

Summary of the recommendations from the Stakeholders Group to the Marine Biotech ERA-NET (ERA-MBt) consortium

Recommendation 1. Consolidate the CSA Stakeholder Group (SG) into an ERA-MBt Stakeholder Platform and ensure active participation of stakeholders in the ERA-MBt activities

- Ensure a healthy balance of stakeholders using (1) existing networks and platforms of stakeholders at various levels (e.g. European Marine Board, World Ocean Council, EuropaBIO, regional/local clusters, technology platforms, ...), filling the gaps and strengthening the group by inviting (2) experts and representatives of individual organisations, SMEs and large industry with relevant expertise.
- Develop appropriate mechanisms for the Stakeholder Platform to advise the funding agencies on trends and developments, stakeholder needs, and thus what is needed and wanted from a marine biotechnology ERA-NET. This can be done among other by
 - Organising dedicated stakeholder workshops, preferably run by an external moderator, to develop ideas and topics for joint ERA-MBt activities, including thematic R&D workshops and joint calls;
 - Developing a virtual meeting place and information exchange hub (via the www.marinebiotech.eu portal) which allows for regular interactions, information updates and regular feedback on the ERA-MBt activities and future actions.

Recommendation 2. Take an industry-academic collaborative approach, ensuring appropriate industry involvement in the ERA-MBt

- Industry should be actively involved in the ERA-NET, both at the level of identification of topics (e.g. through engagement in the Stakeholder Platform) as well as by possible participation in joint activities and funded projects.
- Fund as much/many as possible activities to bridge academic-industry barriers to overcome financial difficulties of 'proof of concept', demonstration and scale-up activities; calls should be simple, reactive and fast.
- Consider options to facilitate access of SMEs to equipment and technology platforms (by direct funding or indirectly by making available information about existing channels and opportunities to gain access).

Recommendation 3. Drastically increase efforts to map and better understand the European marine biotechnology landscape

- Increase efforts to map the European marine biotech landscape, digging deeper and wider, and update the on-line registry accordingly. Particular efforts should be undertaken to map industry activities, especially SMEs, as well as existing industry-academic relationships and knowledge networks (e.g. through in-depth Knowledge Capture Mechanisms using patents of Marine Genetic Resources).

- Make full use of the Stakeholder Platform to provide insight into the SME landscape, needs and concerns.
- Consider subcontracting (do not define to whom in advance – open call for tender) a market study to obtain in-depth information about the contribution of marine biotechnology to the European bio-economy.

Recommendation 4. Ensure that a central component of the ERA-MBt (and its budget) is dedicated to communication, outreach and providing access to relevant information to mobilize a broad European marine biotech research community

- Use professional public relations and communications services to assist with communication, dissemination and outreach products and efforts towards various targets based on a dedicated communication strategy.
- Provide open access to well organised and user-friendly information:
 - Further elaborate the www.marinebiotech.eu portal as a central community and information hub providing information and services (e.g. workspace, brokerage space, update, event calendar, databases, weekly updates, videos with success stories, lab presentation pitches, ...).
 - Further build the organisations-registry/database including SMEs and industries involved in marine biotech in Europe, if possible with statistics data. Provide a section where organization may profile the services they can provide.
 - Create a virtual network of Biobanks and Repositories linked to screening facilities and provide access to relevant databases to facilitate access to information and biological materials from these Biobanks and Repositories. Work together with other initiatives and projects working towards the same achievements (e.g. FP7 MaCuMBa, ESFRI EMBRC, ...).
- Develop an info-pack/pages for new stakeholders that want to get involved: ‘How to participate as a newcomer’.
- Consider IP issues, the application of the Nagoya protocol on ABS and other legal/policy barriers together with other initiatives/projects such as EMBRC, SeaBiotech, Bluegenics, PharmaSea and MicroB3. The ERA-NET should link with these initiatives and fill the gaps where necessary and appropriate to develop a fully functional and comprehensive User Toolkit on IPR/ABS by 2016 made available on www.marinebiotech.eu.

Recommendation 5. Organise a series of thematic research workshops and support training activities

- Organise a series of topical workshops bringing together principal investigator of national research efforts in specific research areas, as well as private sector researchers or representatives, to discuss state of the art and progress and forge potential pan-European networks for participation in later calls – some workshops should focus on needs of SMEs.



- ERA-MBt should support training activities (e.g. master classes/courses, summer courses, master courses) on various topics including
 - Acquisition of 'soft' skills in management, business, economics and entrepreneurship
 - Insight into legal and IP/ABS issues, including Nagoya protocol status and implications.