

“AQUALABS”

Advanced laboratory training courses in aquaculture for early-stage researchers

The aquaculture industry has seen rapid expansion over the past decade in many parts of Europe. With this expansion has come the development of new technologies, and thus the need for a highly skilled and specialised workforce. Today, current and potential workers are required to have recognised qualifications, to be flexible with regard to the work functions they can carry out, and to be mobile within the industry.

The AQUALABS project aimed to provide state-of-the-art advanced training for younger researchers in specific areas of aquaculture.

The project was supported by the European Commission Marie Curie Actions - Human resources and mobility programme, coordinated by AquaTT, endorsed by the industry, and hosted at European centres of excellence.

Its objectives were: to train young researchers in state-of-the-art key scientific techniques, with an emphasis on practical skills and field experience; to provide hands-on experience of new aquaculture systems and laboratory techniques; to present an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to each of the subject areas (developmental, biochemical, physiological, nutritional, environmental and practical); to convey and discuss new philosophies which can be used to enhance subject understanding; to study topical and contemporary issues, with particular emphasis on industrial aquaculture; to provide advanced knowledge on new technological and management issues in aquaculture; to facilitate interactions between young researchers and leading scientists; to enhance the exchange of information between students and staff from different European institutions (European Added Value).

Under the Fifth Framework Programme, a series of four events was organised in 2001, covering the following topics:

- Quality in Fish Products
- Biology of Fish Larvae Production
- Molecular Biology and Ecology in Aquaculture
- Design and Operation of Recirculation Systems

In FP6, six more training courses were put together, which were held over the period 2005-2006 and treated the following subjects:

- Molecular Biology and Ecology - University of Kuopio (Finland)
- Freshwater Aquaculture and the Environment - HAKI (Hungary)
- Fish Welfare - University of Insubria (Italy)
- Quality in Fish Products - University College Cork (Ireland)
- Aquatic Animal Disease Diagnostics - University of Stirling (UK)
- Recirculation Technologies - Wageningen University (The Netherlands)

Project acronym:

AQUALABS

Full title of Project:

Advanced laboratory training courses in aquaculture for early-stage researchers

EU contract number:

013325

Web-site:

www.aquatt.ie/aquattinitiatives/currentinitiatives/aqualabs.php

Coordinator

Mr. David Murphy
AquaTT UETP Ltd.
P.O.BOX 8989
Dublin 2
Ireland

Phone: +35 31 8747088

Fax: +35 31 8747090

Email: david@aquatt.ie

**“IN THE 2005/6 SERIES, 230
YOUNG RESEARCHERS
FROM MORE THAN 40
COUNTRIES PARTICIPATED
IN AND BENEFITED FROM
AQUALABS”**

The seventh and final AQUALABS Training event was the biggest so far with 52 participants. This three day student workshop provided an opportunity for young researchers to share experiences, explore new fields and learn new skills.

Each AQUALAB was a collaborative effort between four or more European Universities, and allowed up to 30 participants to be trained by leading scientists in the latest practical and field techniques. Courses were hosted at European 'Recognised Centres of Excellence' i.e., institutions with specific expertise in the subject area and possessing the current best-available knowledge, generating key research findings and having fully-equipped facilities relating to the area. Each course lasted from 5 to 7 days in duration and included a combination of theory, hands-on laboratory sessions, practical exercises, field-work and site visits. All courses were significantly oversubscribed, demonstrating the need for this

type of event. Selected participants who met the EC young researcher eligibility criteria received a grant to cover up to 100% of their travel, subsistence and course fees. On each course, there were also non-funded places available for participants from industry. Partner institutions were able to claim for 100% of their expenses for hosting the events.

The AQUALABS courses and workshop promoted mobility, affording young researchers a unique opportunity to visit international centres of excellence and network with fellow researchers, leading researchers, and keynote speakers. The relationships developed through the project may lead to more international collaboration & networking, and ultimately contribute to a sustainable industry.



PARTICIPANTS TO THE FINAL AQUALABS TRAINING EVENT IN ORANMORE, CO. GALWAY, IRELAND. SOURCE: AQUALABS WEB SITE.