

Background document

This document provides the background to the next EATiP Meeting in Brussels on 3-4 April 2014, setting out different topics, their background and the requirements for EATiP positions.

Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is the new R&I Framework programme that was initiated at the start of 2014 and, with €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (until 2020), aims to provide more breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the lab to the market. Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument that implements the [Innovation Union](#), a [Europe 2020](#) flagship initiative that targets securing Europe's global competitiveness.

By coupling research and innovation, Horizon 2020 should help to achieve this with its emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.

The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation will be complemented by further measures to complete and further develop the [European Research Area](#). These measures will aim at breaking down barriers to create a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation.

The launch of Horizon 2020 has been accompanied by a significant reorganisation of DG R&I, where aquaculture interests are to be found primarily in the Bioeconomy Directorate, which includes Agri-Food Chain and Marine Resources Units.

- *Mr. Jacques Fuchs of the Marine Resources Unit will make a short presentation in the meeting on funding opportunities and guidelines.*

For aquaculture, the direction outlined is as follows

Competitive and environmentally-friendly European aquaculture

Aquaculture has a large potential for the development of healthy, safe and competitive food products, as well as for environmental services and energy production.

Research efforts are particularly needed for the domestication of some species (established and new species), on interactions with the environment, on health and nutrition of farmed aquatic organisms and on reproduction and breeding, which are among the main obstacles to the sustainable development of European aquaculture. In addition, research should address the social aspects of the seafood sector, which is essential for the cohesion of the social fabric in the European coastal areas.

There are some new projects that have started that include several of these topics, notably 'DIVERSIFY' (new species: coordinator HCMR) and 'FISHBOOST' (breeding: coordinator NOFIMA).

European Technology Platforms

Building on the strategies for Europe 2020 and for an Innovation Union, Horizon 2020 as an integrated research and innovation framework programme recognises the role of ETPs as part of the external advice and societal engagement needed to implement Horizon 2020. The European Commission is committed to its structured dialogue on research policy and priorities with European Technology Platforms.

EATiP was recognised as an official European Technology Platform in July 2013; the complete ETP details are published at - <http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms/>. A strategy was published at the same time for European Technology Platforms – ETP 2020 (available at same web address) – set out the Vision and Mission of ETPs, as a Commission Staff Working Document.

The Vision for ETPs puts forward that they should take a holistic view of their sectoral interests, identify pathways for the commercial deployment of research, provide strategic insights into market opportunities and needs and mobilise and network innovation actors across the EU to enable European companies gain a competitive advantage in global markets.

The Mission for ETPs includes 3 main functions:

1. **Strategy function** = develop strategies and provide a coherent business-focused analysis of research and innovation bottlenecks and opportunities related to societal challenges and industrial leadership actions
2. **Mobilising function** = mobilise industry and other stakeholders within the EU to work in partnership and deliver on agreed priorities
3. **Dissemination function** = share information and enable knowledge transfer to a wide range of stakeholders across the EU

Achieving this Mission requires the industry-led and focused ETPs to be inclusive and representative of businesses, research organisations and universities in their respective fields and to be open to new members. They will have to work in close partnership with Member States and Member State-based networks as well as with countries associated with the framework programme, where appropriate.

It is also anticipated that ETPs will also need to actively work with one another and engage with stakeholders, including those along the value chain, NGOs, social platforms and consumer/societal groups, as appropriate, to address wider challenges and foster solutions that are socially responsible, inclusive and sustainable.

EATiP has partially fulfilled these objectives but was requested to:

- **Develop a strategy to expand the engagement of smaller players**, SMEs in particular, to as to improve representation
- **Explore ways that EATiP's work can incentivise further investments in aquaculture research** – by both the private sector and Member States – so as to implements EATiP's SRIA.

As indicated at the 2013 Annual Meeting – the EATiP Board has recognised that the initial goals of EATiP have been largely achieved, namely by providing the Vision, the SRIA, first Action Plans – followed by official recognition of EATiP as an ETP.

In recent years, there have been additional actions that have or are continuing to contribute to EATiP's development, influence and achievements. If these are analysed within the ETP Mission functions, one categorise these as follows:

Strategy function

- **The Blue Growth Strategy** - designed to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole, recognising that seas and oceans are drivers for the European economy with great potential for innovation and growth. It is the Integrated Maritime Policy's contribution to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. **Aquaculture is one of the specific targets of this strategy.**
 - o *JPI Oceans is a Joint-Programming Initiative created to meet the Grand Challenges regarding European Seas and Oceans, where marine aquaculture is seen as having a role; a presentation on scope and progress will be made by its Director Kathrine Angell-Hansen in the meeting*
- 2014 also brings a new Common Fisheries Policy (that also covers aquaculture) and related instruments that will promote innovation and skill/knowledge transfer actions, in line with the expectations of Europe 2020 – and which also foresees
 - o The creation of a European Aquaculture Advisory Council (2014) to provide recommendations to policy-makers and to help them adopt evidence-based decisions, where it is anticipated that EATiP would be a representative stakeholder.
 - o *The use of the FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Groups) facility for developing local actions – a presentation on this component of the CFP/EMFF will be made by Gilles van de Walle (FARNET)*
- Recognition of the importance of European aquaculture in the Strategic Guidelines for its sustainable development, and for EATiP's SRIA in enhancing competitiveness
- *Incorporation of aquaculture representation in the new Bioeconomy Panel (DG R&I), a new platform for informed discussions on the Bioeconomy. Its role is to suggest and foster European joint actions and measures in the domain of the Bioeconomy (taking into account inputs from the Bioeconomy Observatory and other related initiatives).*

Mobilising function

- As recognised in the 2013 AGM, EATiP has difficulty in mobilising SMEs at the European level; this is not unique to EATiP – the ETP meeting of December 2013 clearly indicated that ‘one size does not fit all’ and those sectors composed primarily of SMEs reported identical situations and issues. Following debate in the 2013 AGM and with those responsible for national ‘mirror’ platforms/clusters, this point will be presented and discussed for decision on how to develop mutual support measures for the integration and mobilisation of aquaculture SMEs within the ETP Mission.
- **Synergy developments**
 - o With other ETPs – e.g. FEFAC (EUFETEC), Plants for the Future, Global Animal Health, FABRE & Animal Task Force
 - The use of fishmeal and fish oil in feeds remains a ‘hot topic’ and the preliminary results of the ARRINA project will be presented and discussed in the light of
 - Synergy with the ‘Plants for the Future’ TP
 - A submission made for an Environmental Footprint Audit (FEFAC)
 - The outcome of debate should be to assure the development of cross-sectoral synergies for new feed ingredients that respond to consumer and the profession’s expectations.
 - o The health of aquaculture livestock remains a top concern, which is being addressed in different approaches, concerning both fish and shellfish:
 - Cooperation with EAFP (European Association of Fish Pathologists) has been put forward as a positive means for identifying priorities and topics for examination.
 - Prof. Randolph Richards will present positions on this and review how the Thematic Area on Health & Welfare could adapt to these.
- **Development of Action Plans (e.g. Aquainnova) – prioritisation issues**
- **Participation in partnerships with other stakeholders**

EATiP has cooperated – at different levels - with a number of European projects that have finished or are nearing completion, e.g.

- Euroshell – shellfish strategy and SRIA
- AquaExcel - aquaculture infrastructures for excellence in European fish research
- AquaMed – Mediterranean Research
- AqAsem – cooperation with Asia – leading to EATiP Missions to China/Vietnam
- AquaTnet – education and teaching platform

As in all individually-funded EU projects, there is a finite timeline and attention is being given as to how to make best use of not only the results but also the core consortium interests i.e. to assure perennity of the these. Many of the consortium members of these projects are member organisations of EATiP.

To note, is that these projects cover different funding interests, including Thematic Network (Erasmus) for AQUATNET, Research infrastructures (ESPRI) for AquaExcel, International Cooperation (AqAsem/AquaMed), while Euroshell is the equivalent of Aquainnova for shellfish.

Presentations/updates on the progress and position of these projects by their representatives

It is requested that debate be made on how best to adapt/incorporate the interests developed so as to best promote continuity within or outside of EATiP's structure.

Dissemination & Cooperation function

Clear examples include

- EATiP's Vision document - >2,500 copies distributed
- 'Aquainnova' RTD leaflets & project transparency (printed for Aquainnova workshops – online)
- AquaTnet – education and teaching platform
- AquaExcel - Aquaculture infrastructures for excellence in European fish research

This aspect needs constant review and updating, including overlap and use of 'parallel' networks (EAS and AquaTT). How best to contribute to AquaTnet and AquaExcel?

While the scene is well set for EATiP to move forward, discussions are needed within the EATiP membership as to how EATiP should and can address these issues, covering strategy, direction and structure/operations.

EATiP's position on international cooperation was requested at the 2013 AGM and, since that time, this question has been widened to include different areas of the world – and where aquaculture has been highlighted as a potential common subject

- Overall, this topic is divided into 2 components
 - o Examining the potential for international cooperation for companies active in aquaculture (
 - o Examining the potential for international cooperation on science and technology, covering both academic research actors but also technology-led SMEs

This topic will be presented for open discussion in the Annual General Meeting

In summary, the Annual Meeting should serve to provide a clear update on many positions that concern the role and function of EATiP in representing its stakeholders and moving innovation forward in European aquaculture.

EATiP Secretariat

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