

DISCUSSION MATERIAL ON STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

1. Collaboration with non-NACEE CEE countries

Six countries of the Central and Eastern European region are still not members of NACEE: Albania; Macedonia; Montenegro; Serbia; Slovakia and Slovenia. There has been interest in joining NACEE from Albania, Macedonia and Serbia, and detailed information about NACEE have been sent to these countries. A letter to Mr. Lufter Xhuveli, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration in Albania was sent on 17 January 2006 by request of the Fishery Directorate of Albania. However, no response has been received so far.

NACEE is open for institutions from these countries, however, instead of active encouragement and persuasion, it is more advisable to maintain and develop exchange of information and to involve relevant institutions in various R&D and training programs organised by NACEE or NACEE member institutions.

Very few collaborations between institutions in NACEE and non-NACEE countries have been reported according to the following:

- Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Varna Branch of Freshwater Fisheries, Bulgaria – Hydrobiological Institute, Ohrid, Macedonia
Exchange of information.
- Research Institute for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Irrigation (HAKI), Szarvas, Hungary – University of Belgrad, Faculty of Agriculture, Serbia
Development of an experimental farm in the framework of a trilateral agreement between University of Belgrade, Serbia; HAKI, Hungary and Akvaforsk, Norway.

2. Collaboration with other international networks and organisations

Of the institutes and organisations that have been identified as potential partners of NACEE (Akvaforsk, AquaTT, EAS, EC DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, EFARO, EUROFISH, FAO, FEAP, IUCN, NACA), there has been regular exchange of information with EAS, EUROFISH, EC DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs and NACA). A joint project proposal has been elaborated in the frame of FP6 together with EAS and EUROFISH. Although the proposal did not get funding, HAKI together with EAS and EUROFISH decided to rewrite the proposal and resubmit it again next year. NACEE has been acknowledged as an important aquaculture network in Europe by the EC DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs that provided financial support to the organisation of the “Aquaculture in Eastern Europe” Workshop during the AQUA 2006 Conference and Exhibition.

NACA invited the representative of NACEE to the Meeting of NACA Lead Centres in Bangkok, 27-28 November 2006. The attendance at this Meeting would offer a good opportunity to continue dialogue with competent experts of NACA and NACA member institutions regarding the planned collaboration between the two networks. The collaboration between NACA and NACEE would be an excellent example of inter-regional collaboration, which is also encouraged by FAO Committee of Fisheries Aquaculture Sub-Committee.

Discussions with AquaTT also started recently. Areas of collaboration wherein AquaTT would be interested include proposal development for upcoming EC calls, education and training networking and delivery and sharing of resources, e.g. webtools. Another possibility for linkages between NACEE and AquaTT is AQUA-TNET; the EC funded Socrates Thematic Network for Aquaculture, Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management, which will become more active over the next six months. A leaflet on AQUA-TNET is distributed among the participants of the Third Directors' Meeting of NACEE.

Representatives of EAS (A. Lane), EFARO (A. Dosdat) and NACEE (L. Varadi) had a meeting recently where a preliminary proposal of trilateral collaboration was elaborated (Annex 1). According to the new proposal, an Aquaculture Board would be formed within EFARO with the participation of EAS and NACEE. The proposal should be accepted first both by the EFARO and NACEE Boards. Then the Secretary of EFARO (A. Dosdat) together with representatives of EAS and NACEE will draft a position paper on the need for this organisation within European aquaculture research and will present it to the Commission. The position paper will include its make-up, its terms of reference and the most suitable tool to support its operation by January 2007. Following this consultation, the most appropriate tool to support operations will be selected and a proposal will be made by the middle of 2007. The involvement of NACEE in the EFARO network would be a major step forward the integration of Central and Eastern European institutions into the European Research Area.

There has been a very close collaboration with FAO, and, in particular, the Inland Water Resources and Aquaculture Unit (FIRI) from the founding of NACEE. The financial support of FAO as contribution to the organisation of the annual Directors Meeting is indispensable for the operation of the network and it is hoped that FAO will have a chance to continue this support in the future. FAO liaison status has been given to the Coordinating Institution of NACEE, the publication of the reports of the Directors' Meetings, the logistic support for NACEE events, the written and electronic information received from FIRI mean great value for NACEE. The FAO Sub-Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe also provides valuable assistance to NACEE in the operation of the web page as a part of the "Agroweb" network, and the Sub-Regional Office also provides financial assistance for specific activities occasionally. Collaboration with FAO as strategic partner of NACEE has a determinant role in the operation of the network.

3. Possible collaboration with neighbouring countries

Potential NACEE membership is limited to 20 Central and Eastern European countries (Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine). However, due to similarities in resources, history, culture and socio-economic conditions, the neighbouring countries deserve attention when regional aquaculture development is discussed. Caucasian countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) are considered CEE countries by the classification of FAO Sub-Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe, although they are not CEE countries according to NACEE classification. These countries and also Kazakhstan and Turkey are in a very special "intermediate" position since they are generally considered neither part of the NACEE, nor part of the NACA region. While Iran is a new member of NACA, Turkey is an accession country to the European Community. Apart from geographical, political and socio-economical classifications and regionalisation the common problems and perspectives in aquaculture make necessary to maintain good professional link and neighbourhood between NACEE countries and non-NACEE neighbouring countries.

NACEE member institutions have different level of collaboration with countries neighbouring NACEE region, with special regard to the Eastern neighbours (Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkey). Regarding the development of collaboration with neighbouring countries, most of the NACEE member institutions (who responded to this particular question of the discussion material) agree that these countries may be eligible for NACEE membership, although concern has also been expressed that excessive enlargement would make the operation of the network difficult.

The Board of Directors may decide on the following options as far as collaboration with neighbouring countries is concerned:

- allow them full membership;
- allow them associate membership (when representatives of institutions are invited to meetings and various events, but associate members do not pay membership fee and have no voting rights);
- promote the development of collaboration with these countries on a network and institutional level without formal membership.

The establishment of a membership/partnership committee could also be considered, which would deal with membership issues of different categories such as:

- institutions in countries of the NACEE region (NACEE members and not-members);
- institutions in countries of Eastern neighbouring countries;
- institutions in Western Europe and the Mediterranean;
- international organisations and networks.

EFARO, EAS AND NACEE: MORE FOCUS ON AQUACULTURE

Rationale

One of the requirements of the EC strategy for aquaculture development in Europe (COM511, 2002) is to strengthen the research supporting this by more cooperation and coordination of aquaculture R&D in Europe.

Although EFARO is a European network of national fisheries and aquaculture research organizations, the main focus is traditionally on fisheries science. In this field it plays an important role in addition to the broader network of ICES, binding together the national institutes that play a key role (authority) in the national research programmes.

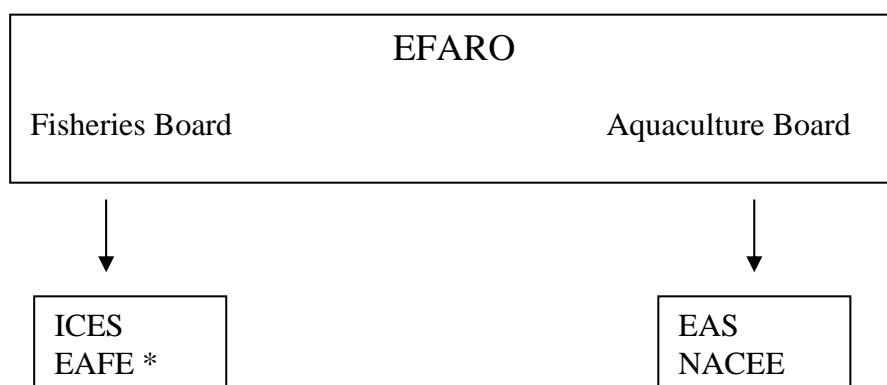
European aquaculture R&D is more loosely organized, mainly through an open scientific network of EAS (European Aquaculture Society). EFARO institutes have no structured cooperation in the field of aquaculture sciences. With an increasing importance of aquaculture in the European (shell)fish production, partly replacing fisheries production, the national governments require EFARO institutes to focus more on aquaculture research. It is effective to use the existing structure of cooperation amongst EFARO institutes to strengthen their position in this field.

Objective & approach

One of the recommendations of the EFARO workshop “Diversification in Aquaculture”, Budapest, 17-20 February 2005, was to create a special network for aquaculture research by national institutes under the umbrella of EFARO, that would work in close connection to the broader scientific society EAS.

The proposed approach is to form an **aquaculture board within EFARO** and including those EFARO institutes with an interest in aquaculture research, based generally on representation by EAS, but also in partnership with NACEE and therefore including national institutes from central and Eastern Europe, in order to organize a structured cooperation comparable to the EFARO cooperation in fisheries research.

The proposed organisation is as follows:



* European Association of Fisheries Economists

The Aquaculture Board would be formed by EFARO aquaculture institute representatives, the EAS Director and/or Board members and the NACEE Chairperson and representative.

Their principal objectives will be:

1. Exchange of experiences and knowledge in aquaculture R&D along various axes:
 - From freshwater to marine systems
 - From extensive to intensive systems
 - From west to east Europe and from north to south Europe (systems)
 - From fundamental research to practice.
2. Providing input from the research community (institutes and university sectors) on research needs and priorities.
3. Acting as a counterpart from governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies and industry (farmers/producers; retailers and feed industry).

Tools

Several tools are available within Europe to support the functioning of this Board. These are:

1. Concerted Action (between institutes)
2. ESF Eurocores Programme
http://www.esf.org/esf_activity_home.php?language=0&domain=0&activity=7
3. ERANET (national governments) <http://cordis.europa.eu/coordination/era-net.htm>
4. Technical Platform (industry) http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms/home_en.html
5. COST (countries) <http://www.cost.esf.org/>

Follow-up

After the meeting of Laszlo Varadi (LV), Alistair Lane (AL) and Antoine Dosdat (AD) (Secretary of EFARO) during the Conference «Future Fish» in Trieste, Italy on 15 September 2006, it was agreed that the following actions would be taken to promote further development:

- AD will send AL a brochure on fisheries and aquaculture R&D for information of the EAS Board.
- EFARO, the EAS Board and NACEE Directors will be proposed to approve “in principle” the establishment of the EFARO Aquaculture Board. This will be done in September-October 2006.
- According to this agreement, AD, (AL and LV) will compile a basic document on the necessity of this organisation for European aquaculture research and present it to the European Commission. The document will contain the history of its establishment, the by-laws and the most convenient funding mechanism. January 2007.
- After this consultation, the most applicable mechanism for the support of the activity will be selected and a proposal will be made. Mid-2007.