

Sustainable Aquatic Food Supply

A European Workshop Generating Interdisciplinary Research Projects

General Situation

Throughout history oceans have been crucial to human civilization. They affect weather and climate, serve as a major route of human dispersion, trade and transport, provide important natural resources and add a significant contribution to recreation and tourism. In modern times, our overall treatment of the oceans, although becoming more and more important economically, is clearly non-sustainable. While utilizing the oceans in a variety of ways, man gives back only waste of various origins and impacts, and threatens natural resources by overexploitation.



Photo: Bruno de Giusti, Wikimedia Commons

A particularly important human-ocean interaction is the utilization of oceanic bio-resources for human nutrition, such as fish, seaweed and a range of others. Global seafood production, by wild catch or mariculture, is the biggest source of wild and domesticated protein in the world. Yet, the world fisheries are in a crisis due to overexploitation. The pressure on certain species is leading to evolutionary changes and is having an impact throughout the food web, leading to imbalances which may be irreversible. Mariculture, on the other hand, is looked upon critically in terms of health risks through abuse of antibiotics and other conditions threatening animal and human welfare. There is urgent need to improve understanding of the processes at work, balancing risks and benefits, and provide policy-makers with sound scientific advice on how best to operate nutrition from the sea and ensure its sustainable availability for the future.



Photo: Joachim Müllerchen, Wikimedia Commons

The marine resource sciences are a perfect example of an area in which international and interdisciplinary collaboration in research programs is of crucial importance. International research structures already exist at the European level. However, they are essentially organized along the classical scientific disciplines with little interdisciplinary interaction. For optimum benefit of the societies and a broad consideration of the full

spectrum of concerns it is, however, essential to go beyond the existing structures and expand them to an interdisciplinary level. In addition to the obvious and highly developed research activities in such disciplines as engineering, biology, physical oceanography and others also competences of the social sciences and the humanities, such as socio-economic, legal, historical and philosophical dimensions, as determining factors for organization and guidance, will have to be considered. At this time it is not clear how multidisciplinary in this sense can effectively be integrated in the research programs.

Format

In order to overcome this situation a workshop with the title “*Sustainable Aquatic Food Supply - A European Workshop Generating Interdisciplinary Research Projects*” will be organized on 11th/12th of March 2013 as a two-day meeting in the Einstein Hall of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities under the governance of a steering committee and Academy's Vice President Professor Klaus Lucas.

The steering committee will have five members of different European countries, distributed over the disciplines of sciences and humanities relevant to the topic. Participants of the workshop will be limited to about 40 (including members of the steering committee), from which 20 are established experts. The second half is constituted of young, post-doctoral scientists, both from various European countries and with consideration of the full spectrum of sciences and humanities involved. There will be one part reserved for the presentation of short position papers with suggestions for research projects. A second part will be devoted to the discussion, selection and adaption of these research topics under the governance of the steering committee with respect to suitability for interdisciplinary research. The research proposals along with the interdisciplinary discussion will be documented. In a final round of consensus among the members of the steering committee a manifest will be issued in which coherent interdisciplinary research ingredients in research programs related to *Sustainable Aquatic Food Supply* will be identified. The manifest will be the basis for the formulation of a suggested European interdisciplinary research program.

Work Organization

The workshop and its organization is financed by a grant of the Volkswagen Foundation.



The approach consists of three phases:

the preparation phase, the presentation and discussion phase, and the final compilation phase.

In the **preparation phase** European experts in the field of *Sustainable Aquatic Food Supply* are identified and invited to submit short abstracts of research proposals. The proposals are requested to explicitly address indispensable or desirable contributions

of other disciplines considered to be valuable complements of the suggested research. They will be evaluated by the steering committee, and invitations for participation in the workshop will be sent out. Participation requires presentation of a research proposal worked out in more detail, again with consideration of desirable ingredients from other disciplines. Also in this preparation phase European young scientists working in the affected fields are invited to apply for participation by an appropriate Europe wide call. The preparation phase is scheduled to extend over eight months.

In the **presentation and discussion phase** the actual workshop will be held on the 11th/12th of March 2013 in Berlin, at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

The basic program structure will be

First Day:

- 9:00 – 11:00 Meeting of the Steering Committee/Registration of Participants
- 11:00 – 13:00 First Round of Short Presentations with Discussion
- 14:00 – 16:00 Second Round of Short Presentations with Discussion
- 17:00 - 19:00 Meeting of the Steering Committee

Second Day:

- 9:00 – 13:00 Generation of Multidisciplinary Research Proposals under the Governance of the Steering Committee
- 14:00 – 16:00 Final Round of Consensus

In the **final compilation phase** a manifest will be worked out containing coherent research proposals in the field of Sustainable Aquatic Food Supply with strong interdisciplinary contents. It will be subject to reconciliation among the members of the steering committee and will represent the essential lasting result of the workshop. This phase is scheduled to last four months, and the project will thus be terminated in summer 2013.