

**REPORT OF THE
THIRD MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF THE
NETWORK OF AQUACULTURE CENTRES IN CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE
Dubrovnik, Croatia, 28–30 September 2006**

1. The Research Institute for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Irrigation (HAKI), Szarvas, Hungary,¹ as Coordinating Institution of the Network of Aquaculture Centers in Central-Eastern Europe (NACEE) organized the Third Meeting of NACEE Directors in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 28–30 September 2006. The meeting was hosted by the University of Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik, Croatia² and partly supported by the Aquaculture Management and Conservation Service, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, Rome.³ The main objectives of the meeting were to review the last year's progress of NACEE in general and its working groups, in particular, to decide on relevant organizational, technical and financial issues, and to find ways to improve collaboration, with special regard to joint project activities. The detailed programme and prospectus of the meeting are included in Annex 1.
2. The meeting was attended by 50 participants representing 36 institutions from 15 countries, and by representatives of EUROFISH⁴ and FAO (Annex 2 provides the list of participants).
3. The meeting was opened by Mr Branko Glamuzina, representing the host organization, the University of Dubrovnik. He gave a short description of the University of Dubrovnik and welcomed all participants at the meeting. Then the floor was given to Mr Laszlo Varadi, Director of HAKI, the NACEE Coordinating Institution. In his speech, Mr Varadi said few words on the growth of the network and its increasing international recognition. Mr Uwe Barg greeted the participants on behalf of Mr Jiansan Jia, Chief of FAO's Aquaculture Management and Conservation Service. He highlighted that FAO considered NACEE the result of a major effort by its members in the development of their network and there was hope that NACEE would develop like the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA)⁵ in Asia.
4. The participants were greeted by Mr Ivan Katavic, Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Forestry of Croatia, who gave an overview of aquaculture trends in Croatia and the changes that took place within the last two decades. In his remarks (Annex 3), he noted that today a new approach to aquaculture was required with more concern of environmental and health issues, traceability and fish welfare. He emphasized the vital importance of regional and international cooperation for the development of Croatian aquaculture and expressed his hope that Croatia would benefit from its involvement in NACEE. Finally, the Deputy Minister wished everyone a pleasant stay in Dubrovnik.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

5. Since the Second Meeting of NACEE Directors in September 2005,⁶ four more institutions joined NACEE:

- Center for Experimental and Applied Biology, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina;⁷

¹ <http://www.haki.hu/english/default.htm>

² http://www.unidu.hr/index_eng.php

³ <http://www.fao.org/fi>

⁴ <http://www.eurofish.dk>

⁵ <http://www.enaca.org>

⁶ The Report of the Second Meeting is available at: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/009/a0629b/a0629b00.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.pmf.unsa.ba>

- Department of Fish Culture, Szent István University, Gödöllő, Hungary;⁸
- Division of Ichthyobiology and Fisheries, Warsaw Agricultural University, Warsaw, Poland,⁹ and
- Faculty of Ecology, Belaya Tserkov State Agricultural University, Belaya Tserkov, Ukraine.¹⁰

The directors or representatives of the newly admitted institutions gave brief presentations of their mandate and activities.

6. Three institutions expressed their willingness and commitment to join NACEE during the meeting. After a brief introduction of their activities and structure, the Board of Directors unanimously supported their membership and welcomed their participation in the network. The new NACEE members are:

- Institute of Marine Biology, University of Montenegro, Kotor, Montenegro;¹¹
- Laboratory of Biotechnologies, Astrakhan State University, Astrakhan, Russian Federation;¹²
- Ukrainian State Institute for Projecting Fisheries Enterprises (“Ukrribproekt”), Kiev, Ukraine.

Summary information on these three institutions is included in Annex 4. NACEE herewith increased its membership to 38 institutions from 15 countries.

PROGRESS REPORT AND FINANCIAL REPORT BY THE NACEE COORDINATING INSTITUTION

7. The session was chaired by Mr Branko Glamuzina (University of Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik, Croatia). During the session, Mr Varadi presented the Progress Report and the Financial Report for 2005 and 2006 of HAKI, the Coordinating Institution of NACEE. Five major topics were touched in the Progress Report:

- expansion of NACEE, admission of new members;
- granting of FAO liaison status to NACEE;
- participation of NACEE and its member institutions in EU projects;
- organization of a workshop on Aquaculture in Eastern Europe during the AQUA 2006 Conference in Florence, Italy; and
- networking and exchange of information.

8. As the fiscal year 2006 is not over yet, the presented Financial Report was only preliminary, the final one will be sent to NACEE Directors in the beginning of 2007. Mr Varadi brought forward the negative balance of 2005 as compared to the positive balance of 2006 due to the higher membership fees. NACEE members had all agreed to the increase of the membership fee from 100 to 300 euros. The Progress Report is attached in Annex 5.

9. Both the Progress Report and Financial Report were discussed and adopted by the Directors.

⁸ <http://www.mkk.szie.hu/dep/halt/English/index2.htm>

⁹ <http://animal.sggw.pl/jednostki/piir/piir.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.btsau.kiev.ua>

¹¹ <http://www.ibmk.org/indexe.htm>

¹² <http://www.ei.aspu.ru>

REPORTS ON THE PROGRESS OF NACEE WORKING GROUPS

10. The discussion of the four Working Group progress reports was chaired by Mr Tomislav Treer (University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia¹³). Mrs Lidiya Vasilyeva from the “BIOS” Research and Production Center for Sturgeon Breeding, the Lead Institution of the “Sturgeon Culture” Working Group gave a detailed overview of the research activities, material and human resources and existing international collaboration of the group members. A special attention was paid to suggestions for different forms of cooperation: (1) joint research; (2) economic collaboration; and (3) information exchange and advanced training. Twelve research priorities were identified. The report is available in Annex 6.1.

11. Mr Andrey Bogeruk (Federal Centre of Fish Genetics and Selection¹⁴, the Lead Institution of the “Carp Genetics” Working Group) presented the last year progress and suggested a number of topics that should be discussed and decided on during the present meeting. He proposed to modify the name of the group into “Fish Genetics” to reflect the full scope of research by this group. The full report is available in Annex 7.1.

12. Mr Varadi (Research Institute for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Irrigation, the Lead Institution of the “New and High Value Species” Working Group) described the potential and the problems of this field and summarized the activities of each of the four subgroups: (1) pikeperch and pike culture; (2) culture of coregonids; (3) culture of black carp; and (4) crayfish culture. The full report is attached in Annex 8.1.

13. Mr Konstantin Tylik (Kaliningrad State Technical University¹⁵) and Mr Branko Glamuzina (University of Dubrovnik), representatives of the two Lead Institutions of the “Aquaculture Education” Working Group, gave a comparative analysis of the educational systems in NACEE countries. Mr Tylik highlighted the great differences between the curricula, training periods, scientific degrees and compliance with the Bologna Process. Mr Glamuzina urged the participants to create a consortium of the present educational institutions already during the Dubrovnik Meeting. The full report is available in Annex 9.1.

14. During the discussion of education in aquaculture, Mr Katavic pointed out several important aspects in aquaculture today, including the need for technical training in aquaculture, discouraging technicians and specialists from leaving aquaculture and motivating the youth to seek employment in this sector. He stressed that it was extremely important to change the general view of aquaculture as a struggling sector without much employment perspective and to prove that it was worth to choose aquaculture careers.

15. After a short discussion, all four NACEE Working Group reports were accepted by the Board of Directors.

SESSION ON STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF NACEE

16. The session was chaired by Mr Andrey Bogeruk (Pedigree Fish Breeding Center – Moscow Branch of the Federal Center for Fish Genetics and Selection, Russian Federation). After a short introduction, he gave the floor to Mr Peter Lengyel (HAKI), who presented a report on the problems arising from the bilingual character of NACEE, i.e. that the big quantities of documents to be translated took time and resources from organizational and coordination tasks. Initially, two possible solutions had been proposed by the Coordinating Institution: either transforming the bilingual network into a single-language one or sharing the coordination work between two closely cooperating centres: one for Russian-speaking countries

¹³ <http://www.unizg.hr/homepage/>

¹⁴ <http://www.fsgcr.com>

¹⁵ <http://www.klgtu.ru/en/index.php>

and the other for English-speaking ones. Taking into consideration the feedback of NACEE members, a proposal was developed, according to which, the present structure and the bilingual character of the Network would be kept, but the Coordinating Institution would share the work of translation with some other institution. The summary of the proposal, distributed to the Directors in advance is available in Annex 10.

17. After discussing the possible alternatives, the participants accepted the proposal. It was decided that HAKI would continue doing the translations from Russian to English, while BIOS offered to do the translations from English to Russian in the future.

18. The issue of financing the translations received particular attention during the discussion. After evaluating the available options, it was decided to allocate a certain sum from the NACEE budget for translation purposes. It was estimated that the income from membership fees would be sufficient to cover these expenses. The Coordinating Institution should do its best for finding sources of financing for simultaneous interpretation during the NACEE Director Meetings. If the available finances are insufficient, the cost of simultaneous interpretation should be paid partly or entirely by the participants of the meeting. The Coordinating Institution should prepare a cost estimate in advance of each meeting and inform the meeting participants on the contribution they are required to pay.

19. An extensive discussion took place on issues of networking and information exchange. A discussion material was prepared and distributed in advance (Annex 11). The following conclusions were made:

- It was pointed out that many members were somewhat hesitant to provide information to others. It should be of common understanding that information exchange is an indispensable condition of networking and collaboration.
- The use of the NACEE webpage¹⁶ in information exchange should be increased and made more efficient. Member institutions should place a link to NACEE on their webpages, along with a brief description of NACEE in their own national languages. If possible, partner organizations of NACEE and its member institutions should also be convinced to link NACEE to their webpages. Subsections on the NACEE Working Groups should be developed further.
- It was pointed out that, at the moment, the NACEE webpage could not be found using Internet search engines. It was even suggested to create an independent website, not linked to the AgroWeb page where it is currently located. However, seeing the valuable assistance, including also web development and web hosting, that was provided to NACEE by the FAO Office of the Subregional Representative (SEUR), it was decided not to change the current location of the website, but to try improving its searchability with the assistance of the SEUR information technology specialists.
- A proposal was made to compile and publish a catalogue of fish breeds in Central-Eastern Europe. Mr Barg (FAO) encouraged all NACEE members to put forward such specific proposals for technical publications that could subsequently be discussed with (or even published by) FAO.
- Member institutions should provide each other with lists of publications and journals that they can provide to others. Other NACEE member institutions should be included in the mailing and distribution lists of each member.

¹⁶ <http://agrowebcee.net/subnetwork/nacee/>

SESSION ON THE STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT PROJECT ACTIVITIES

20. The session was chaired by Mrs Liliana Hadjinikolova (Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Varna – Plovdiv Branch of Freshwater Fisheries, Bulgaria). A presentation on ongoing and proposed joint projects was made by Mr Lengyel. The material was prepared and distributed to the participants in advance (Annex 12).

21. It became clear during the discussion that many of the Eastern-European institutions had very little (if any) experience in writing project proposals according to formats and requirements of national and international funding agencies and donor institutions in the European Union (EU), Norway and other countries. It was suggested to organize a workshop in Saint-Petersburg on project writing for representatives of such institutions, inviting lecturers from EU, FAO and other major funding organizations. However, it was also noted that, as proposal writing was a very complicated activity needing much time, efforts and experience, the effectiveness of such a workshop could result very low. It should be investigated if there are any other possibilities to share the knowledge (e.g. inviting interested representatives of such members to institutions already having such experience, providing them with resource documents, etc.). The Coordinating Institution, with the assistance of FAO, will try to compile information on project preparation and distribute it to NACEE members.

22. It was pointed out that the technical knowledge of proposal writing was only one side of success, and professional competence and collaboration should not be neglected. Even if the actual source of funding is not known, if there is no applicable call, NACEE members can still try to elaborate complex research topics, identify each others capacities and possibly start working on some smaller subtasks using the available finances.

23. A special reference was made to the proposal for a project “Study of the current status and development of the strategy of aquaculture development in countries of Central and Eastern Europe for the period up to 2020–2030” which could be submitted for consideration by FAO. It was clarified that Mr Bogeruk proposed this idea. Mr Barg suggested that this project idea be further developed by Mr Bogeruk and other interested NACEE directors. A more advanced project idea could be submitted to technical units of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION OUTSIDE NACEE

24. The session on international collaboration was chaired by Mr Neculai Patriche (Institute of Research and Development for Aquatic Ecology, Fishing and Aquaculture, Galati, Romania¹⁷) and Mr Ihor Hrytsynyak (Institute of Fisheries, Kiev, Ukraine). Mr Varadi presented an overview of the status and development of international collaboration with other institutions and organizations outside NACEE. Possible partners were separated into three major groups: (1) non-NACEE countries of the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region; (2) other international networks and organizations; and (3) countries bordering on NACEE. A discussion material was prepared by the Coordinating Institution and distributed to participants in advance (Annex 13).

25. It was pointed out that contacts with institutions in non-NACEE countries of the CEE Region were quite poor. NACEE is open for institutions from these countries, however, instead of active encouragement and persuasion to joining, it is more advisable to maintain and develop

¹⁷ <http://www.icdeapa.lx.ro>

exchange of information and to involve relevant institutions in various R&D and training programmes organized by NACEE or NACEE member institutions.

26. Contacts with other international organizations and networks are quite good and they are developing intensively. In particular, Mr Varadi informed the participants that NACEE had been invited to the board of the European Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organization (EFARO).¹⁸ This collaboration offers a possibility for NACEE to influence the determination of European research priorities. The Board of Directors approved the further development of this cooperation and entitled the NACEE Coordinating Institution to represent the Network in the EFARO Board.

27. Mrs Ann-Mari Haram, representing Eurofish, a very important partner of NACEE, gave a short overview of the developments in the organization since the NACEE Meeting in Astrakhan in 2005 and outlined some possibilities for cooperation between NACEE and Eurofish. Since the meeting in Astrakhan, Spain and Italy have joined Eurofish, bringing the number of member countries up to eleven countries across Europe. Eurofish continues its focus on food safety, trade and markets as well as aquaculture. It is the ambition of the organization to increase its efforts in the field of aquaculture through its publication and project activities. As regards cooperation between NACEE and Eurofish, Eurofish shares the hope of NACEE that funding for the project EastAquaNet could be secured this year. Eurofish also repeated its offer to NACEE regarding dissemination of information through the Eurofish Magazine (EM). Eurofish invited NACEE to send one page of information every two months to Eurofish with various information. The information would need to be reader-friendly and in English. This would contribute towards making NACEE more visible and also increase cooperation within the network. At the same time, the readers of the EM would appreciate more information about aquaculture, in particular as regards developments in CEE. In general, Eurofish is open for proposals for further cooperation with NACEE.

28. Mr Varadi then presented options for collaboration with neighbouring countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkey. The NACEE Meeting agreed that NACEE could offer Associate Membership to interested institutions from these countries. Associate Membership would include invitations to interested institutions to join NACEE meetings or other events. Associate members do not pay membership fees and have no voting rights.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

29. The session was chaired by Mr Otomar Linhart (Research Institute of Fish Culture and Hydrobiology, Vodnany, Czech Republic¹⁹) and Mrs Lidiya Vasilyeva (“BIOS” Research and Production Center for Sturgeon Breeding, Astrakhan, Russian Federation). Mr Varadi introduced the following main themes for this session:

- Time and venue of the Fourth NACEE Directors’ Meeting
- Upcoming events of special importance
- Other issues proposed by participants
- Presentations

30. The NACEE Meeting participants welcomed the generous offer by the “Dunarea de Jos” University²⁰ and the Institute for Research and Development of Aquatic Ecology, Fisheries and Aquaculture to host the next meeting of NACEE Directors. The meeting agreed on the

¹⁸ <http://www.efaro.org>

¹⁹ http://www.vurh.jcu.cz/index_a.html

²⁰ <http://www.ugal.ro>

following dates and venue of the Fourth Meeting of NACEE Directors: 27–29 September 2007, Galati, Romania. The Meeting also warmly welcomed the offer by the Institute for Fisheries, Kiev, to host the Fifth Meeting of NACEE Directors in 2008, however, the final decision on this issue was postponed to the Fourth Meeting of Directors.

31. A number of events were noted, including the Aquaculture Europe Conference in October 2007 in Istanbul, the Fish Spermatology Conference in Vodnany, and others. Their list is provided in Annex 14. Upcoming events of interest will also be posted on NACEE webpage.

32. Three brief overview presentations were given to the NACEE Meeting. Mr Barg gave a brief overview of ongoing FAO activities. This overview covered :

- EIFAC Session, 19–21 June 2006, Mondsee Austria;
- Main outcomes of the Third Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, 4–8 September 2006, New Delhi, India;
- FAO's Global and Regional Reviews of Aquaculture Development Trends,
- Prospective Analysis of Future Aquaculture Development (PAFADs)
- FAO's Aquaculture Gateway page, National Aquaculture Sector Overviews (NASOs), National Aquaculture Legislation Overviews, Aquaculture Glossary;
- recent efforts and FAO initiatives on the establishment and promotion of aquaculture networks in Africa and the Americas.

33. Mr Varadi highlighted key issues and trends in inland aquaculture from a Central and Eastern European perspective. The summary of the presentation is attached to the present report as Annex 15.

34. Mr Glamuzina presented selected aspects of mariculture in Central and Eastern Europe and possibilities for its development. The text of the presentation is available in Annex 16.

35. Following the last plenary session, the four NACEE Working Groups organized ad-hoc meetings to determine the specific steps for collaboration in the next year. Summaries of the discussions and the produced documents are attached in Annexes 6.2, 7.2, 8.2 and 9.2. Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on establishing a joint NACEE Master Programme in Aquaculture by NACEE member educational institutions was stressed as a particular result of the Meeting.

DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS' MEETING

36. The Report of the Third Meeting of NACEE Directors was revised, discussed and adopted by the participants on 29 September 2006. The final version of the report together with its annexes will be published by FAO and circulated among all interested parties.