Workpackage 5/8 Meeting

Hotel Dom Pedro Golf, Vilamoura, Portugal
8th September 2011

Minutes

Present: John Bostock (JB), Jean Dhont (JD), Mike Moulton (MM), Juhani Pirhonen (JP), Bernd Ueberschär (BU), Sónia Seixas (SS), Gonçalo Santos (GS) and Clive Dove(CD). Apologies were received from, Jouni Heikkinen and Ryan Kaye (RK).

WP5/8 Training Workshop

The group reviewed the outcome of the previous day's workshops. It was agreed these had been very successful and well received. JD asked for copies of any further materials to be made available to the participants to be sent to him to upload onto the linked website for the event. The need for a longer-term solution was discussed. JB explained that a strict limit on file size prevented use of the project website for the distribution of audio, video or other large files.

The possibility of using Lime Survey to conduct a feedback questionnaire was discussed and BU agreed to set up a small survey for this. JB also added the facility for feedback to be added via the PBWorks Wiki.

Future of WP5/8 & sustainability

Following news that a new phase of Aqua-tnet will be funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme, the group discussed continuation of the WP5 theme within the new project. JB explained that ICT in teaching will now be part of a broader workpackage on innovation in lifelong learning, that will also encompass lifelong learning, curriculum development, and innovations in teaching and assessment. Bernd Ueberschär will lead the sub-group on ICT and Margaret Eleftheriou will lead the overall workpackage. All current members of WP5/8 will be welcome to join either the new workpackage or one of the others if they considered that to be more appropriate. Mike Moulton would be assisting Odd-Ivar Lekang in Workpackage 1 (MSc Course Cooperation).

It is anticipated that the resources developed to support innovative teaching and especially the use of ICT/Web 2.0 tools will be retained and further enhanced in the new project. Deliverables can be summarised as follows:

- Demonstration, development and sharing of Learning objects; Specifically the diagnostic language tool/games developed under the aqua-tnet/Pescalex projects will be demonstrated and decisions taken as to further development across the network

- Demonstration/presentation of choice of innovative ICT technology, diagnostic tools, learning objects and other digital resources at Annual event workshops

- Creation/development of online framework for resource sharing

Discussions with stakeholder groups

Developments in e-learning and blended learning were discussed with students. After initial enthusiasm they considered aspects of e-learning to be useful, but valued face-to-face contact with tutors and other students most of all. Video material was seen as a useful supplement to lectures, but not a complete replacement. Frustration was expressed at technical obstacles such as requiring too long to obtain passwords to access particular materials or unavailability of materials at times when students wanted to access them. Some also cited bad experiences with video conferencing when call quality was inadequate etc. A different observation was that lecturers are often research scientists who may need training and support to also be effective teachers.

The issue of digital literacy was raised, and whether students would prefer to be using podcasts and videos to submit assignments rather than more traditional essays. This had not been much considered and students had no direct experience of this approach. With respect to industry stakeholders, it was noted that many farms now had quite sophisticated communication facilities, including Internet access at most sites and video conferencing tools. However, this does not necessarily mean they have good IT skills or could readily use the facilities for e-learning. Nevertheless, it was agreed that aquaculture is predominantly a rural and often remote occupation where e-learning should offer significant benefits. The need for links with workpackage 6 on Lifelong Learning was highlighted. They had found that upskilling workers was not always seen as advantageous by employees. However, broader studies had shown significant benefits and these need to be explained to employers.

A FEAP representative highlighted recent discussions at their meetings which had identified a number of "Grand Challenges". These included:

- recruitment and retention of staff (especially for small businesses)
- trends towards consolidation due to smaller returns
- food security and food import prices
- feed ingredient prices
- access to freshwater (need for novel approaches and strategic development)
- climate change and risk of exotic diseases

- how aquaculture fits with offshore (renewable) energy
- coastal zone management (including social approaches and risk analysis approach)
- sustainability
- Need to consider the whole aquaculture value chain, not just bioeconomy
- Need to engage with and communicate with schools

It was agreed that aqua-net could play a useful role in engaging industry, academia and students in these issues. This is a theme that could be taken forward in the next project.