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Terms of Reference for CEDA Working Group on Platform for Subsidised Research Programmes

Introduction

Research funding is generally available for innovation within the European Union, and national governments in Europe - especially if it's for research related to 'Nature-Based-Solutions' or energy transition. In the past, the dredging industry has taken advantage of research subsidies to drive innovations and develop new techniques for dredging, reclamation and infrastructure works. However, the requirements for successful grant application is changing, and increasingly parties in search of funds for industry research, need to collaborate in order to win funding. Subsidy programmes require collaboration across the industry and different parties, such as universities and research centres, consultants and contractors, end users and government organisations, have a part to play.

As an association, CEDA has members in every section of the industry and is well-placed to operate as a platform to help organisations find partners for their research programmes. Also, CEDA can help with the dissemination of knowledge and research outcomes. However, there are a number of potential challenges for CEDA in this role. For example, how can we make sure that all members have the same opportunities to participate? How do we provide equal opportunities for all members? Does CEDA have the resources available to play a role in research projects (this role is often covered by members in a voluntary capacity).

For some time, the CEDA Education Commission and the CEDA Strategy Commission have been discussing the possibilities for acting as a platform for research. They have reached the conclusion that CEDA could at least host a platform where members can exchange information on potential projects, and express their interest in participating in projects. Its successful implementation will require a clear structure, easy accessibility for CEDA members, and a way to coordinate communication for those on the platform. In order to do this, both commissions have jointly proposed a new working group that can take their ideas for the platform forward, and construct the required IT infrastructure for it. The following Terms of Reference is proposed for the working group.

Objective

The working group is tasked with preparing a work plan for the set-up of an IT platform in which companies (CEDA members) can share information on research programmes, and find interested parties to collaborate in research applications. After confirmation of the work plan by the Board, resources will be made available to implement the platform and communicate its availability and purpose to CEDA members.

Understanding dredging

Scope

Issues to be addressed in the work plan include and should consider:

- The role of universities and research centres in setting up the platform and sharing information, while remaining non-competitive with each other in setting up proposals for the funding programmes.
- How to approach CEDA members about participation in research projects and how to decide who to accept (e.g. should all interested parties be accepted? How will the choice be made between similar parties?).
- Who will coordinate the interaction between interested parties (e.g. should this be a CEDA role or left to the party asking for participants? How will interactions be reported to CEDA / CEDA members?)
- How will the results be reported to CEDA and CEDA members? Will the information about the programme be made available publicly, for members, or only for participants?
- Will there be any privacy concerns in setting up the platform? Will any member information be shared?
- How will the platform be evaluated after one or two years of operation?
- How will decisions on implementation be made (e.g. will it be needed at board-level?), and will any funds from CEDA, or access to the website, be required?
- Will any interaction be required with the Strategy or Education Commissions for implementation?
- How will the platform be promoted to CEDA members when implemented?

Deliverables

A comprehensive work plan will be drafted for review by the Strategy and Education Commissions, and possibly with the Board for the implementation decision. It is likely that the working group will continue to work on the implementation if there is a positive decision to go ahead.

Proposed timing

The working group will have their first meeting on **27 March 2019** at the CEDA HQ, in Delft, the Netherlands, at which point the Draft Terms of Reference will be finalised and development of the work plan will start. The work plan to be drafted in 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2019. Implementation (when decided) can be done in 4th quarter of 2019 and first 2 quarters of 2020.

Composition of the Working Group

The WG is envisaged as an international group with equal participation from academia, consultants, contractors and manufacturers.