

**SOCRATES THEMATIC NETWORK
AQUACULTURE, FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT 2008-11**

**LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME
ERASMUS
Academic Network**

13.8 Summary Report on Annual Event 2009

Participant(s)

Stefan Meyer, EAS Student Group, President Elect 2009-10

Other student panel members' absence was excused. WP13 contributions to the Annual Event (e.g. coordinated feedback to core WPs and WP13 group work) were discussed and prepared in forehand (see deliverable 13.6).

Meeting Objectives

- Presenting our own activities and achievements so far
- Meeting with the core WP representatives
- Providing feedback on the core WP reports and their activities
- Coordinating the further cooperation between WP 13 and the other WPs

Introductory presentation of WP 13 activities and achievements

In an introductory presentation, given on the start-up of the event, the following points were presented to all attendees:

1. *As a student association, our aims are to...*
 - improve interaction and communication between students and education providers
 - adequately represent students within the domain
 - ensure project outputs fit to students' requirements
 - highlight the most student-relevant topics
2. *As stakeholder representatives, we...*
 - interact with 8 core work packages
 - give feedback on WP deliverables
 - help finding the most effective way of dissemination of knowledge to and from students
3. *As student association, we...*
 - inform our members on AquaTNET activities
 - provide our network for dissemination
4. *EAS-student group organised a workshop during "Aquaculture Europe 2009" in Trondheim*
 - dedicated student workshop
 - ~30 participants from all over Europe
 - all students (BSc, MSc, PhD) from our domain
 - presentation on AquaTNET and the PhD-portal by Marieke Reuver and Peter Bossier
5. *EAS-student group will organise the following events*
 - EAS-SG student workshop 2010 in Porto, 5th-8th October
 - Student Workshop in Gödöllő, Hungary, autumn 2010 (East- and West-European Students' meeting)
6. *Our student network...*
 - continues to grow
 - makes use of social networks (e.g. Facebook)
 - links to local, already existing student networks
 - reaches beyond "aquaculture" to include fisheries and aquatic resource management as well

7. *Other activities include...*
 - running our own website, with up-to-date information on student activities
 - writing articles on the potential for student activities within our domain
 - review of AquaTNET-WP reports, comments will be given throughout the event
 - forwarding surveys for WP4
8. *Agenda for the Annual Event 2009*
 - meeting with WP-representatives and commenting on the WP reports
 - find WPs needs for student-interaction, e.g. in...
 - benchmarking surveys
 - website accessibility
 - database usage
 - approach project-members to increase student network
 - produce an event report
 - communicate “highlights” to our network
9. *We see our major challenge in...*
 - encouraging students to participate in student mobility programs
 - raise the awareness of AquaTNET and related issues in eastern European countries
 - communicating the needs of Research Institutes (WP 10) and Industry (WP 11) to help students in their curriculum planning
 - transporting the AquaTNET-project momentum to our target group

Stakeholder Interview Session

During the stakeholder – core WP interview and interaction session, WP 13 made the following comments, suggestions and points-of-criticism to the core WP representatives. Additional points that could not be communicated in the allocated time are summarized here as well. The session was hosted by Mark Norman and a general summary is provided elsewhere.

WP 1, MSc core group

- To avoid the situation, where a research institute receives an under-qualified or under-motivated MSc student, the student should be invited for a job interview and further recommendations by a supervisor should be requested.
- Regarding the MSc platform, it should be assured, that all European students, especially from the Eastern European countries, have equal possibilities to access the resource. This is not only referring to the language of the website (multi-language instructions/tutorials and FAQs should be considered) but as well to a balanced representation of institutions. In the latter case, it should be avoided, that students get the impression that this portal is only for Western European students.

Furthermore it is recommended by WP13:

- To increase awareness of WP1 activities (especially regarding the MSc portal) and to facilitate advertisement, WP1 is invited to prepare a “promo-package” (i.e. a flyer or a short text) for dissemination to the WP13 student network. Low formality and appealing design are encouraged.
- Include a synthesis of costs and fees related to each MSc program and/or module.
- Clarify terminology. It was discussed and well understood, that it is very difficult to find a clearly understandable terminology. It is suggested to highlight the most frequently used terms (e.g. module, course, program, ...) and compare their meaning across countries (e.g. as a synopsis).

WP 2, PhD core group

- The PhD portal could include ongoing PhD theses as well. In case a user of the PhD portal would like to get in touch with a thesis-author for a specific question or inquiry, the likelihood of a positive response would probably be higher if the PhD-student is still working on his thesis, as opposed to somebody who finished his/her thesis several years ago. This would additionally allow for improved awareness and networking between ongoing PhD-students working on similar/complementary topics.
- Building an inventory of available PhD courses is highly encouraged.

- WP13 offers his student dissemination network to send around links and informational (e.g. flyer or leaflet) material to increase awareness for WP2 and the PhD portal.
- WP13 endorses the publication of a “press release” article at the end of a PhD-thesis and suggests including this on the PhD portal. This kind of article can be a good skill training (handling of popular press) for the PhD candidate and an “easy input” for the PhD database (i.e. easy to read for database users).

Furthermore it is recommended by WP13:

- Clarify terminology. It was discussed and well understood, that it is very difficult to find a clearly understandable terminology. It is suggested to highlight the most frequently used terms (e.g. module, course, program, ...) and compare their meaning across countries (e.g. as a synopsis).
- PhD relevant methodologies, equipment, designs,... could be compiled in a database (e.g. like a WIKI) to provide a self-authored, ever-growing knowledge-base of interest for PhD-students from the AquaTNET-domain. This suggestion has cross-cut potential with WP1 (MSc students need similar information) and WP3 (students might want to visit a place/institution where he/she can learn such a methodology).
- WP2 is encouraged to benchmark the PhD platform with the help of WP13. WP13 can provide independent students from all disciplines of the project domain to test the platform.
- Being a PhD-student requires a high degree of managerial and coordination skills. WP13 sees a high potential for a cross-cut effort between WP2 and WP4.
- WP2 could survey their contacts from the PhD portal (newly finished PhDs) and ask them for their career experience and perspectives. This information would give current PhD students a good indicator for the situation on the academic job market in the domain.
- WP13 suggests putting more effort in an elaborated web-design of the PhD-portal to increase user-acceptance and –friendliness. A search function is needed.

WP 3, Mobility

- The mobility map needs to represent all European regions, preferably in a good balance. Otherwise, it provokes a feeling of under-representation of “my home country” and a guest/user might lose his/her interest.
- All (!) AquaTNET project partners are invited to contribute to the mobility platform and provide at least a set of minimum information on their institution/location.
- A meta search function (i.e. searching on the website of the target institution, if available) would increase user friendliness
- NGOs (e.g. WWF; idea came up after plenary talk by Eric Bernard from WWF) should be considered as potential partners in student mobility. Students could visit NGO home offices and learn about administration and policy making and/or visit farms, production sites and so on to join a certification process.
- NGOs should be included as 4th category in mobility map
- To avoid outdated of online content, that is provided by 3rd party institutions, a “shelf-life” should be included. This would automatically remove content when it is too old to be up-to-date.

Furthermore it is recommended by WP13:

- The entrance requirements for other/future institutions (i.e. not only higher education, but also commercial and NGO) to be included on the map should not be too high.
- WP3 is invited to present, if possible, the first version of the mobility map during the EAS-SG workshop at the Aquaculture Europe conference in Porto, October, 5th-8th 2010.
- RSS feed on updated content of the website.

WP 4, New generic skills and competences

- Use online survey whenever possible.
- Use mother-tongue surveys whenever possible, especially in countries with low English language availability
- In-depth interviews (face to face or online) with selected students. Contacts can be mediated by WP13.
- WP13 agrees with WP4 choice of useful generic skills, as stated in the group meeting minutes.

- WP13 invites WP4 to make further use of the student dissemination network to spread survey and so on.

WP 5 & 8, Innovation in teaching methods & ICT advisory group

- WP13 invites WP5 to benchmark FAQ and helpdesks on “our” students.
- As discussed during the session, WP13 supports a strict ban of unethical use of plagiarism in theses and supports the use of IT tools to track down criminal behaviour.
- Wp13 agrees with the industry’s claim for new employees/former students to be up to date with the most relevant IT tools. WP13 therefore encourages the use of up-to-date IT-tools in HE-teaching. WP5 should elaborate and communicate a definition of “relevant up-to-date IT-tools”.

WP 6, Positioning lifelong learning

- During the interaction session it was discussed “Why should students worry about lifelong learning?” Students, especially at an early stage of their carrier, might not see the relevance and potential of the LLL approach.
- Clarify the threefold approach to LLL as 1) training the trainers (e.g. teachers/lecturers at universities receiving training), 2) prepare students/future employees/workers/staff for LLL and 3) universities and institutions as provider of LLL.
- WP13 suggests to prepare an easy-to-understand info package about LLL for students; could for example include an exemplary CV of an academic staff member with a classical HE-carrier and elements of LLL. This topic could also be presented to a broader audience during the next EAS-SG workshop at the Aquaculture Europe conference in Porto, October, 5th-8th 2010.

Summary presentation and wrap-up of the event

During the wrap-up session of the event, the activities of WP13 during the Annual Event 2009 and subsequent activities were summarized as follows.

1. *Interactions with core work packages included...*
 - advise and comments on portals:
 - accessibility for eastern and western EU students
 - language
 - up-to-date information
 - EU-wide coverage
 - types of content
 - offer for benchmarking with students (ICT-tools, surveys, portals, ...)
 - call for short-info on core WP to disseminate to students
2. *Interactions with stakeholders and secretariat...*
 - revealed the connection between stakeholders:
 - students become researchers
 - students leave for the industry
 - students are close to consumer-concerns
 - envisioned the role of NGOs as stakeholders and potential education providers
 - encouraged a “kick-off” for student-activities on a broader scale
3. *After the meeting...*
 - we spread the word about the latest Aqua-TNET activities
 - we continue to be ears and mouth of our members/students
 - we are open to your requests and offer our support
 - we invite you to facilitate access to “your” students
 - forwarding of info-packages
 - encourage participation in student activities and events

Conclusion

The Annual Event 2009 gave a short, albeit intense, window of opportunity for interaction and exchange between representatives of WP13 and the other core and stakeholder WPs. Plenary and one-to-one discussions facilitated feedback on current achievements and development of new ideas. It was possible to underline the outstanding importance of student (target group) appropriate formulation and preparation of all



core group deliverables, including web portals and survey. It was reminded, that the student stakeholder representatives can be consulted by all core WPs to communicate and disseminate material to the student network.