

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

**LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME  
ERASMUS  
Academic Network**

Minutes of the WP2, Core Group Meeting (year 1)

May 11-12, 2009

Held at Ghent University, Ghent (Belgium)

**Project Acronym:** AQUA-TNET

**Project title:** Aquaculture, Fisheries & Aquatic Resource Management TN

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## Agenda

1. Presentation and discussion of the agenda
2. Presentation of WP2 work program
3. Presentation of the outcome of WP2 in Aqua-TNET1 by Peter Bossier
4. Presentation of the outcome of ongoing generic PhD programmes such as those run by European Associations of Universities by Peter Bossier
5. Making an inventory of ongoing dedicated PhD courses in the Aqua-TNET domain
  - a. How to gather information
  - b. Timing on the development of this item
  - c. How to present data on the PhD portal
6. Phd portal
  - a. Demonstration
  - b. Discussion about the portal features
  - c. Discussion on how to build momentum around the PhD portal (includes PhD courses)
  - d. Discussion about generating portal input
7. To do list
  - a. Agenda for the next meeting
  - b. Planning the next meeting
  - c. Contribution to
    - i. Cross cutting activity
    - ii. General meeting

## List of Attendees:

Peter Bossier	Ghent University
Axel Miller	The Scottish Association for Marine Science
Giovanni Sansone	Universita degli Stude di Napoli
Bianca Maria Poli	University of Firenze
Trevor Telfer	University of Stirling
Olav Vadstein	Norwegian University of Science and technology
Caroline Van Geeteruyen	Ghent University

## Minutes WP2 Core Group Meeting

### 1. Presentation and discussion of the agenda

Peter Bossier, WP2 coordinator, welcomed the participants to the first core group meeting. The meeting started with a run through the agenda.

Tasks listed in the proposal: an overview.

1. Bring partners (University + Research Institutes/Industrial Partners) together to identify where new multidisciplinary PhD programmes are needed and where necessary create structures to enable implementation of joint research. (needs analysis)
2. Develop a common standard/structure and guidelines for PhD programmes (methodology, content, uniformity of evaluation).
3. Bring PhD supervisors together to identify common elements required by the new taught components of PhD programmes with a view to sharing courses and resources and where required, up skilling of lecturers to deliver such elements (training of trainers).
4. Building upon work done in the first phase, further develop the PhD database to include information on courses available (entry requirements, taught aspects, assessment instruments)
5. Carry out a review of current PhD methodologies/experimental design with a view to standardising techniques (e.g. statistics packages, welfare requirements etc) to allow for valid comparison and group analysis of research results.
6. Facilitate the interaction between PhD student and PhD supervisor with the aim of evaluating and possibly upgrading draft PhD programmes. (in accordance with Bologna recommendations)
7. To monitor the important work of the European Association of Universities related to PhD programmes and disseminate their outputs to network

Comments made by every task listed:

- 1: An inventory is going to be made and it is going to be decided on how this will be done.
- 2: guidelines on methodology and on uniformity of evaluation
- 3: Questions are asked about the "Training of trainers".
- 4: A start is going to be made.
- 5: The question is raised on how to fill this in.
- 6: Cross cutting exercise with the PhD students.
- 7: A start will be made also today.

Questions are asked about the "Training of trainers". Does this need an emphasis?

A remark is made that most courses are not up to standard. Focus needs to be on the training and on how to do it properly. Demands differ, so maybe we need to focus on how not to do it.

The general consent is to keep it low key.

Another opinion is that we can find no solution for this. Or it will be at least difficult.

At the start of the meeting there was some confusion concerning terminology: what is actually meant by 'courses'. By general consent it is decided and accepted that courses are actually the taught courses.

## 2. Presentation of WP2 work program

### How are the deliverables for Aqua -TNET 2 going to be presented?

#### **Deliverable 2.3:** database on web portal

It would be better to make a general document to raise awareness.

Quality assurance: is this really necessary? On the other hand something like minute taking is positive for students and lecturers. At least both parties have something to fall back on if questions or problems should arise.

There is need for a more structured way of working. The focus needs to be on the things that really matter. The quality is a priority.

At the moment there is not a good linkage with the industry needs. It would be useful to gather some information. Maybe the question could be asked at the stakeholders meeting in Ghent at May 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The general consent is that the industry is more interested in high scientific standard. But what are they actually looking for? Are they looking **in specialist or more general knowledge**? PhD's are looked at as a proof a managerial experience.

Maybe the question should be raised to the industry what they expect from the PhD students. What type of knowledge and skills are they actually looking for? Are they looking for top trained students or not? A lot if not everything depends on how to sector wants to use the students.

The perception is that the industry can keep students of a lower education and not strictly speaking PhD students.

- Consult the industry WP at the Stakeholder meeting on May 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> and ask their opinion: what is the industry really looking for: students with specialist or general knowledge.

When we look at our North American colleagues: the generic courses and structured courses is an Aqua TNET1 result going along the lines of the North American model. The feeling is that here in Europe we are playing catch-up to what they, The North American colleagues, are already doing.

Maybe we need to consider the possibility of contacting them and asking them on what they think about it.

Another option is to ask people from EATiP platform, and get their opinion.

But we do need to ask the industry what they want. We also need to make industry aware there are people out there with certain skills and that they will have those skills when they get on the job market. Unfortunately there is a realistic chance that the industry will give not one central answer,

so how can the industry help us to define the courses to get the students on the job market?

#### **Deliverable 2.7:** Comparative quality of PhD courses and need for standardisation.

Courses in welfare.

We need to look at most common courses.

- Shearing best practice.

#### **Deliverable 2.11:** Possibilities for Integration of Research Results.

Universities and research institutes need to work more closely

- Change title: possibilities for integration between universities and research institutes.

#### **Deliverable 2.12:** Feedback of Student on PhD programmes and Courses.

This will have to be organised during the cross cutting event. The first meeting will be at the stakeholder meeting at Ghent University on May 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>. During that meeting feedback will be asked.

The general feeling is that in the tasks certain elements are missing:

- The database should be simpler for students and trainers. The structural point of the network is to try to have more facilities to oblige to universities and the research centres.
- There needs to be an agreement for free movement of students between the universities so that facilities can be compared etc.
- We can try to make people aware of all the courses, this can be done by increasing visibility of all the courses. We need to start from the bottom up not only from the top down approach.

### 3 Presentation of the outcome of WP2 in Aqua-TNET1 by Peter Bossier

### 4. Presentation of the outcome of ongoing generic PhD programmes such as those run by European Associations of Universities by Peter Bossier

*EUA-CDE EUA council for Doctoral Education.*

This programme will be monitored. We are going to look specifically at our domain. We can learn from them.

- Peter is going to monitor what is happening on their website. And produce the report on that basis.
- Luc François will be contacted by Peter Bossier for the possibilities of presenting the outcome of Aqua TNET at the EUA-CDE.
- A PowerPoint presentation will be given at the annual meeting.

### 5 Making an inventory of ongoing dedicated PhD courses in the Aqua-TNET domain

- a. How to gather information
- b. Timing on the development of this item
- c. How to present data on the PhD portal

#### **Inventory of the ongoing PhD courses**

Stirling University in Scotland: there are two sorts of courses: masters modules for specific skills training. And Masters structured in course skills or advanced courses with more specific courses.

The problem is that: in Scotland's credit system the level for masters is level 11 and PhD is level 12. Master modules would be usable across Europe.

In Norway a PhD student can take master course outside their course. And not all subjects are open to PhD students. The course will be more a generic overview subject. It is more informal when these courses are offered. The master's courses of Stirling are 2 weeks.

University of Florence in Italy: they have compulsory courses and specific courses for doctorate: they are classified as larger courses. So maybe courses of masters could be included but not as a credit basic thing. PhD students need to get the 2<sup>nd</sup> level.

An important factor is that ECTS are not used across Europe in PhD studies.

We need to make a distinction between those courses and the boarder courses that take months.

- **Need to focus on intensive and module based courses**
- **Gather information on those types of courses.**

The **general conclusion** is that a European wide network of courses is needed. There is also need for more movement of students and trainers between institutes. But for that to be able to exist there needs to be a clear ECTS basis across Europe (like the work TUNING is doing); because this will increase the mobility between the institutes in Europe. But this is and will be a very difficult task. That is way maybe we can at least try and make this database where all the courses are noted.

### **How are we going to gather the info? How will the data be collected?**

To make a start every core member will produce the basic information. It has also been decided that every core member should gather information in their own country. In order to make this task easier a standard mail will be written. The mail will consist of a short text so that the mail can be spread out in the 9 countries of WP2. Later on we will look at the other institutes of Aqua TNET. When exactly this will happen is not decided.

The content of e-mail:

- The motivation will be: to increase mobility of PhD students.
- To improve transparency
- To give visibility to the courses
  - Need for info on the intensive and module based courses
  - What is the language is the course: English or mother tongue?
  - National evaluation in credits, do we need to include this?
  - Give the national criteria.
  - What is available to whom? (Mapping)
  - Need for general info on the status today
  - Link to aqua TNET PhD portal

What will happen to the information that the institutes will give? And when are they going to get feedback? Will institutes have a way to change input? For example when information changes of that institute, will the institute be able to keep it updated? Everything needs to be done so that as much data as possible can be collected. Are there programs at this moment that will fund such projects for students to travel to another country? It is decided that this information is not needed now in this mail.

- **A draft of the proposed e-mail will be written and approved by members.**
- **Every core member will stat be producing the basic information and also start gathering information in their own country.**

**What information** is needed in the database?

The key thing will be to keep it simple, so that it will really be filled in by institutes. The basic information has to be in the data base. For example core info page and a page with links to all the institutes.

As Work package 1 was working along the same lines in their first core group meeting but then on MsC level, their input was copied.

- **New list with information for Programmes:**
  1. Name University / Higher Education Institution
  2. Name/Title of Program
  3. Country

4. Language(s)
5. Credits (total ECTS)
6. (Subject area): options should only be 1. Aquaculture, 2. Fisheries, 3. Aquatic Resource Management, 4. Other (please specify)
7. Educational Form (Taught, Research, or Other)\*
8. Link to Program home page

This template will be taken from Work Package 1 and will be modified to make it suitable for PhD. This will be done **after having asked permission** from WP 1 so that both MsC en PhD databases have the same layout. This then will create a general overview of all MsC and PhD courses in Europe.

Additions will be made to the original MsC list:

**Extra information to be added to list of information:**

- When will the course start?
- Credits/**hours/ duration** of the course.
- The timeframe of the course.
- The responsible person with contact details
- Abstract of the course: max of 200 words.
- Availability for distance education.
- The cost of the education.

**Information to be left out:**

- Leave out 6. (Subject area): options should only be 1. Aquaculture, 2. Fisheries, 3. Aquatic Resource Management, 4. Other (please specify)

- **Peter Bossier is going to contact WP1 leader Odd-Ivar Lekang on how their portal is going to look. So that both portals will get a sort of Aqua-TNET branding.**
- The set deadline: we need to get the website ready and know how to build it: by September, before the annual meeting.
- A template of the database will ready for the annual meeting in October.
- The letter will be sent in early September. Before that we need to make sure that we have a draft of the letter and a draft of the information.
- Need for an explanation on the website on what needs to be filled in: some sort of information bubble could be used?
- **First input on website by annual meeting.**

The next question asked was: are we building a new website or are we keeping the existing one. The decision was made to keep on using the current website and database.

The link to the PhD portal needs to be more visible, now it is at the end of the page. We need to look at possible ways on how to improve this: getting on the first page of Google can be used.

## 6. Phd portal

- a. Demonstration
- b. Discussion about the portal features
- c. Discussion on how to build momentum around the PhD portal (includes PhD courses)
- d. Discussion about generating portal input

Prof Peter Bossier gave a presentation of the current PhD portal of Aqua-TNET 1.

Unfortunately the input on the current portal is extremely low. At the moment the portal has only 2 universities. How is information put on the website? If somebody sends information it is put on the website: the uploading is done by Ghent University.

How to do it for Aqua TNET 2?

The current data base is not searchable; you need to go through everything, and what will happen when it will get too big? Are there ways to modify this?

Could we work with a password, because now it is open to everybody? People outside of Aqua-TNET can also see this info, so maybe work with a password for them, because there could be sensitive information in the PhD thesis.

Although a PhD thesis is public with an ISBN number in Belgium. In the UK copies of the thesis are put on library computer. And in Norway the PhD thesis is also open document with ISBN number. To solve this we could just have an abstract of the thesis next to the title on the portal.

Students will be able to submit what they want: the title with the full or abstract thesis or a presentation of it. The most important thing is that people submit and that an abstract should be a minimum.

Should it be uploadable by others? Send it by e-mail and submit, or people can submit themselves?

**The database needs to be updated regularly:** automatically updateable: with a profile for students and they have to keep it updated, they are responsible for it themselves.

How popular will it be? Or is it? It is probably not only students who will consult the website. It is a useful portal.

What will the expenses be for maintaining this portal? Will this be possible for a long period? Maybe we need to avoid a website that needs constant updating, it should be kept it low maintenance. We can opt for a website where you submit once then it is finished.

➤ Just keep it in a simple database:

- **Abstract of the thesis and/or**
- **Thesis: the publication and/or**
- **The presentation**

Presented as downloadable

An abstract of the thesis should be an absolute minimum.

Certain changes will be made: a content table will be introduced and there will be no longer curriculum vitae of the student on the portal.

The website needs to be updated: this could be mentioned in the newsletter.

### **How easy is it to upload from home?**

How will we make people do it? How are they going to upload this information?

We will not go to the supervisor but the students.

People cannot be forced to put content on the portal. So how will we reach these people?

1<sup>st</sup> step: Maybe start contacting **core members** so that that put doc on. Upload things from their own university. Momentum is created. **For General meeting: we will ask for PhD thesis's of the last 3 years.**

2<sup>nd</sup> step: they could contact students to make it more popular.

Work with password access to core group members to upload their information. But people are simply not responding to put information on the portal. How can this problem be easily solved? (Blackmail) Maybe an option is to put people under some pressure to submit information.

General promotion of the thesis: we could work with a mail link to request a thesis that is located at a certain university. Or we can do it with a direct link to the thesis which is at the university.

- **We will contact core group members that the PhD thesis of the (minimum) last 3 years should be uploaded by the general meeting. Then we will start reaching out.**

The **target** of the portal is specific aquaculture: put in newsletters in aquaculture magazines, run demo's on conferences of EAS, contact people who are interested in fisheries and aquatic resources, contact the whole domain of Aqua TNET, ICIS magazine, ...

The most important is that PhD students are contacted. How to do this?

**The same site should have all the courses and the thesis: make a general site for all PhD related items in Europe.**

Right words in the metadata so Google picks it up fast: need to be on the first page of Google.

Apply for money for the future so that there are funds to keep the website running.

**To put a link of the student organisations on the portal (EAS SG website)**

Need for a dynamic portal

In the future we could offer the links to e-courses on the portal/website.

## 7 To do list

- a. Agenda for the next meeting
- b. Planning the next meeting
- c. Contribution to
  - i. Cross cutting activity
  - ii. General meeting

Planning for the **next meeting**:

We will discuss certain aspects before the annual event and after. The time needed after the annual meeting will be used to do a certain debriefing (Cross-fertilisation).

The **cross cutting event**: students, industry /research industry and consumers.

We will ask the cross cutting work packages what we can offer.

What do we need to know from them?

Industry: What kind of qualification are they looking for?

Students: Present students with our plans and ask for feedback: what would make it attractive for them?

Consumers: A lot of confusion on the health aspect: 2 main questions: is fish safe and what health benefits?

Are there educational elements that students can inform the consumer on?

**Looking out for: General communication skills are they included in the courses, that then needs to added to the portal: presentations etc. Some sort of press release should be given at the end of their education. Or even better write a feature article: on how to communicate this to consumer.**

- **We should start thinking about introducing some sort of press release by students at the end of their education.**

Relate to the consumers that students can follow general communication skills so that information can be given.

Use in house press release to send out information on WP2, apparently journalists do pick up on this.

What to present at the **annual event**?

- A short update on EUA activities.
- PhD portal presentation
- First input by annual meeting
- Template of the website ready
- Short summary on WP2 of Aqua TNET1
- Program of the current WP2
- Outcome of the cross cutting meetings/events

**To do list:**

We should ask WP13, the student association, how they see the updating of the website. We can ask them to give input on how to improve it or what they would like to see changed.

We need to make a draft of and send out the e-mail to ask partners to collaborate in the PhD portal.

At a later stage we could also start including extra information e.g. the e-courses that student could follow.

Maybe we should also raise the question of improving mobility to work package 3.

*Another important aspect:* the relation with research institutes:

What with PhD students who want to go to research institutes?

They, members of research institutes, can be a promoter (2<sup>nd</sup>) on a thesis. If they have had a hand in the training of the students it is a logical step that they can be employed by the research institute. It is a way of recruitment. But what will their involvement be PhD courses? The recruitment is different from the industry. Research is rather more specialised.

And how can we get them involved. At this moment there is no knowledge of any research institutes being involved in the PhD courses.

Should we involve regulators? Like in Scotland: the planning authority and CIPA: Central Environment and Protection Agency. Because aquaculture is getting bigger and bigger and maybe they need to be involved as well. There is a lack of knowledge coming from the regulators. This might be more relevant for WP1.

The portal:

How to change to a website where everybody can upload?

It would be technically more difficult. If it is possible expert help would be needed.

The website is currently located at UGent at the amount of people that are allowed access is restricted by UGent regulations. The reason why the site is located at UGent is because it was not really user friendly.

Another important issue is: will there be money available for the development of the website?

- **We need to check with AquaTT what the possibilities are: move our site to their part of the site or is that not possible?**