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## Executive summary

As part of the international multidisciplinary programme MISTRALS (Mediterranean Integrated Studies At Local And Regional Scales) for multi-disciplinary regional research in the Mediterranean region, MERMeX (Marine Ecosystems Response in the Mediterranean Experiment) is an international cooperative research programme that aims at a better understanding of the functioning and alteration of marine ecosystems to anthropogenic and climatic changes in the Mediterranean. To achieve its goals, MERMeX will document the characteristics of the Mediterranean ecosystems based on a synergy between (i) nested enhanced and special field observation periods over several years from 2010, (ii) existing long term observation series from marine observatories and satellite missions, and (iii) coupled oceanographic-biogeochemistry-higher trophic level models.

The data collected during the programme will be gathered on a common database (Sedoo - Service de Données de l'OMP / ESPRI - IPSL) for secured, facilitated and enhanced availability. The present MERMeX data and publication policy defines the access rules to the data in order to best accommodate the data provider and user expectations. For datasets collected by MERMeX investigators, but benefiting totally or partially of supports from other origin than MISTRALS (e.g. European and national programmes, cruises on IFREMER vessels), the present data and publication policy does not substitute to that of the other funding agencies.

MERMeX non-public data are delivered to registered users only, for the sole purpose of scientific studies designed to meet MERMeX objectives and educational activities related to the dissemination of MERMeX science. Commercial use or exploitation of MERMeX data are strictly prohibited unless explicitly allowed by the data owner. The data received under the MERMeX policy shall never be redistributed to a third party.

If a data user makes an effective use of a dataset retrieved, he/she shall establish direct contacts with the principal investigator(s) of the data in order to offer collaboration. Co-authorship of MERMeX dataset users and principal investigator(s) should be the rule for papers making extensive use of MERMeX data. In any case, the origin of MERMeX data used in publications shall be appropriately acknowledged and referenced.

Publications making use of MERMeX data should be registered in the MERMeX bibliographic management system as soon as they are submitted to a journal, conference or other organisation.

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## 1. Introduction

MERMeX (Marine Ecosystems Response in the Mediterranean Experiment) is an international cooperative research programme that aims at a better functioning and alteration of marine ecosystems to anthropogenic and climatic changes in the Mediterranean. It involves a large research community from various disciplines

and methodological backgrounds. In this context the present data and publication policy aims at developing the exchange and use of local, satellite and model data to foster collaborations. To this purpose, the present MERMeX data policy details the mutual rights and obligations of data providers and users.

The MERMeX Steering Committee (SC) has defined the present data and publication policy. It is valid from January 1, 2014 to August 30, 2020. This policy covers the data collected during the MERMeX operational phase. It may be revised in order to fit at best the MERMeX programme and database evolutions, as deemed necessary by the MERMeX SC. At the term of this seven-year period, the MISTRALS governing board will be responsible for defining how data archive and data access shall be handled.

The restricted access granted to non-public data through this policy allows the sole and direct use of the data for scientific and educational activities.

Since the data are originally collected for specific purposes, no warranty is given as to their suitability for the use intended by the recipient. The database centres and the data providers have no liability for any loss, damage, claim, demand, cost or expense directly or indirectly arising from any use, receipt or supply of data under this agreement.

## 2. Definitions

In the context of this policy:

- *Data* are the products from observations or models either produced by MERMeX participants or externally produced data, which contribute to MERMeX scientific goals. Data are either public or restricted to registered users.
- *Metadata* includes all information describing the data contents, including an extensive catalogue. The MERMeX metadata is public.
- *Data owners* are the agencies or institutes funding the data collection.
- *Principal investigators* are the scientists responsible for a data set from an instrument or a model, from instrument/model deployment and data collection, to data processing and transfer to the database, or any person (collaborator, student) that they may suggest.
- *Data providers* provide data to the database. They are either data owners or principal investigators.
- *Registered data users* can use non-public data from the MERMeX database. They are granted royalty-free access to the data through an on-line registration process on the database that include endorsement of the present Data and Publication Policy. They will be referred to as registered users. There are three categories of data users described hereafter.
- *Core users for a given experiment* are MERMeX data providers and scientists from institutions providing funding or in-kind support to that experiment. *Core users* can access all the data. They are granted exclusive access to the MERMeX data for a default period of 3 years from data deposit deadline on the database as defined in paragraph 3.
- *Associated users for a given experiment* are MERMeX scientists not involved in this experiment or scientists not directly participating in MERMeX but in scientific studies or educational activities that can promote the dissemination of MERMeX data and science. They can access data open to research activities and MERMeX data once the period of exclusive access is over.
- *Public users* are non-registered data users. They have only access to metadata and public data from the database.

### 3. Data provider obligations

- The data provider has to submit the quality-controlled data to the database within 1 year of the data acquisition. For complicated or large datasets requiring extensive processing and quality control, the MERMeX SC can permit exceptions after examination.
- The data provider shall transfer their data to the MERMeX database free of charge.
- Unless otherwise specified by their data provider, the datasets will be firstly reserved to core users for the default period of 3 years. After this period, the datasets will automatically be open to associated scientists or public as specified by data owners.
- A dataset within the MERMeX database can be opened to associated scientists or public domain before the expiration of the initial period of exclusive use by the core users. This can be done at the discretion of the data provider for a particular dataset.
- A dataset can be updated at any time. The data provider is responsible for providing the best quality version of the dataset to the MERMeX database. The data users having uploaded previous versions of the dataset will be informed of updates through automatic mailing.
- Principal investigators are invited to refer any data misuse to the database managers.

### 4. Registered data user obligations

- To access non-public data, users have to fill the on-line registration form and describe the work they intend to do with the MERMeX data. Registrations are handled by the MERMeX SC. Registration is valid for 3 years.
- MERMeX data are delivered to registered users for the sole purpose of scientific studies designed to meet MERMeX objectives or educational activities related to the dissemination of MERMeX science.
- Commercial use and exploitation of non-public MERMeX data by the data user are prohibited, unless specific permission has been obtained in writing from the data owner. The first contact for such an agreement is the dataset principal investigator whose name is mentioned in the data catalogue.
- No data transfer to third parties is allowed from any registered user having received data under the MERMeX data policy.
- The agencies or institutions funding data collection and the database centres have to be acknowledged in any publication or communication using the data with the following sentence: "Data were obtained from the MISTRALS-MERMeX project, endorsed by the IMBER, LOICZ and SOLAS programs». Every dataset provider is invited to propose a specific extra acknowledgment sentence. The complete acknowledgement sentence to be used is written in the metadata and must be reproduced in any publication using the dataset.
- Any access to a dataset will automatically trigger an e-mail to the dataset principal investigator(s) so that he/she is aware of who intends to use the data. If the data user makes an effective use of the dataset retrieved, he/she shall establish direct contacts with the principal investigator(s) of the data in order to offer collaboration.

- Co-authorship of the data principal investigators and users should be the rule for papers making extensive use of MERMeX datasets. In any case the data user is expected to contact the principal investigator to agree on either co-authorship or acknowledgement.
  - Users having produced significant processed datasets or products based on the use of a dataset or product of the database should inform the database managers. If so decided by the MERMeX SC, the processed products should be provided to the database and disseminated to the registered users under the rules described herein.
  - Any communication or publication making use of MERMeX data shall be registered on-line in the MERMeX bibliographic management system and transmitted in electronic form as soon as it is submitted to a journal, conference or any other organisation. The project coordinators, on behalf of the MERMeX SC, may require changes in the publication as deemed necessary for the appropriate reference of MERMeX datasets or acknowledgement of MERMeX contribution. References and electronic copies of publications will be updated once accepted or published.
  - The MERMeX list of publication will be public in order to provide the community with a comprehensive and updated list of the publications produced within the programme or making use of the datasets acquired during the programme.
  - Registered users accept the obligations described herein attached to the use of the data. If a user breaks the data and publication policy rules, the database centre managers will remove him/her from the registered user directory and ask him/her to delete all the copies of the datasets he/she has obtained from the database.
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