



The EPOS success story: from a concept to a research infrastructure serving the need of the solid Earth science community

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EPOS, the European Plate Observing System, is a research infrastructure of pan-European dimension aiming at integrating national and international research infrastructures for solid Earth sciences under a common delivery framework coordinated by the EPOS European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC).

Currently, EPOS integrates more than 138 diverse research institutions, universities, and organisations from 25 European countries and involves five international organisations. These infrastructures produce, manage, and preserve an enormous amount of data, data products and services, all together covering the whole gamut of solid Earth science research from seismology to volcanology, from geology to geodesy, geomagnetism, satellite data, including experimental facilities and natural observatories.

To guarantee the success of such a complex infrastructure like EPOS, it has been essential to agree on a vision and a mission that have been shared and adopted, since the beginning, by the whole, diverse, and fragmented solid Earth scientific community as well as by the crucial decision-making organisms (e.g. National Governments, European Commission). This implies that EPOS is working to ensure harmonisation between the EPOS pan-European implementation plans and national priorities and strategies and at the same time to involve international initiatives for sharing and accessing data.

In this context, the EPOS architecture has been planned, designed, and implemented by assembling key elements (i.e. National Research Infrastructures, Thematic Core Services, Integrated Core Services, ERIC Management Office) to allow the enterprise to work as a single, but distributed and sustainable research infrastructure.

At the same time, the management structure of EPOS has been designed to engage the research community and the decision-making organisms in the construction of EPOS throughout the whole process, and to facilitate the flow of information between the research community, Project Management Office, Project Development Board and Board of General Representatives (executive).

The EPOS solid management structure we present, has demonstrated to be crucial for the success of EPOS and it was key for the implementation of the EPOS vision and mission, tailoring the management to the project environment, with a special focus on quality management and internal communication, thanks to efficient and common strategies in relation to the effective legal, governance and financial framework, and the harmonization of pan-European implementation plans with national priorities and strategies.