

## **AQUAMED – A STRATEGY FOR AQUACULTURE RESEARCH IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

*“Setting up a multi-stakeholder platform to coordinate research activities related to Mediterranean aquaculture is crucial. It is necessary for the sector to produce sustainable, healthy, nutritious seafood and will generate employment for peripheral areas. AquaTT is looking forward to providing our expertise on stakeholder consultation and dissemination to support this dedicated group of international partners,” said David Murphy, AquaTT manager.*

The rapid development of Mediterranean aquaculture is increasingly confronted with a set of difficulties such as inadequate production systems and competitiveness, interaction and space competition with other users of a limited natural resource. It is prepared to face the major challenges of coastal zone integration, environmental concerns, and inaccurate perceptions of product quality. Aquaculture development in the Mediterranean countries is characterised by a wide range of consumer preferences, and diverse levels of maturity respect to research and development structures and capacities. Coastal zones are of strategic importance to the EU. Many European citizens live, holiday, and work in these areas. They are a major source of our food and raw materials. They provide a vital function for the transport and trade industries, and they feature some of our most valuable habitats. Consequently, a strategy for a knowledge-based development of the activity has to be implemented using a flexible and concerted approach.

The new Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) **AQUAMED** project, *The Future of Research on Aquaculture in the Mediterranean Region*, will develop a cross-functional strategy for aquaculture research in the Mediterranean region. It will develop a multi-stakeholder platform to orchestrate research activities, and it will publish a revolving implementation plan aimed at the sustainable development of aquaculture. The platform will rationalise research programming in order to avoid duplication and fragmentation of research efforts, and to stimulate long-term cooperation and coordination across policy makers, the aquaculture industry and RTD performers in the region.

The **AQUAMED** partnership had a fruitful kick-off meeting in Barcelona last week, attended by 25 participants from 15 different countries. Almost all countries in the Mediterranean region are represented, including most North-African countries, Israel, Lebanon and Turkey.

**AQUAMED** will make a real contribution to strengthening the links between main research institutes and between key stakeholders in the whole Mediterranean region. It will promote innovative Mediterranean research and focus on the most relevant issues needed to sustain aquaculture in the region. It will strengthen the EU-Mediterranean partnership in developing common projects and plan for the challenges Mediterranean aquaculture will face in the future.

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If you would like to arrange an interview with the **AQUAMED** project team, please contact Marieke Reuver, Programme Officer, to arrange a suitable time, [marieke@aquatt.ie](mailto:marieke@aquatt.ie).

**Ends**

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**Issued by AquaTT Limited, the AQUAMED dissemination project team. For further information contact Marieke Reuver, RTD Programme Officer, [marieke@aquatt.ie](mailto:marieke@aquatt.ie)**

#### **Note to Editors**

IFREMER is the project coordinator of this project on behalf of EFARO, with AquaTT as its dissemination partner. The AQUAMED project has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 244999.

**EFARO** - The European Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organisation is a non-profit organisation, created in 1989 in order to achieve greater cohesion and coordination of fisheries and aquaculture research. EFARO's main focus is the delivery of new applied knowledge in the field of scientific support for policies in the European Community and associated States.

**IFREMER** is a public institute of industrial and commercial nature which develops scientific expertise in monitoring, use and promotion of coastal seas, monitoring and optimising aquaculture products, promoting scientific advices on fisheries resources for a sustainable fishing, exploring the seafloor and the ocean biodiversity, forecasting ocean circulation, marine ecosystems evolution, and manages vessels and underwater vehicles for the French scientific community. It has been involved for 30 years in research in aquaculture and in the study of marine biology and aquatic ecosystems.

**AquaTT** is an international foundation which provides project management and training services to support the sustainable development of Europe's aquatic resources. AquaTT's mission is to bridge the knowledge gap between the dynamic R&D environments and the progressive commercial sector. AquaTT supports its target audiences through the provision of support services and through participation in, and coordination of EU projects and initiatives in the area of knowledge management including customised dissemination, education, training and technology transfer.

Detailed partner profiles are available on request.