

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

**LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME  
ERASMUS  
Academic Network**

Minutes of the WP1. - MSc Core group - at the Annual Event (year 1)

6 October 2009

Hotel Eden Roc, Sant Feliu de Guixols (Spain)

**Project Acronym:** AQUA-TNET

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## Agenda

1. Welcome and introduction
2. MSc terminology
3. Website database
4. Stakeholder interaction
5. Scope of Network
6. Next WP1 core group meeting

### List of Attendees:

Name	Institute/company	Country
Atar, Hasan Hüseyin	Ankara University	Turkey
Bothwell, John	Queen's University Belfast	UK
Galinou-Mitsoudi, Sofia	Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki	Greece
Garcia de Leaniz, Carlos	Swansea University	UK
Guary, Jean-Claude	INTECHMER	France
Jauncey, Kim	The University of Stirling	UK
Lekang, Odd-Ivar	Norwegian University of Life Sciences	Norway
Messina, Maria	University of Udine	Italy
Uzunova, Eliza	Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"	Bulgaria
Van Stappen, Gilbert	Ghent University	Belgium
Weiss, Peter	University Centre of the West Fjords	Iceland

## 1. Welcome and introduction

Odd-Ivar Lekang, work package coordinator, welcomes the participants and explains what the purpose of the meeting is. All participants are invited to present themselves: their name, affiliation, if they were involved in AquaTNET phase 1, and if they participated to any previous AquaTNET phase 2 event (e.g. WP1 core group meeting in Ås, Norway).

The WP coordinator next explains what the different topics of the meeting are: he gives a brief summary of the document '**Master degrees in aquaculture, fisheries and aquatic resource management in Europe: confusing use of basic terminology**'. This document has been compiled as a result (deliverable) of the WP1 core group meeting in Ås, Norway, 21-22 April 2009, and has circulated among the WP1 core group members for feedback. On a number of points a decision has not been taken yet by the core group members. It is the intention to submit this document now to the attendants of the meeting for decision on the few points under debate, and for final approval.

The various issues to be addressed during this meeting are:

- MSc Terminology
- Website Database
- Stakeholder interaction
- Scope of network
- Next WP1 core group meeting

## 2. MSc terminology

The discussion which took place in Ås among those members who were present there, and which has led to the draft document mentioned above, is repeated in brief. Using the same arguments which are summarized in the draft document, the participants now unanimously agree to use exclusively the term '**Master Programme**' when referring to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade education level which is the subject of this work package. This general term should cover 'Master of Science', 'Professional/Vocational Master' and any type of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade education which may be to a certain degree a mixture of both; in the activities of this WP this distinction will not be made as such, in view of the very specific national contexts in which these programmes are offered, and due to the difficulty in maintaining this subdivision throughout in a consistent way. In the website database (see point 3) these considerations should be mentioned, and it can be stressed that different programmes may have a different finality and objectives (potentially leading to PhD or not; research-oriented; industry-oriented....; see also keynote speech by Frederik De Decker at this Annual Event), without however structuring the database along the lines of this (artificial) subdivision.

The participants to the meeting also unanimously agree to use the term 'module' for any element which makes up a part of a Master programme (be it a course, unit etc.). Consequently it is generally understood that a Master Programme consists of a number of modules, each of which corresponds with a number of ECTS (typically -but not always- one module stands for 5 ECTS or a multiple of 5 ECTS; 1 ECTS generally -but not always- corresponds with 20-30 hr of student effort).

### 3. Website database

The participants to the meeting agree that the database of Master Programmes on the AquaTNET website is intended to be a major source of information, not only for students seeking information on these programmes, but also for teachers/lecturers, university administrators and others. They therefore conclude that the design and contents of this website should be the result of careful planning, meditation and deliberation within the consortium. Also the functionalities (e.g. searchability; degree of interactivity...) are of crucial importance. They therefore emphasize that representatives of WP1 and other WP's should be involved in the planning of the website from an early stage onwards.

Nevertheless, the participants also recognize that the internet presently offers a wealth of information for students and educators on all kinds of Master Programmes within the EU (e.g. EU Cordis Database; FEAP website; UK website with Master Programmes). The database of Master Programmes should therefore not try to double work which has been done elsewhere already, but to act as a portal site, providing specific information in a specific way. From this point of view, it would be good policy if the website would include links to other relevant databases (and reciprocally).

In order to guarantee **maximal consistency** and **comparability** of the information offered in the database, and to **reduce the need for constant updating**, the participants therefore agree that the Master Programmes included in the database, should offer the following fields of information (be it not necessarily in this order):

- Name of the Programme;
- Name of the degree granted at the end of the Programme;
- Name of the university offering the Programme;
- Country of university offering the Programme;
- Language(s) of teaching;
- Total ECTS of Programme + (if relevant) Total ECTS for Thesis work;
- Duration of Programme;
- URL Link to Programme's website;
- Contact email address(es) (with preference for a non-personalized email address).

The participants to the meeting recognize the importance and value of **student mobility** between different Programmes and discuss if the database should include a field of information in this respect, e.g. specifying the number of ECTS foreseen for mobility. They realize, however, that in view of the prevailing lack of uniformity and the differences between existing exchange programmes, it will be difficult to present this information in a concise and consistent way. They therefore agree that the database should give sufficient attention to this important aspect (e.g. through a headline addressing this specific point). How exactly this should be formulated and be presented on the website will be the object of future discussion once the website is in an initial state of development.

### 4. Stakeholder interaction

The participants further recognize the importance of **life-long learning (LLL)** for the curriculum, and discuss how this can be related to the creation of the database. From a LLL

point of view, it would be highly advisable to include LLL-related information in the database, e.g. what mechanisms do the universities/Programmes provide to promote LLL? Can candidate-students register for separate modules? What does industry expect from a 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle curriculum? Does the information offered in the database address the specific need(s) inherent to LLL? If yes, is the information presented relevant and sufficient? The participants conclude that it will be difficult to include this information in the database in a consistent and self-explanatory way. Nevertheless, when the website (and the database) is in its design phase, the WP1 members will seek for feedback, in particular from AquaTNET student and industry representatives, how this information can be incorporated anyhow in the database.

Within a broader context, the participants discuss on the notion 'good practice' in MSc's – though this is strictly spoken not the subject of any project deliverable. They agree that their activities focus rather on organizational and harmonization issues ("grey mechanisms") than on improving the quality of education *in se* (though it can be argued that better organization and harmonization contribute to better quality education as well).

## 5. Scope of network

The participants further discuss the scope of the Master Programmes, which could be included in the database. Actually, this discussion should be broadened to the question which institutes can become partner of the AquaTNET network.

Geographically, they agree that the database should cover Programmes, offered by universities located in EU member and associated countries.

Thematically, they acknowledge that presently the focus is very much on aquaculture, when one considers the background of the participants to AquaTNET events so far. As also 'Fisheries' and 'Aquatic Resource Management' are within the scope of the AquaTNET network, the participants agree that they will make an effort (each within his/her own national context) to obtain information on the existence (if any) of other networks in these fields of expertise, and possibly to attract new consortium members with this particular background.. Although this has not been the subject of debate as such within the AquaTNET consortium, the participants to the meeting interpret 'Aquatic Resource' as 'Aquatic **Bio**-resource', and this restriction should be applied when taking into account Master Programmes which can be included in the database.

## 6. WP1 core group meeting 2010

After some discussion about potential venues for the WP1 core group meeting in 2010, Sofia Galinou-Mitsoudi volunteers to organize the next WP1 core group meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for May 2010. Mrs. Galinou-Mitsoudi will explore the logistic and practical possibilities of organizing the meeting in Chalkidiki, in the immediate vicinity of Thessaloniki. Odd-Ivar Lekang will propose a number of tentative dates. In terms of duration, the participants agree that the following tentative timing is suitable:

- Arrival in the evening of day 0
- Full-day meeting on day 1
- Meeting a.m. on day 2; departure p.m. day 2.

The WP1 core group members decide to have a Skype on the practical planning of this meeting in February 2010. As a result of this 2010 meeting, the Report '**MSc thesis survey and recommendations**' should be produced; this issue, and recommendations on how to increase the exchange of thesis work, will be a crucial subject for the next WP1 meeting.