

# Vocational Aqualabs

## FACTSHEET



### At a Glance

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| <b>Title:</b>           | Vocational Aqualabs - Vocational Generic Skills for Researchers             |
| <b>Programme:</b>       | EU Lifelong Learning Programme - Leonardo da Vinci - Transfer of innovation |
| <b>Total budget:</b>    | €332,240  |
| <b>EC contribution:</b> | €248,845  |
| <b>Duration:</b>        | December 2009 – November 2011   |
| <b>Consortium:</b>      | 6 partners  |
| <b>Coordinator:</b>     | Ankara University, Turkey   |
| <b>Web:</b>             | <a href="http://www.aqualabs.eu">www.aqualabs.eu</a>                        |

Vocational Aqualabs is a two year project funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme through the Turkish National Agency and is concerned with generic skills needed in aquaculture research.

### The Challenge

European aquaculture is a fast-growing and innovative industry, its success relying on a joint practical and theoretical knowledge base and an adequate supply of up-skilled personnel. Such up-skilling must be subject-specific but equally important are the generic skills. Generic skills, although essential in today's world, are not usually part of course provision. Up-skilling of researchers has a multiplication effect in the fact that they supply industry with new knowledge for sustainable growth of the sector.

### Project Objectives

The overall aim of Vocational Aqualabs is to improve Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems in the European Aquaculture sector to ensure researchers receive continual professional development training in generic skills which will a) result in increasing the quality, attractiveness and security of research career pathways b) increase the relevancy of researchers and their research to the sector c) improve knowledge transfer to industry for exploitation contributing to a sustainable sector in Europe.

## Methodology

Vocational Aqualabs will identify the generic skills required in aquaculture research by consulting all stakeholders through a needs analysis of the sector to find out whether researchers possess the skills identified and at what level. Modules will be developed to fill the gaps, using a skill/competency/learning outcome based approach and the project will offer flexible learning pathways for skill acquisition to aquaculture researchers.

The project builds on four projects:

- 1. WAVE** - Validation of Working Experience in Aquaculture (LDV) which involved surveying ninety fish farms in ten countries and created a master list of competences/skills in ten European languages which is validated by the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP).
- 2. AQUALABS** (FP6, Marie Curie Training Courses) which delivered six high level technical training courses for young researchers with one very successful short workshop focusing on generic research skills.
- 3. VALLA** - Validation of All Lifelong Learning in Aquaculture (European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Project) which provided an occupational map, examined how the resulting competence-based learning outcomes can be evaluated and how short trainings can be accredited.
- 4. AQUA-TNET** 2008-11 (Lifelong Learning Programme – Erasmus) Thematic Network in aquaculture, fisheries and aquatic resource management. WP4, “Generic Skills and competences approaches” will review best practice in postgraduate programmes, sharing its findings with the network.

## Results

Vocational Aqualabs will make a useful and innovative contribution to the link between aquaculture research and the industry. Vocational Aqualabs will identify the key generic skills which are required by researchers and in turn design flexible training modules based on industry's needs which can be delivered using a variety of learning pathways (formal and informal). The results will give valuable support to the partner countries involved. The added value consists in spreading much-needed skills in a rapidly changing innovative field, aquaculture, where competitiveness can only continue through an adequate supply of sufficiently up-skilled personnel.

## Project Partners



### Turkey

Ankara University  
Applicant Coordinator



### Ireland

AquaTT  
Management Coordinator



### United Kingdom

Stirling University  
University of Aberdeen



### Greece

AQUARK



### Spain

INNOVAMAR

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