



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019 SUMMARY

EATiP members and collaborators gathered in Brussels on June 17 and 18 to discuss the positioning of aquaculture innovation and research for the development of the sector. After the President, Gustavo Larrazábal, opened the event, an update of platform actions and achievements was given by Alexandra Neyts.

Fulfilling its role as European Technology Platform, EATiP invited representatives from the [European Commission Directorate-General of Research and Innovation](#) (DG RTD), to inform about the position of aquaculture in the upcoming [Horizon Europe](#). Marta Iglesias from the Unit of Healthy Oceans & Seas presented its structure, with a specific focus on the Food and Natural Resources cluster in Pillar 2 of the programme. Seas, oceans and inland waters are one of its intervention areas, but also other areas are relevant such as food systems and circular systems. The European Innovation Council will be the main funding mechanism to support disruptive innovations, of which 70% of the budget will be earmarked for SMEs. As one of the planned R&I missions, healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters is expected to receive ample attention. Finally, InvestEU was mentioned as an important new tool to stimulate the private sector to invest in R&I. The budget for #HorizonEU has not yet been approved, and a public consultation will be held in 2019-2020.

Felix Leinemann from the [EC Directorate-General of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries](#) (DG MARE) explained that there is no common European legislation, but a common policy, written down in the Strategic guidelines for a sustainable aquaculture from 2013. The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is not binding, but is linked to the national strategies and multi-annual plans, providing important input to the European Maritime and Fisheries Funds. Although there are some hindering factors, this has resulted in improved strategic planning, support of aquaculture in other EU programmes, and simplifications of licensing procedures. The Strategic Guidelines are soon to be reviewed, there is a need to benchmark the outcomes, and a broad communication of the results and good practices needs still more focus. Along with the new EMFF (2021-27), it is the intention to update the Multi-Annual National Plans. A Blue Economy Investment Platform has been set up to bring together investors and SMEs. EATiP and MiPs are encouraged to help identifying the priorities relevant for the industry. DG MARE compiled a shortlist of all aquaculture related collaborative projects during the last 10 years.

The [European Committee of the Regions](#) (CoR), represented by Dimo Stoyanov, clarified the mandate of this body, as the voice of European regions and cities, with its members that are appointed by the regional governments. The CoR participates in the legislative process and is being consulted on all issues of regional value. The opportunities of organising a common event between EATiP and CoR was discussed. As the main bottlenecks for aquaculture growth in Europe are found in the regions, the support of a stronger collaboration between the MiPs and the regional representatives of the CoR was regarded as an efficient way to promote aquaculture relevant R&I strategies. During this process, reaching the NGOs and the authorities that have aquaculture as their area of responsibility is critical.



John Bostock, University of Stirling, is representing EATiP in the [EC Expert Group on Skills and Career Development in the Blue Economy](#). They develop a skills policy for the marine and maritime sectors and give advice on education, training, skills and career development. A set of Blue Career Projects have been set up, and a framework for cooperation on technological skills between sectors within the blue economy has been developed. As one of the Ocean Literacy projects, engaging the public, children and young people with marine issues, ESCO provides a comprehensive description of aquaculture occupations to educators. Finally, training opportunities through the H2020 projects AQUAEXCEL and EURASTiP were highlighted and explained. EATiP provides aquaculture priorities into the blue career and ocean literacy initiatives, and disseminates skill development requirements and opportunities of relevance to the sector.

The [EATiP Mirror Platforms](#) (MiPs) have gained a lot of importance since the establishment of the Working Group some years ago. At present, 15 different MiPs have officially subscribed, the latest one being NCE Aquaculture from Norway. However, there are still some areas missing, such as countries from the Baltic region, Iceland, Portugal and the Eastern Mediterranean. As the chairperson of the working group, Yolanda Molares (ACUIPLUS) presented the results from the survey conducted earlier this year among the MiPs. It showed their interest to engage in the discussion of common challenges, e.g. through interregional workshops, working groups and sharing of best practice.

The launch of an overall 2-page EATiP position paper, pointing out critical R&I issues to be pursued for strengthening a sustainable aquaculture growth in Europe and beyond, was taken up by the MiPs to launch a set of recommendations. Stakeholders represented by the different MiPs provided their main R&I related concerns and opportunities in freshwater, marine cold and warm water fish farming, and the culture of shellfish and other species. All responses, gathered and summed up by the different working groups, were presented to the attendants of the AGM.

In order to align the EATiP priorities with those developed by collaborative technology platforms and relevant networks, representatives from [FABRE](#) (Farm Animal Breeding & Reproduction, Ana Granados and Anna Sonesson), [Waterborne Technology Platform](#) (Jaap Gebraad) and [SCAR-FISH](#) (Dennis Lisbjerg) presented their conclusions of relevance to the aquaculture community.

Through consultative group discussions, the draft results from the EATiP Mirror Platform exercise on R&I recommendations were debated. An updated and refined version of the position paper recommendations, taking into account the attendant's feedback and suggestions, is being prepared and will be presented at Aquaculture Europe on the EU-EATiP Day (October 9, 2019).

Day two of the General Meeting started with an outline on how to move forward and how members and other interested parties can engage in upcoming EATiP activities. At the [Aquaculture Europe conference](#) "Growing from Water" in Berlin, EATiP is co-organising a session on low-trophic aquaculture with the Healthy Oceans & Seas Unit from DG RTD on October 9. The aim is to provide recommendations on how to close the critical knowledge gaps to reach a fully commercial production of seafood resources down the food chain.



Laurence Crosnier from Mercator elaborated on the purpose of the [Copernicus aquaculture joint event](#) (24-25 September in Athens), and how the aquaculture sector can benefit from the freely available marine environmental data sets, covering both physical and biological parameters. A [survey](#) has been launched in order to better customize the content of the training to the needs of the potential participants.

EATiP is involved in a set of projects, as partner, member of the advisory committees or as collaborator. Training aspects included in the EATiP EURASTIP and AQUAEXCEL2020 had been covered by John Bostock. The [EURASTiP](#) manager David Bassett (EATiP) emphasized the remaining project activities until the end of this year, especially the [Brokerage Event in Vietnam and Thailand](#) (Aug 26 – Sept 5), and the interregional exchanges of professionals and trainers. He also summarized the projects main accomplishments, including the aligning of certifications and standards in SE Asia and Europe, and the establishment of national technology platforms in each of the three target countries: THAITIP in Thailand, VINATIP in Vietnam and BATIP in Bangladesh.

[AQUAEXCEL](#) is the European project integrating aquaculture Research Infrastructures. The role of EATiP is to foster innovation and to stimulate project result uptake from potential end users. Courtney Hough (EATiP) presented how the Industry and Research Advisory Panel selects promising results and how these are showcased at Brokerage meetings. The next event is planned to take place at Aquaculture Europe on October 9 (Berlin).

Besides specific activities such as the Copernicus workshop and research and support actions, EATiP has a continuous dialogue with European Commission members, international networks, projects and organisations that are important for the shaping of aquaculture research and innovation. Some of those were invited to the EATiP AGM to explain their role and vision for the future: [AORA](#) (Bertrand le Gallic, University of Brest), [PARAFISHCONTROL](#) (Ariadna Sitjà-Bobadilla, CSIC) and [AQUA-LIT](#) (Matthias Sandra, VLIZ).

Public awareness has been identified as one of the major challenges of aquaculture in Europe, and the floor was opened to all members to provide suggestions for collaborative actions needed to stimulate industry-relevant aquaculture research and innovation in the years to come. It resulted in the following feedback:

- Communication of issues telling a positive story:
 - o Welfare (need for indicators!),
 - o Circular economy (move towards zero waste!),
 - o Resources from down the food chain (upscale production of insects, algae!),
 - o Renewable energy (need for new vessels!)
 - o Aquaculture as a tool to reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Communicators spreading the good news:
 - o Retailers having direct contact with the consumers
 - o Producers / farmers
 - o Industry: suppliers, processors
 - o Researchers and educators: need to take a pro-active role
- Communication targets:
 - o Market, media and policy makers



- NGOs: have the tools and the power
- Schools - at all levels
- Tools of communication:
 - Ambassadors: students as game-changing agents
 - School visits
 - Transparency of the industry
 - Cooperation between existing R&I projects

An [on-line survey](#) on aquaculture public outreach issues is open to all.

A final discussion engaged the attendants in how EATiP could contribute to proactively drive common priorities towards scientific, multi-stakeholder actions and projects. The push for lobbying of appropriate policy tools, alongside European organisations such as FEAP, FEAC and EMPA was also emphasized. Several suggestions for crucial topics of European interest were given:

- Standardisation across regions
- Welfare indicators
- Technologies to improve fish health and welfare (and how to make them available to SMEs!)
- Environmental interactions impact and sustainability
- Circularity:
 - Production design to reach zero waste
 - Ecosystem services removing nutrients on a large scale (not a farm-scale)
- Lowering the food chain
- Functional feeds

The proposed format of the interactions and discussions are joint, cross-regional events in member states, back-to-back to industry gatherings. These can be hosted by MiPs, taking place in collaboration with FEAP events

All presentations have been made available to the EATiP members through our joint communication platform.

EATiP wants to thank all contributors and participants for motivating us to further engage and collaborate on behalf of the aquaculture multi-stakeholder community!

Please join us by:

- Becoming a member: see [conditions](#)
- Registering for the [Brokerage event](#) in Vietnam and Thailand (25 August – 5 September), supported by the [EURASTiP](#) project
- Signing up for the [Copernicus aquaculture workshop](#) (24-25 September, Athens)
- Expressing your interest to present your project at the EU-EATiP Day at [Aquaculture Europe '19](#), focusing on the low-trophic aquaculture value chain (9 October, Berlin)
- Participating in the [aquaculture public outreach survey](#) (through the [AORA](#) project)
- Involving EATiP as a partner in your project proposals

If you have inquiries to any of the above, please contact secretariat@eatip.eu or the General Secretary alexandra@eatip.eu