



JERICO-S3 DELIVERABLE

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

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Table of Content

1. Executive Summary	4
2. Introduction	5
3. The role of the JERICO Nations Committee	5
3.1. Description and role towards nations' expectations	5
3.2. Surveys to gather perceived needs from nations	6
4. JERICO in the national landscapes	6
4.1. JERICO User analysis	6
4.2. User needs analysis example	7
5. Status of JERICO for the upcoming ESFRI application	9
6. Conclusions	12
7. References	12



1. Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the diverse needs and capabilities of nations involved in the Joint European Research Infrastructure of Coastal Observatories (JERICO). Through the integration of national perspectives facilitated by the Nations Committee, JERICO aims to bridge gaps between regional needs and scientific possibilities in coastal observation and management. By harmonizing datasets and leveraging collaborative expertise, JERICO seeks to enhance its strategic alignment with national priorities while promoting effective environmental monitoring. This document outlines the positions and commitments of participating nations, analyzing the implications for the forthcoming ESFRI Roadmap application. The report also highlights the developments made in terms of user needs analysis and strategic stakeholder engagement, underscoring JERICO's potential to advance data interoperability and support the Blue Economy across Europe.

2. Introduction

The dynamic and complex nature of coastal environments calls for a dedicated and holistic appraisal, that is to be achieved by the JERICO (Joint European Research Infrastructure of Coastal Observatories) Distributed Research Infrastructure (DRI). JERICO aims to foster comprehensive understanding and management of coastal areas across Europe, unifying and harmonising datasets and practices.

The importance of collaboration and synergy with other surrounding environmental RIs is increasingly recognised in the European RI landscape, as agreements and partnerships enhance the scope and impact of marine observations and research, and ultimately services provision. By integrating efforts across various RIs connected to coastal topics, JERICO contributes to a more robust and interconnected environmental monitoring framework in Europe, especially considering its e-infrastructure (e-JERICO) that aims to act as a discovery platform for all related marine resources.

JERICO's unique value proposition lies in its ability to bridge the gap between the diverse scientific expertise and priorities of participating partners. This diversity enriches the project, as different countries bring their infrastructure's capacities, expertise and focus areas, leading to a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to coastal research. Building on the legacy of over a decade of consecutive projects, JERICO-S3 benefits from a large and experienced consortium. This long-standing foundation allows the project to move forward and expand its capabilities, by fostering a collaborative environment that drives innovation and excellence in coastal research. As of the writing of the present document, JERICO involves 16 nations, with ongoing efforts to include three additional countries—Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey—to join the initiative. The expansion of the consortium reflects JERICO's commitment to inclusivity and its vision of a truly pan-European mesh dedicated to coastal observation and research.

This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the positions and commitments of various partners involved in the JERICO-S project and beyond. It starts by describing past involvements in the last ESFRI application, and then describes the current and expected commitments for the upcoming ESFRI application.

3. The role of the JERICO Nations Committee

3.1. Description and role towards nations' expectations

The Nations Committee is a provisional organization designed to integrate national perspectives into the development of JERICO. Initially formed to foster a strong and efficient relationship between the ongoing JERICO-DS and JERICO-S3 projects, it has merged with the LTG previously formed in JERICO-S3. It plays a crucial role in supporting the development of an application for inclusion in the next ESFRI roadmap, targeted for 2026. The Nations Committee has several specific objectives, listed hereby. **(1) Strategic Orientation and Development:** Jointly determine, from national perspectives, the scope and strategic direction of JERICO-RI, covering all aspects of its development and operation, including services to science and society, governance models, business cases, and business models. It also involves inviting new nations to join the JERICO community and managing relationships with external stakeholders. **(2) National Perspective and Implementation:** Review findings,

results, recommendations, and strategies developed in JERICO-S3 and JERICO-DS, providing national insights on challenges and opportunities for implementing these strategies at the national level. **(3) Communication and Dissemination:** Discuss key achievements of the JERICO-DS (and then JERICO-S3) work packages and decide on effective communication and dissemination strategies to the nations. **(4) Progress and Challenges:** Inform about the progress and bottlenecks in national commitments to JERICO. **(5) Decision-Maker Engagement:** Exchange practices and methods for engaging and convincing national decision-makers. **(6) ESFRI Application Support:** Offer support and recommendations in preparation of the 2026 ESFRI Roadmap application. **(7) Visibility and Promotion:** Ensure the visibility and promotion of JERICO within the nations. **(8) Funding Opportunities:** Identify and share funding opportunities at national, European, and global levels that JERICO could potentially leverage.

3.2. Surveys to gather perceived needs from nations

The chair of the Nations Committee, Dominique Durand, and a member of the Nations Committee, Marcello Magaldi, undertook a thorough initiative to gather the expectations and needs of various nations towards JERICO. This initiative involved the development and distribution of comprehensive surveys to committee members, aiming to capture both national and global scientific priorities and societal needs.

The process was initiated by WP1 leaders and co-leaders, who recognized the necessity of a structured survey to collect vital national scientific inputs. The primary objective was to ensure a bidirectional flow of information, allowing for the exchange and update of scientific strategies and needs between global and national scales. This approach was designed to encourage national stakeholders to articulate their priorities, even beyond the scientific topics previously identified in past JERICO projects, and also align with the overarching objectives of the scientific strategy. The focus was particularly on the Key Scientific Challenges highlighted in the ESFRI application submitted in September 2020. In total, six Scientific Topics and three Integrated Themes were delineated for the survey.

For each topic and theme, societal needs, their scales (multinational/regional, national, and local), and their relations to KSCs and MSFD descriptors were thoroughly listed. These were subsequently approved during various meetings by National Representatives (NRs). It was also decided that NRs would fill out the survey after gathering input from key high-level stakeholders. Specific questions for NRs included assessing the priority and implementation levels of societal needs, identifying any missing societal needs, and detailing the sources of their information.

4. JERICO in the national landscapes

4.1. JERICO User analysis

A "User Analysis" report was subcontracted by the JERICO coordination to Euroquality, in order to update and enrich the user base knowledge. Euroquality's report synthesises the positions of nations regarding their expected commitments to JERICO, focusing on the utilization of coastal in situ data, information, and services within the Blue Economy. This

analysis is pivotal as it expands our understanding of the user base, indirectly reflecting the needs of nations involved with JERICO.

The report identifies key aspects, listed hereby: **(1) Gap Analysis** - Highlighting potential innovations and strategic priorities for JERICO based on current practices and needs within the Blue Economy sectors; **(2) Recommendations and Lessons** - Drawing insights from diverse contexts to enrich the understanding of user requirements and strategic alignments; **(3) JERICO's Ecosystem** - Assessing the integration and collaboration with other Research Infrastructures and initiatives to enhance JERICO's impact and relevance; and **(4) Key Selling Points** - Identifying compelling arguments to advocate for JERICO as an essential Research Infrastructure for Blue Economy stakeholders, aligning with national interests and commitments. However, this report should not be considered as an exhaustive listing. Rather, it provides a preliminary scope and generalisation of findings without specific geographical or sectoral focus, which calls for deeper, more targeted studies.

The report underscores JERICO's potential to serve as a unified access point, foster collaboration, and enhance data interoperability and standardization across the Blue Economy, thereby aligning with and supporting the diverse needs and commitments of participating nations. Overall, this analysis highlights that JERICO could play a quite important role in providing fine-scale coastal data, real-time observations, and decision support crucial for national planning, resource management, and regulatory compliance. This capacity should be further promoted at the Ministry level, whenever possible, so as to underline JERICO's role in the developing Blue Economy.

4.2. User needs analysis example

In Geraldini et al. (2021), the authors address the growing pressure on coastal zones from economic activities on both land and marine sides, driven by the global growth of the “Blue economy”. The paper identifies the fragmented sectoral interests and legislation along the Italian coasts as significant challenges, necessitating a bridge between knowledge (data, information, and methods) and governance (decision-makers at all levels) to ensure sustainable economic development as well as social and ecosystem resilience.

The study ultimately aims to align user needs with the European and national legislative frameworks to create a policy-oriented demand for Copernicus Earth Observation services in coastal areas. It highlights the need for an effective system to monitor compliance, and assess legislative progress. The study seeks to identify gaps in the current Copernicus product offerings for coastal monitoring by bringing out stakeholder requirements.

The methodology therein applied (see Figure 1) to the Italian user landscape could be scalable to the European level. The results offer a comprehensive overview of coastal user requirements in Italy, emphasizing the need for integrated information for coastal management, and in fact this forms the basis for defining coastal services.

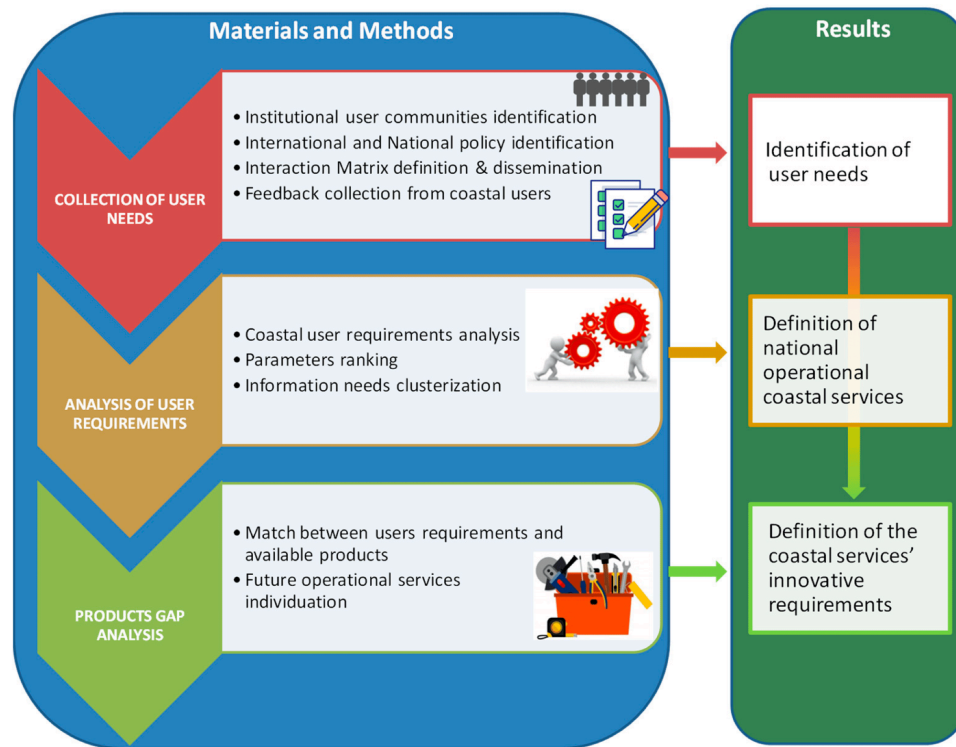


Figure 1 - Methodology applied in Geraldini et al. (2021) to explore user requirements, so as to better define coastal services. Reproduced from Geraldini et al. (2021).

The strength of the presented methodology lies in its heterogeneity, representativity, and transdisciplinary approach. It involved users from various sectors including environmental and civil protection, security and defense, fishing and resources management, cultural heritage, and infrastructure. This diversity ensures a comprehensive understanding of national requirements, driven by regulatory obligations and directives often concerning diverse thematic.

Key aspects of the methodology employed in Geraldini et al. (2021) include **(1) A systematic and Integrated Approach** - The same procedure was used to define all thematic operational services, creating a system of interconnected modules; **(2) A qualified Demand** - Institutional users, responsible for implementing international and national legislation, provided the requirements, ensuring a qualified and relevant demand and **(3) A representativity and Homogeneity** - The geographically distributed users covered all thematic issues, providing a complete national perspective.

The method involved synergic interaction between coastal end-users, Earth Observation (EO) experts, and coastal processes experts, forming the "Coastal table" within the Italian Copernicus User Forum and Space Economy Mirror Copernicus context. The resulting coastal operational services, integrating satellite products with in-situ data and models, aims to support Blue Growth policies and Green Deal strategies. They enable continuous temporal monitoring of large areas, optimized maritime and coastal activity planning, and improved maritime management for authorities.

The findings from this user analysis provide a valuable framework for JERICO. JERICO aims to enhance and integrate coastal monitoring and forecasting services across Europe, aligning with the goals of the Blue Growth and Green Deal strategies. In Geraldini et al. (2021), direct

links between European directives, operational services and parameters involved (see Figure 2) are investigated. Applying this methodology within JERICO can help in understanding the diverse needs of different countries and regions involved in the project, as well as in understanding which EU directives could be directly supported.

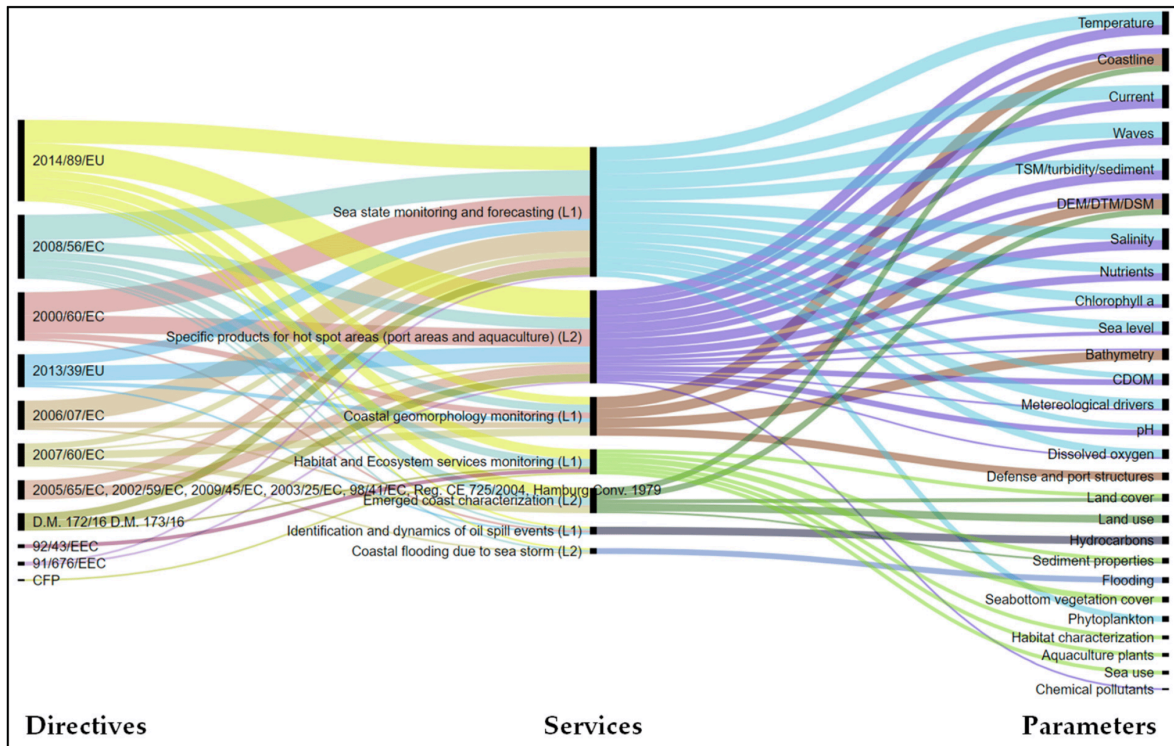


Figure 2 - Sankey diagram connecting the European Directives, the identified national operational services in Italy, and the parameters provided by the operational network. Such analysis could be scalable at the European level for JERICO. Reproduced from Geraldini et al. (2021).

Key insights that could be leveraged for JERICO include the scalability to the European level, the integrated coastal service model, the synergic interaction framework, the policy-oriented demand, and the need for qualified and representative insights. By adopting and adapting the user needs analysis methodology outlined in Geraldini et al. (2021), JERICO can better understand and address the specific needs of each participating country and their likely course of development. This approach will enable JERICO to develop comprehensive, integrated, and user-driven coastal services that support sustainable development and resilience in Europe's coastal zones.

5. Status of JERICO for the upcoming ESFRI application

5.1. Political involvement of Nations in the governance of JERICO

The governance structure of JERICO is designed to ensure balanced representation and effective decision-making across all participating nations. Each nation involved in JERICO will nominate one delegate to the Assembly of Members, which will serve as the primary decision-making body. This Assembly of Members is crucial for maintaining a collaborative and inclusive governance framework, allowing each nation to have a voice in the strategic

direction and policies of JERICO. In addition, the Executive Committee is responsible for implementing the decisions made by the Assembly of Members, overseeing the operational aspects of JERICO, and ensuring that the project's objectives are met efficiently and effectively. To further ensure regional representativity and balanced input from various coastal areas, the head of each JERICO service office which will compose the Executive Committee will rotate periodically. This rotation system will guarantee that different regions will be represented in the governance process over time, reflecting the diverse coastal environments and research priorities within Europe, also favouring the commitment of Nations in JERICO.

5.2. Political support

The Letters of Support (LoS) from countries and institutions so far involved in JERICO are important for JERICO's 2025 ESFRI application. They demonstrate political commitment and endorsement at a national level. Coming from one or several ministries depending on the country, they showcase that the project aligns with their strategic priorities regarding marine observations and policies. This support is significant as it underscores a willingness from participating countries to invest resources in the long-term in JERICO, both financial and organizational.

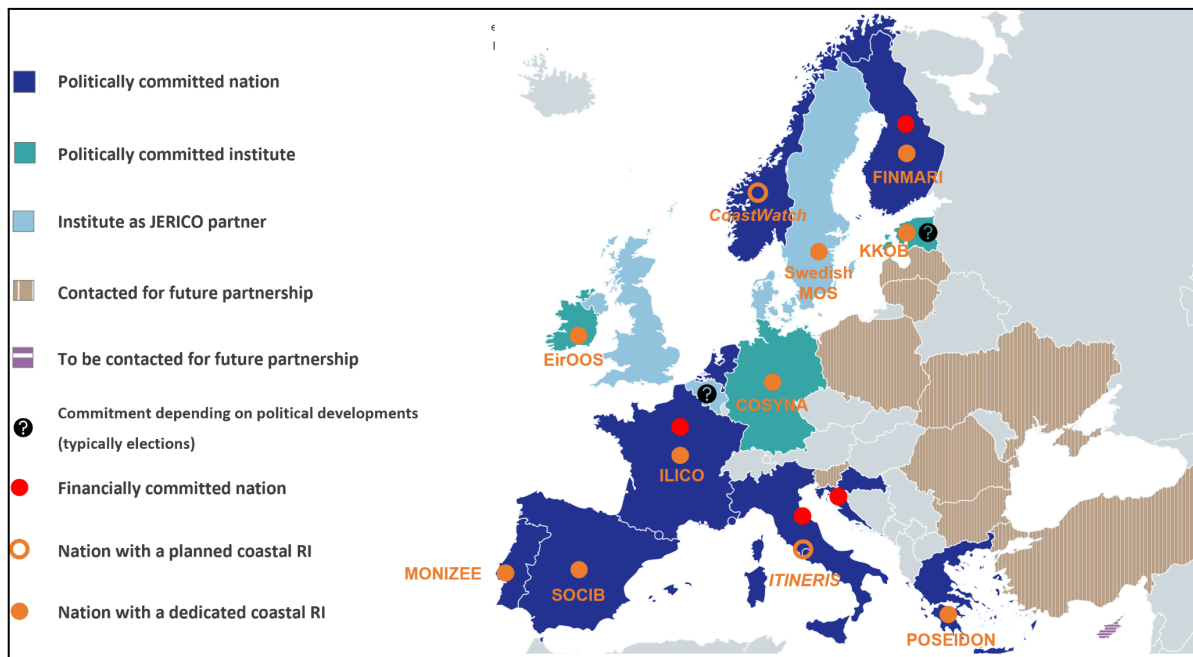


Figure 3 - Political commitments for the 2026 ESFRI Roadmap application. Reproduced from JERICO-DS D4.2.

In the context of the ESFRI application, these LoS provide assurance to the ESFRI evaluation panel that there is a solid foundation of support across multiple European countries, enhancing the credibility and feasibility of the project and of its scientific strategy, based on an extensive spatial coverage. Countries with existing or planned RIs dedicated to coastal observation directly related to JERICO highlight synergies and opportunities for collaboration: this reinforces the project's potential for impactful scientific outcomes and innovation. In addition to 9 countries which will or will likely provide a LoS (see also Figure 3), two more countries may provide support, contingent on upcoming political developments. This state of

matter for JERICO strengthens its position as a pan-European initiative with widespread support and participation and bolsters its prospects for a successful implementation and long-term sustainability.

Euroquality, as a subcontractor, played a role in preparing the coordination team and also NC members for effective engagement with key ministry representatives, regarding the importance of JERICO and the necessity of political commitment for its next ESFRI application to the 2026 ESFRI Roadmap. They conducted a thorough training session for the coordination team and other members, which included simulating an actual meeting and role-playing as ministry representatives receiving the JERICO coordinator (L. Delauney), the chair of the NC (D. Durand), and the National Representative for France (L. Cocquempot). This hands-on approach helped the team develop practical skills for real-life interactions that are planned to happen in the second half of 2024 and first semester of 2025. Euroquality provided a detailed summary of key points and made available a comprehensive report. It outlines a structured methodology for engaging and convincing ministry representatives. This structure includes **(1) Proposal of a schedule and agenda for the meeting:** This section outlines a structured agenda with specific time allocations for each part of the meeting, so as to ensure a focused and efficient discussion. It includes introducing the meeting framework, discussing data gaps and needs, presenting JERICO's solutions and outlining next steps; **(2) Guidelines for preparing the meeting:** This section gives detailed instructions on preparing slides and notes, in doing so emphasizing the importance of customizing the presentation to the national context and specific ministry needs. They include advice on how to prepare a pitch, identify key selling points, anticipate objections and develop use cases relevant to each nation's economic sectors. The slide preparation itself was divided into several parts (Introduction and Framework, Current Needs and Gaps, The JERICO-RI Solution, Next Steps); **(3) Methodologies for a successful meeting:** The report detailed methodologies based on active listening and adapting the presentation to the ministry's needs and issues; and **(4) Training for the meeting:** After preparing the draft slides and pitch, a rehearsal was conducted in June 2024. Euroquality simulated the role of the ministry and evaluated the presentations based on clarity, relevance to the national context, and persuasiveness. The rehearsal aimed to build capacity on the methodologies and simulate future meetings. The methodologies for a successful meeting provided by Euroquality include the following elements, of prime importance:

- **Proposing a meeting framework:** Steps to ensure a robust launch (ice breakers, role identification, objectives, agenda settings, context validation, timing checks)
- **Committing methodology:** Structured discussion points to align JERICO's offer with the ministry's needs. This included understanding the ministry's needs, issues, budget constraints, decision-making process, and competition.
- **Burning Bridges methodology:** Ensuring that objections are addressed and resolved during the meeting to prevent them from stemming again.
- **Answer to Objections methodology:** A four-step process (Explore, Reformulate, Argue, Check) to handle objections and ensure that all concerns are fully addressed.

This second subcontracting, resulting in this training and report, directly compounds one of the objectives of the NC mentioned in a previous section, "Decision-Maker Engagement:



Exchange practices and methods for engaging and convincing national decision-makers." This meticulous preparation stands as crucial for ensuring that all JERICO partners are well-equipped to advocate for JERICO's strategic objectives and secure the necessary political support.

6. Conclusions

The analysis within this report investigates the complex interplay between national needs at the European level, and the potential for JERICO to meet these commitments. Having synthesized the diverse national positions related to coastal challenges, JERICO is now able to address specific regional priorities, aligning them with broader scientific and strategic goals. The Nations Committee's role is crucial in integrating these perspectives, enabling JERICO to effectively prepare for its 2026 ESFRI Roadmap application. The insights provided by Euroquality's user needs analysis demonstrate JERICO's capacity to support the Blue Economy, by delivering - or allowing to discover and exploit - much-needed datasets and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. Moving forward, JERICO's commitment to understanding and reconciling nation-specific needs with its scientific capabilities will be pivotal in achieving sustainable development and resilience in Europe's coastal areas.

7. References

Geraldini S, Bruschi A, Bellotti G, Taramelli A. User Needs Analysis for the Definition of Operational Coastal Services. *Water*. 2021; 13(1):92. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w13010092>