Validation of EPOS services

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The third year of EPOS-IP (October 2017 - October 2018) is dedicated to the validation of the data and service provision through the Thematic Core Services (TCS) and the Integrated Core Services Central hub (ICS-C). The EPOS service validation process is composed by two complementary simultaneous actions:

- An internal verification, that checks if a service is fit for use as well as the contents of the TCS provision to ensure exploitation of results. This action is driven by the Project Development Board (PDB) and involves all the TCS and the ICS.
- An external validation, checking if a service is fit for purpose. By its own external nature, this component of the validation process is conducted from a user’s perspective. This was achieved in two ways: 1) engaging Impact Assessment Groups, one per Thematic Core Service (TCS) and one for the Integrated Core Service (ICS); 2) through an External Evaluation Panel, who were asked to provide a holistic view on service maturity. This component is driven by the Validation Secretariat.

The members of the Impact Assessment Groups were chosen by the Validation Secretariat from a 10-long list of typical users in each community, proposed by the TCS and ICS leaders. The members of the External Evaluator Panel, invited by the Board of National Scientific Representatives (BNSR), are experts from solid Earth science, data science and ICT as well as research infrastructures managers from environmental science. They ensure a global vision, since they come from Australia, USA, New Zealand and European countries. The External Evaluation Panel is receiving the progress reports, the outcomes of internal verification as well as the views of the Impact Assessment Groups in order to provide their indications and report to the BNSR at the end of September 2018.
The entire validation process consists of three checkpoints, September 2017, March 2018 and September 2018. At each checkpoint the progress in technical, legal, governance and financial implementation is checked through a list of criteria proposed by the PDB and agreed with the TCS and ICS. The criteria are accompanied with a metrics to assess their fulfilment. Service provision units that do not reach validation in October 2018 will remain in a roadmap for reanalysis at a later stage.

The outcome of the validation process will determine which services have achieved maturity for entering in the testing and pre-operational phase of the EPOS infrastructure, and therefore they might be eligible for funding through the EPOS-ERIC. This decision falls in the sphere of competence of the Board of Government Representatives (BGR), who delegated in the Board of National Scientific Representatives (BNSR) the management of the validation process. On June 2017, in Athens, the BGR approved the methodology for validation and the BNSR appointed a Validation Secretariat (Joao Fonseca, Andreas Reitbrock, Aude Chambodut). In October 2018 the BNSR will make recommendations to the BGR concerning service validation. The BGR will pass the outcomes of the validation phase to the General Assembly on the new EPOS-ERIC.