AQUAEXCEL[2020]: RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES FOR THE BENEFIT OF EUROPEAN AQUACULTURE RESEARCH AND INDUSTRY

M. Vandeputte[1,2]

[1]INRA UMR 1313 GABI, F-78350 Jouy-en-Josas, France. Email: marc.vandeputte@jouy.inra.fr
[2]Ifremer, Chemin de Maguelone, F-34250 Palavas-les-Flots, France

The Project
AQUAEXCEL[2020] is a H2020 infrastructure project coordinated by the Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), France, with 22 partners from 10 countries, combining 39 research infrastructures.
The project follows-up the AQUAEXCEL project (2011-2015), started in October 2015 and will finish in September 2020.

The Challenge
Today, European aquaculture technology is one of the areas where Europe has a competitive edge and can make a difference in the future. Nevertheless, the European aquaculture industry is facing increasing challenges due to a more demanding and selective market combined with competition from outside the EU. These complex challenges require technological solutions that can only be solved with the contribution of high level experts and experienced professionals with access to excellent research facilities, outstanding services, and the right biological resources, and industry implication via the European Aquaculture Technology an Innovation Platform (EATiP)

Structure of the project and services offered
The objectives of AQUAEXCEL[2020] are to provide a wider and more efficient access to, and use of, the aquaculture research infrastructures existing in the EU. AQUAEXCEL2020 will be a key vehicle in the improvement of aquaculture research practices to the benefit of industry through finalized research and innovation, and of excellent science through the development of highly innovative methods and approaches such as Virtual Laboratories, standardized experimental fish lines and nano-sensors. It will lead to a better management of animal experiments for research according to the 3 R's, Reduction (via e.g. capitalization of data and provision of stable experimental fish lines), Refinement (via a better control of experimental procedures) and Replacement (via e.g. Virtual Laboratories).

One major feature of AQUAEXCEL2020 is its **Transnational access (TNA) program**, allowing external teams to access the partners' infrastructures via submission of research proposals, which are funded or not based on evaluation by an independent selection panel. Access is offered to 39 unique research infrastructures of the participating institutes, with experimental costs, travel and subsistence supported by the project. The facilities available cover the entire range of production systems, environments, scales, fish species and fields of expertise. Access is available to EU and Associated States research teams and industry/SMEs, based on the scientific excellence of proposals and relevance to the aquaculture sector. Access is also available to third countries on a limited basis (up to 25%) Calls for access will be organised every on a regular basis Detailed information is available at www.aquaexcel.eu

Special mechanisms will be set up in collaboration with EATiP to promote the use of research infrastructures by the industry (and especially SMEs), and to promote the uptake of the most relevant project results (especially TNA) by the industry via invitation to brokerage events with industry.

As a whole, AQUAEXCEL2020 will provide a world-class platform for all types of fish culture research, from biology to technology, in all types of rearing systems, with all major EU fish species, including the most promising new species.

Contact: www.aquaexcel.eu

Acknowledgements