

# CONCEPT

## FOR A

# “SOUTH BALTIC AQUACULTURE COOPERATION”

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## 1. Background and aim

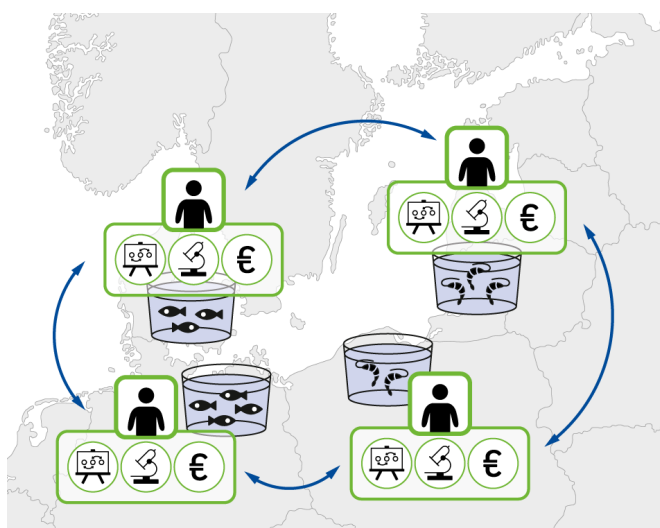
As the InnoAquaTech project is ending in July 2019, a framework shall be developed that allows to continue the cooperation of the project partners (and other interested stakeholders) in the field of aquaculture. In the project application this initiative was named “South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation”.

The project InnoAquaTech promotes cross-border development and transfer of innovative sustainable and environmentally friendly aquaculture technologies in the South Baltic Region. The project partners aim to showcase in pilot cases the viability of a strong aquaculture economy in the South Baltic Region. The InnoAquaTech project partners have the scientific expertise and economic know-how to act as advisors and facilitators of aquaculture technology and cooperate with SMEs and their support organizations that will gain increased innovation capacity as well as being able to develop and implement cross-border value chains.

This continued joint effort of aquaculture stakeholders across borders and the different links of the value chain is the motivation and the subject for the “South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation”. The cooperation in turn will help to strengthen the South Baltic area’s aquaculture sector and contribute to more sustainable food production.

In this document we have developed an approach on how such a cooperation can be organized and financed without the project co-funding that the Interreg South Baltic Programme has been providing for the InnoAquaTech project between 2016 and 2019.

In the following chapter we propose a possible organizational backbone for the cooperation and identify possible external and internal funding sources. We also develop the approach of “internal projects” that are requested by

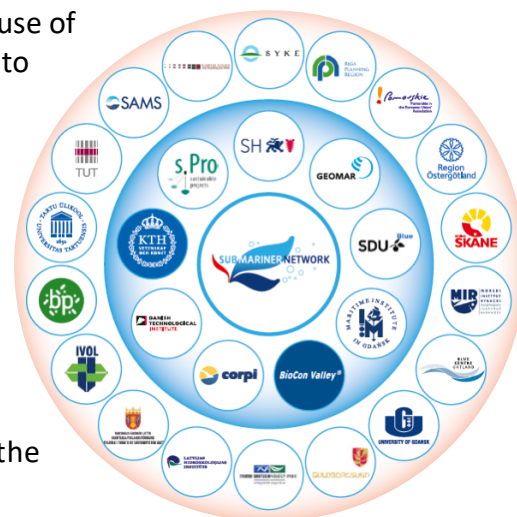


the members of the “South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation” and are financed without external funding. In the third chapter we have developed a detailed manual for the organization and implementation of study visits – based on the study visits organized and implemented in the InnoAquaTech project. Such a study visit / study visit package would be one example for an internal project as introduced in chapter 2 and illustrates the approach to them – also in terms of costing. In the final chapter we are introducing other topics for suitable “internal projects” that could be developed within the “South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation”.

## 2. Organizational backbone for cooperation and funding

The InnoAquaTech project was grounding on the results on the INTERREG projects AQUAFIMA and SUBMARINER. The latter was leading after its project end to a continued and ever-growing cooperation in the framework of the SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth EEIG, which was founded in 2014. The mission of the SUBMARINER Network is to promote innovative approaches to the sustainable use of marine resources and to offer a cooperation platform to related actors and initiatives in the Baltic Sea Region. Aquaculture is an important topic in this area. As such many of the partners of the InnoAquaTech project have become members of the SUBMARINER Network over the last years.

In this concept we propose that the InnoAquaTech project partners and other interested stakeholders in the field of aquaculture form the “South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation” as working group under the umbrella of the SUBMARINER Network.



### The SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth EEIG

The SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth EEIG is the leading transnational networking hub in the Baltic Sea Region that promotes sustainable and innovative uses for marine resources. It is a flagship initiative of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The EUSBSR flagship umbrella project provides since 2013 communication and match-making as well as action and strategy development across the various marine sectors, including aquaculture and blue biotechnology, by connecting R&D with regional development and industry innovation. With twelve transnational blue growth projects on board, in mid-2019 the Network is also operating through various thematic Working Groups, each having its own members and bottom-up agendas.

The SUBMARINER Network operates across the project spheres and thematic areas. This means that the SUBMARINER Network projects don't operate in silos, rather they are embedded in a blue thematic mega-cluster that fosters and nourishes opportunities for exchange and cross-linkages among actors, ideas, data and knowledge.

The members of the SUBMARINER Network are paying an annual membership fee. This membership fee could not finance the cooperation work and specific activities of the working group “South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation” but it could provide some seed funding for planning the activities that the working group is intending to implement and to find ways of funding them.

The organizational backbone of the Network is the SUBMARINER Secretariat which is based in Berlin. This Secretariat could be tasked to facilitate the cooperation, e.g. promotion, communication, coordination activities. For the study visits, discussed in more detail in chapter 3, this could comprise e.g. the development of an initial outline or rough draft agenda and the calculation of the necessary financial means. Concrete tasks of the Secretariat in the implementation phase may include the setting-up of a dedicated ‘Study Visits’ page on the SUBMARINER website, which would present the potential host facilities along with a short description of what a study visit entails. The Secretariat may also be responsible for setting up and maintaining the registration software through which participants may subscribe and keep track of the payments. In addition, the Secretariat may be responsible for the general promotion of the study visit, writing up the minutes and a brief report, developing and publishing a set of FAQs on the website. The Secretariat may further provide support with the development of templates, participant and registration lists, reports, badges, initial background material, etc. It must be noted that the Secretariat cannot act as an ‘expert’ – the concrete input and design of the study visit must come from a knowledgeable institution that is interested in organizing it.

For actually financing the activities of the working group “South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation” we have identified two main options: External Funding and Internal Funding.

## 2.1 External Funding

European Projects:

- In first place this refers to **Horizon 2020** projects. One example is the current call “Sustainable European aquaculture 4.0: nutrition and breeding (DT-BG-04-2018-2019) that was launched under the Blue Growth header of H2020. Some partners of the InnoAquaTech project developed together with the SUBMARINER Secretariat for this call a proposal aiming at optimizing the existing production conditions of the three selected freshwater fish species in recirculating aquaculture systems. This could be one central activity of the “South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation”.
- After 2020 the new Programming period of the EC starts. In this context the draft regulation of the Commission for European territorial cooperation (ETC) for 2021 – 2027 foresees a “**Component 5**”. While the name for this programme still needs to be determined it is planned to be an investment programme focusing on the commercialization and scaling up of interregional innovation projects for the development of European value chains. Its characteristics are very specific for an ETC programmes: it is a pure investment programme focusing only on innovation related matters, directly managed by the Commission. This new programme seems to be a very interesting option for the SUBMARINER Network and in particular for the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation.

Transnational projects:

- The Interreg **South Baltic Programme** remains a very relevant and important funding programme for the future activities of the “South Baltic Aquaculture

Cooperation". We assume that certain activities of the working group will fall under the future thematic areas of the programme. For example, the project AQUAVIP that was recently approved by the South Baltic Programme and will start in January 2020, will be able to support capacity building activities very relevant to the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation. Given the fact that such a proposal would stem from a former South Baltic project might increase the chances of approval. Another possible funding programme for a Baltic Sea wide cooperation is the Interreg **Baltic Sea Region Programme**.

- The **BONUS Programme** might be the right funding programme for rather research-oriented activities. Currently a consortium coordinated by BONUS EEIG has started to work on the project "Towards a joint Baltic and North Sea research and innovation programme". This future programme is envisaged to start in 2021

National projects:

- Especially for bi- or trilateral projects **national funding programmes** are an option. In Germany the program *ZIM Network International* from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs (program operated by VDI) is one example for such a program, which is setting up a transnational network for advancing technologies in a clearly defined relatively narrow sectors. Aquaculture could be such a sector.
- The national project "Bioeconomy at Marine Sites (BaMS)" funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) with 20 million Euro is starting on October 2019. The focus of the BaMS project is on developing a new innovation area in northern Germany with 79 project partners from research, industry and public administration. New - and above all sustainable - concepts are currently being developed in BaMS for a comprehensive circular economy, including fish, mussels and algae, among other things. SUBMARINER Network will act as an international partner of BaMS and it is a great opportunity for South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation to play a large role too in development blue bioeconomy in the region.

## 2.2 Internal Funding

While applications for external funding are always responsive, i.e. responding to calls that are beyond the control of the "South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation", the internal funding provides the opportunity for the working group to be pro-active. As such "Internal Projects" are services of the SUBMARINER Network EEIG (i.e. the Secretariat) for its members. They are developed "on demand" of the SUBMARINER members based on a topic paper that is e.g. issues by the working group "South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation".

The topic paper lists all activities that have been identified in the work of the working group (e.g. in projects, during conferences, in the Members Assembly or by specific requests from members) as necessary / useful / desirable and which are NOT part of an externally funded project (like e.g. InnoAquaTech). These activities might include:

- Study visits (for this example please refer to chapter 3)

- Pitching events (this might include also events that are called for by a large enterprise in order to address a specific topic by many small enterprises that want to become part of the supply chain)
- Thematic workshops
- Conferences (beyond the conferences planned already in externally funded projects)
- Reports

Only if there is a critical mass, i.e. a minimum number of SUBMARINER members (e.g. more than 3 members), that expresses upon receipt of the topic paper interest in a specific service, then the Secretariat develops a project proposal (incl. work plan, budget etc.) for this activity.

It is a prerequisite that those members requesting a project proposal for a specific activity are ready to pro-actively contribute to this activity (e.g. assume certain tasks in the organization of a study visit) and are ready to contribute to the financing of the tasks that are provided by the Secretariat (or which are direct costs for suppliers).

The drafting of the topic list and the elaboration of a project proposal is part of the general services of the SUBMARINER Network that is covered by the membership fees.

Once a project proposal is accepted by a critical mass the respective members commit themselves to work for this internal project and to cover the costs of the EEIG (in line with the project proposal).

### 3. Exemplary activity “study visit”

In the following chapters, the InnoAquaTech project presents a manual for developing International Business Study Visits in the future, based on experiences from throughout the project period. A framework has been developed where study visits (as well as matchmaking events and summer schools) may continue to be organised beyond the projects’ lifetime. This document serves as a draft study visit manual and is elaborated for a scenario in which current project partners may join the newly established Baltic Aquaculture Network.

The aim of the study visits is to highlight the innovative work that has been done on aquaculture in the Baltic Sea Region and to ensure that Baltic Sea aquaculture practices continue to have a great impact after project’s end, not only in the Baltic Sea Region, but also attracting participants outside of this region to the study visits. Participants should be open to exchange knowledge with other experts within the European aquaculture sector. In addition to a general visit of an aquaculture farm or research institute, study visits could focus on a specific topic or species, as well as on a specific aspect, such as technology, monitoring, environmental impacts, animal welfare, feed, breeding, finance etc. The study visits will bring together stakeholders from the aquaculture sector with the aim of stimulating knowledge-exchange between practitioners / future collaborations. The ideal group size for a study visit is estimated to be about 15 participants.



### 3.1 Defining an international business study visit

Three InnoAquaTech study visits were organized between 2018 and 2019 to support innovative aquaculture business models with practical knowledge and business partnerships. The aim was to gather and share knowledge on innovative aquaculture business models and to help build capacity for the region's aquaculture industry. Participants included industry stakeholders to apply the knowledge, representatives from scientific institutions to gather expertise, and business support organizations to build up a network for successful application of the technologies. In March 2018, a study visit was organized in Iceland for 18 participants, with a focus on geothermal energy, fish aquaculture and microalgae production. In November that year, 20 participants visited Belgium for a study visit to learn more about the innovative approaches of Flemish aquaculture, aquaponics and unique species farmed there. The final InnoAquaTech study visit took place in Jutland, Denmark and gave stakeholders in the South Baltic Region the possibility to exchange directly with the people behind Denmark's state-of-the-art aquaculture technology.



Figure 1: [Samherji HF aquaculture farm](#) visited during the study visit to Iceland

The organisation of future study visits after project-end may focus on topics beyond those that have already been explored. Future study visits could potentially be more focused on specific topics, such as certain aquaculture technologies or marine and fresh-water species. A business study visit in this context is defined as a two- or three-day excursion to at least two aquaculture or aquaculture-related facilities, exploring together with a number of interested participants the aquaculture practices of different Baltic or EU-wide institutions. The number of participants or the number of hosts facilities visited may differ per study visit.

#### *Study visit Secretariat*

With the foreseen launch of a the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation, the process of organizing study visits will differ from those that have been organised in the context of the InnoAquaTech project. The SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth, EPCO of InnoAquaTech, will act as a general Secretariat.

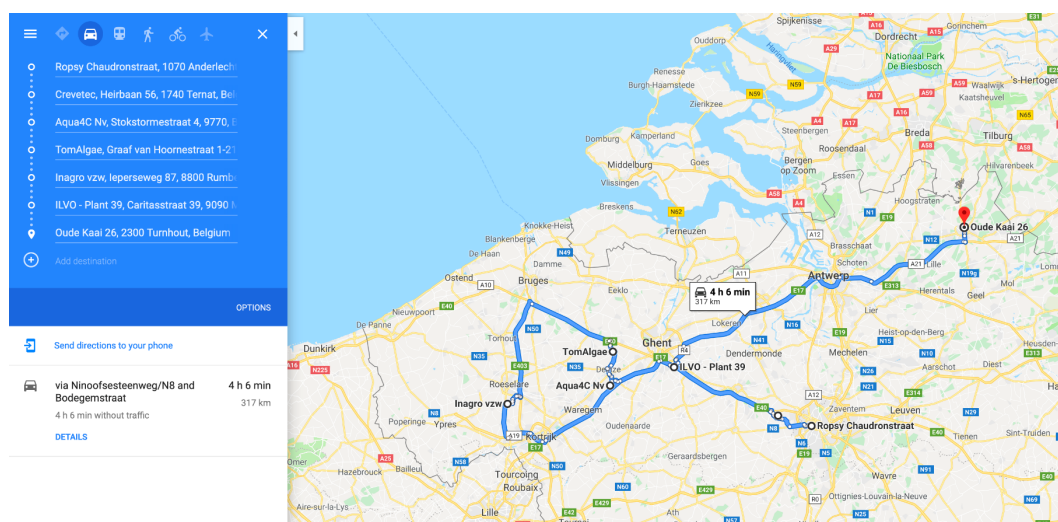


Figure 2: Route taken during the study visit in Belgium

### Study visit hosts

The general idea for a study visit should come from a specific institution – either an interested participant or an institution that is interested in hosting a study visit. Based on this initial expression of interest, additional hosts may be sought in the country or neighbouring countries where that institution is located. Such an institution would act as the general ‘Lead’ of the study visit and is responsible for its success. Tasks for study visit host facilities would include the drafting of an agenda, writing up the general objectives, finding additional host facilities and participants, as well as ensuring that the organisation runs smoothly, from arranging guided tours to ensuring adequate local transport.

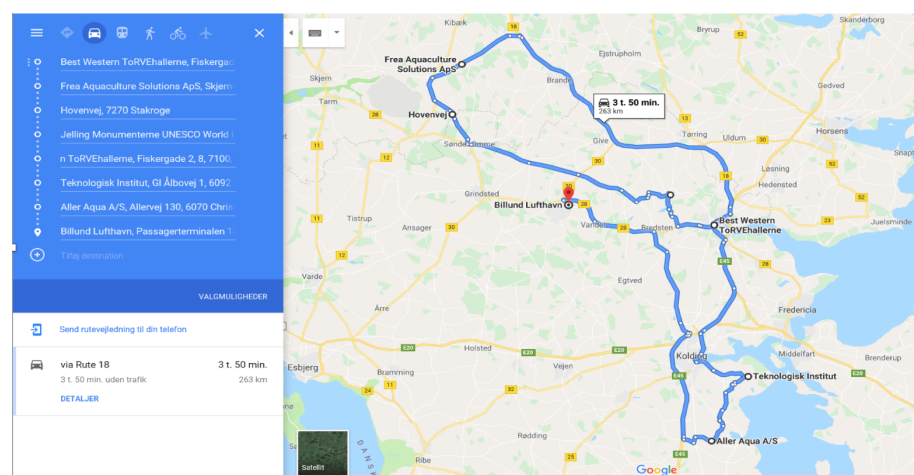


Figure 3: Route of the study visit in Denmark May 2019

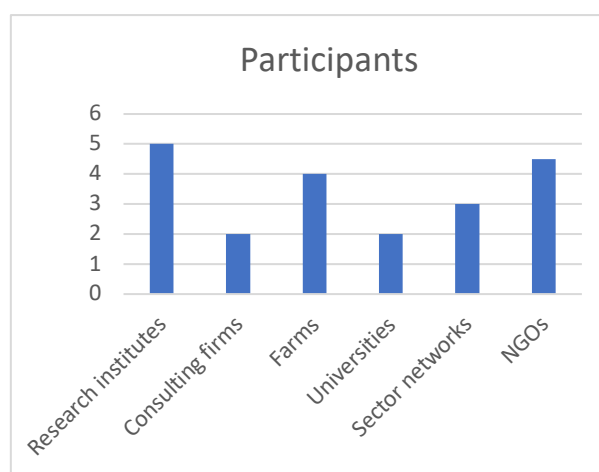
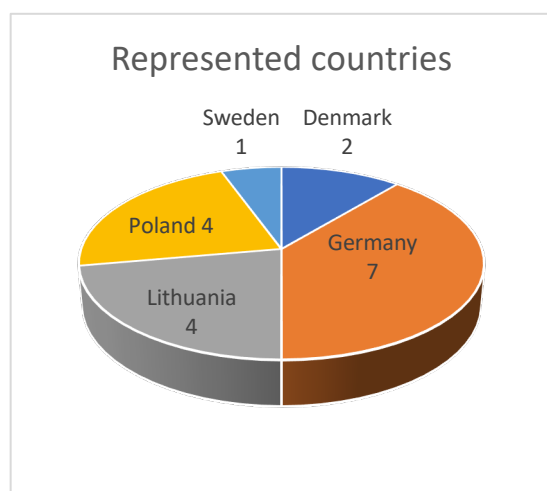
## 3.2 Stakeholder Analysis

Based on the participants and host facilities of the previously organised study visits, a rough stakeholder identification exercise has been undertaken. The aim of pursuing more study visits would be to attract many interested stakeholders from across the Baltic Sea Region, but potentially also from beyond. Such stakeholders may include project partners, full SUBMARINER Network or associate members, SMEs, investors, NGOs, researchers etc. Quite often, those participants that joined a study visit, work for an organisation that could also act



as a host facility, for another study visit. For this reason, so far, no distinction has been made in the stakeholder identification exercise. Many more potential stakeholders can be targeted beyond previous participants, for instance from national stakeholder lists or from the SUBMARINER stakeholder list.

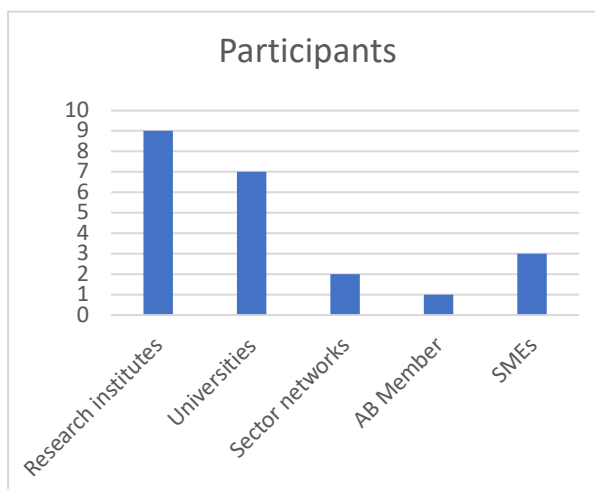
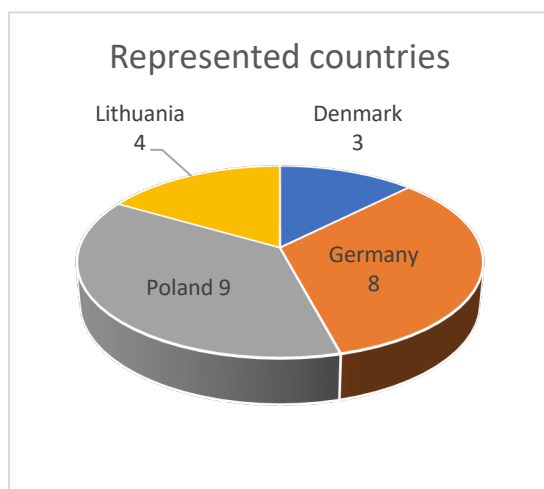
For the study visit to Belgium, five of the visited facilities were farms and four were research institutes. For the study visit in Iceland, 4 farms were visited, along with one algae farm, 3 primary producers (companies) and a business park; research institute and competence centre. The graphs below present the background of the participants to the study visit in Iceland.



*Graphs 1 and 2: Representation of participants to the study visit in Iceland*





A further stakeholder analysis could explore the number of different types of institutes per country, and compare this with the hosts and participants of the past study visits – to get a sense which countries have interest in study visits and how this number is linked to the number of aquaculture facilities in that country.

The graphs on the next page present the background of the participants to the study visit in Denmark.



Graphs 3 and 4: Representation of participants to the study visit in Denmark

## STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

International	Denmark	Germany	Lithuania
 <p>European Aquaculture Society Aquacircle Association</p>	 <p>Assentoft Aqua/Circular Steel FREASolutions Atlantic Sapphire/Langsand Laks/Langsand Dambrug TI Sdr. Stenderup Extrusion and Pelleting Aller Aqua Biomar VKST DTI Aquacopa GmbH Agro Business Park A/S The Danish Aquaculture Organization</p>	 <p>BioCon Valley Projektträger Jülich Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection University of Rostock Pomerania Development Agency Co Garnelen Farm EUCC-D Grevesmühlen GmbH &amp; Co. KG Hanseatische Umwelt CAM GmbH Institute of Marine Biotechnology e.V. Economic Development Corporation Vorpommern Thünen Institute of Baltic Fisheries</p>	 <p>Klaipeda Science and Technology Park Geometra PLC Association „Alternative aquaculture“ JSC Geoterma</p>

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## STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Poland	Sweden	Iceland	
 <p>Przegląd Rybacki Aqua Medic Poland Bartosz Blum, Poznań Fish Farm K-2 Copers, Warszawa Poznan University of Life Sciences Institute of Oceanography University of Gdańsk Maritime Institute National Marine Fisheries Research Institute Polish Trout Breeders Association</p>	 <p>East Regional Aquaculture Centre (ERAC) AtrinoVA Business Development</p>	 <p>Arctic Char Fish Farm on the South Coast Reykjavik Aquaponics Office Keynatura HS Orka Resource Park Matorka Algalif algae site in Ásbrú</p>	

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Figure 4: Draft Stakeholder Analysis for future study visits – full Excel table available as Annex I

### 3.3 Rough costs calculation

In order to develop a financial framework for organising study visits in the future, a rough calculation of the associated costs is presented in this section. This calculation is based on the actual costs of the two study visits that were organised in March and November 2018 (in Iceland and Belgium), as well as on the costs made for the study visit planned to take place in Denmark in May 2019. In addition, the responses to a questionnaire that was distributed during the study visit in Belgium are incorporated into the calculation. It must be noted that the costs made for the three study visits so far may differ from those planned for the future, as costs depend both on external factors including the location of the study visits, as well as on the internal objectives of the organisers (e.g. number of facilities visited, visiting one country or more, or number of participants). In order to set up a study visit programme, it must at least break even – meaning that the costs are fully covered.

During the study visit organised in Belgium in November 2018, a survey was distributed among participants which provided some insights into preferences of participants, for instance with regard to ideal length of a study visit. Questions included preferences regarding scope, logistics and pricing of different study visit packages. Options included a two-day trip (visiting up to 6 sites) and a three-day trip (visiting up to nine sites). The packages presented as options included an economy (including visiting fees, organisation and transport at the site) and a comfort package (including visiting fees, organisation, transport, accommodation and meals). For the economy package for the two-day and three-day trips, price options included 400, 500, 600 and 700 euros. For the comfort package, prices were 800, 1000, 1200 and 1400 euros. The survey indicated that prices depend on the exclusivity of sites; meeting with experts; and the quality of meals and hotels.

#### Cost items

Based on the study visits organised so far, the study visit package that was offered to participants excluded the costs of travel to and from the host facilities, as well as accommodation and a per diem to cover meals. Depending on the number of participants and the time of year and location of the study visit, group discounts may for instance be arranged for accommodation in hotels.

#### Included costs

- Venue rent
- External organisation fee / entrance / tour fees
- Day rates (?)
- Local transport costs / rental bus
- Fuel and parking costs

#### Excluded costs

- Travel to and from host facility/ies
- Accommodation
- Per diem (food & additional expenses)
- Insurance

*Table 1: Costs included and excluded in the two past study visits participant fees*

The rough costs for the study visits to Iceland and Belgium are presented below. For the study visit to Iceland, there were 18 participants, to the one in Belgium, 20 people participated and to the one in Denmark, 22 people participated. Participants paid for their own travel and accommodation, but the local transport via a rented minibus was covered by the project.

### **Iceland**

<i>Service</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Amount (Net)</i>
<i>External organization fee and fee for geothermal plants</i>	1	2435,30 €
<i>Day rates</i>	10	600,00 €
<i>Rental Bus (9 seats)</i>	2	450,00 €
<i>Fuel and parking fees</i>	2	150,00 €
<b>Total</b>		<b>9635,30 €</b>

### **Belgium**

<i>Service</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Amount (Net)</i>
<i>Visiting fees</i>	2	500,00 €
<i>Day rates</i>	13	600,00 €
<i>Rental Bus (9 seats)</i>	3	270,00 €
<i>Fuel and parking fees</i>	3	80,00 €
<b>Total</b>		<b>9850,00 €</b>

Table 2: Costs made for study visit to Iceland and study visit to Belgium (March and November 2018)

Each study visit will take place over a certain number of days – depending on the location of the visit as well as the number of potential host facilities that could be visited. During the study visit in Belgium, 9 facilities were visited and during the one in Iceland, participants visited 7 facilities. The study visit to Denmark took participants to visit 4 aquaculture facilities.

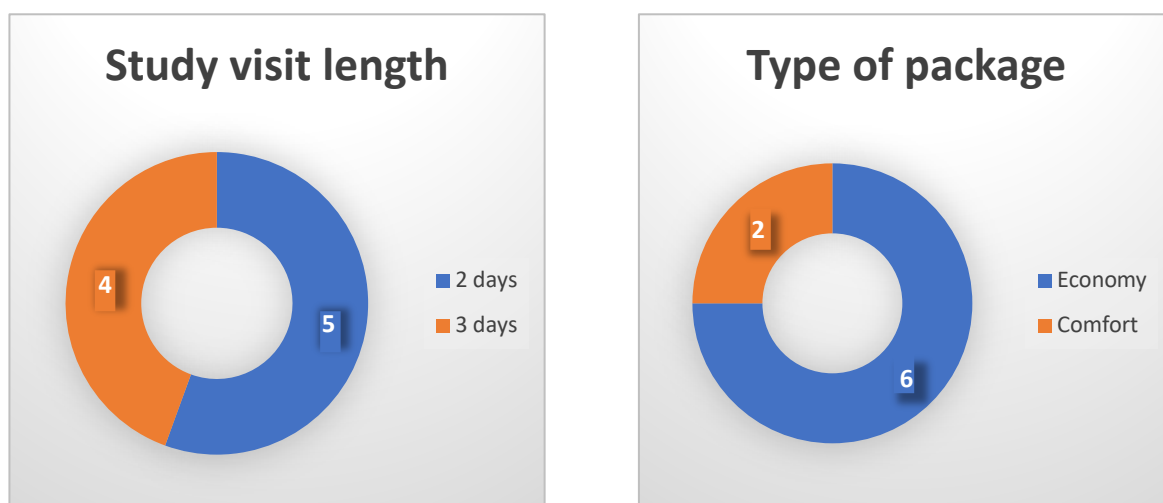
Looking at the two examples, the costs of the study visits was almost €10.000 for three days each. The maximum number of participants that can take part in a study visit is between 15 and 20, as there simply will not be enough room to host a larger group during a tour of an aquaculture facility. This should include two or three organisers. Looking at the study visit in Belgium, and dividing the total organisation costs by the number of participants, the participants fee excluding travel, accommodation and a per diem for food and other expenses, would have been €492. For the study visit in Iceland, the costs for participants would have been €602.20. For this calculation, we will assume a mean cost of €550 basic participants' fee.

As a preliminary conclusion, it may be argued that a basic study visit of three days, visiting around 8 facilities would cost around €10.000. Assuming a study visit would attract 15 participants, this would mean an income of €8.250 (15 x €550). It might be argued that if study visits are to be organised outside of the scope of projects, it may be useful to include accommodation and a per diem to cover food and additional expenses, in the package price. Assuming a price per night in an average-quality hotel of €100 and costs for meals of €60 per day, a study visit of three days would then cost a participant an additional €38050. It must be considered that the costs for organising a study visit and thus the costs of participants' fees, is highly dependent on the country in which the study visit will take place. It must also be noted that future study visits may include less visited host facilities, which would then also



reduce the total costs of the organisation (e.g. less local transport costs, shorter duration, less entrance fees, etc.).

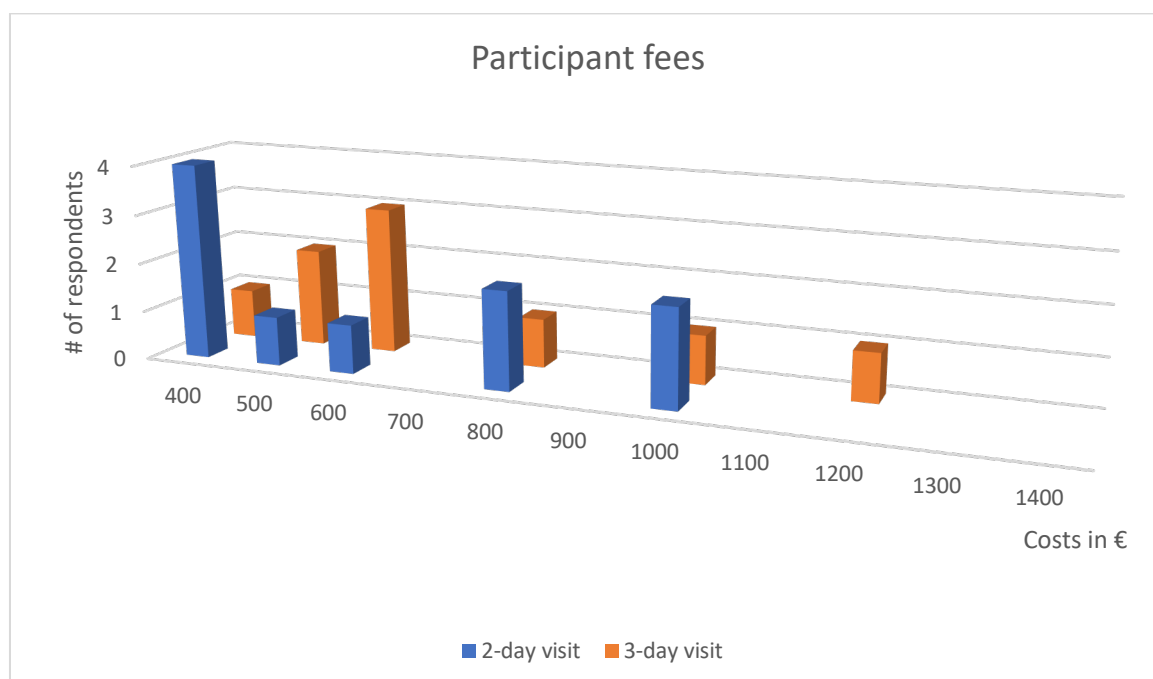
To make a basic assessment of whether such participant fees are also feasible in the future, post project-end, the responses to the questionnaire that was distributed during the study visit to Belgium provide an additional insight. Eight anonymous responses were collected and a basic analysis is presented below:



Graph 1: Responses to questionnaire Belgian study visit regarding length and type of package

5 out of 9 responses indicated a preference for a study visit to last two days rather than three days. Although this is a minimal difference, it may indicate for instance that potential participants of future study visits would also be interested in a study visit of 1.5 days. 6 out of 8 responses indicated that they preferred an economy package, in which the costs for accommodation and meals were not included. This may illustrate a preference of participants to arrange for their own travel and accommodation, perhaps based on the assumption that this would result in lower costs.

The questionnaire also asked respondents about the price that respondents would be willing to pay for such a study visit in the future. The results are presented below in a graph:



Graph 2: Responses to questionnaire Belgian study visit regarding participant fees

The responses to the questionnaire seem to indicate that participants are willing to pay around €500 for a study visit of two days, and around €600 for a visit of three days. Some of the respondents would be willing to pay for a comfort-package prices (starting from €800) for both the two-day as well as the three-day visits. As the previously calculated average cost of a study visit of three days is assumed to be €550, and the responses indicate that the average price that people are willing to pay is between €400 and €600, this means that the rough calculation based on the study visits in Iceland and Belgium are more or less indicative for future costs and participant fees for study visits.

This however also implies that if a study visit were to be organized beyond the scope of project funding, the minimum number of participants would have to be 25 ( $€10.000 / €400$ ) for a moderate calculation, or 17 ( $€10.000/€600$ ) for a more optimistic calculation. In addition to manipulating the minimum number of participants necessary to cover the costs, one might also manipulate the costs involved in the study visit. This can include the number of facilities visited, meaning a reduction of the total costs of entrance or guided tour fees, as well as reducing the number of day rates. Assuming for instance that the study visit in Belgium was organized over two days instead of three, this could already mean a reduction in the costs of €1000, which would mean that the minimum number of participants necessary to cover the costs, is already reduced by two persons. Other aspects that could reduce the total costs of the organization, could include the number of host facilities visited, external guided tours and site visits, for instance. From the information available so far, the results seem to indicate that an optimal participants' fee to ask of potential participants, lies somewhere between €400 and €600, assuming a minimum of 20 participants, for a study visit that will last three days and cost around €10.000. This scenario would cover the costs – with every additional participant potentially providing an additional revenue stream for the organizers and the Secretariat. The table below presents the indicative participant fees that would cover the costs

of a study visit of €10.000, €8.000 or €5.000, and what the minimum number of participants would be to realize this costs coverage.

	Costs of a study visit: €5.000	Costs of a study visit: €8.000	Costs of a study visit: €10.000
10 pax	€500	€800	€1.000
12 pax	€416.67	€666.67	€833.33
15 pax	€333.33	€533	€666.67
18 pax	€277.78	€444.44	€555.56
20 pax	€250	€400	€500

Table 3: Indicate costs of future participant fees

As one may expect, the costs per participant go up exponentially as the costs of the organisation of a study visit increase, as well as the minimum number of participants. Based on the information collected, it may be argued that the range of participants' fees that respondents to the questionnaire indicated, is between €400 and €600 – so this should be considered when organising future study visits.

#### Post-project funding

The costs of the study visits that took place in 2018 and 2019 were covered through InnoAquaTech project finance. As the project has been come to an end in July 2019 and the objective is to organise more of them in the future, alternative ways of financing such study visits must be found. The most obvious solution is to charge all costs of a study visit directly to the participants.

For a potential future study visit, the organizers must develop a rough calculation of the costs they are willing to make – based on the number of days a study visit should last, the number of host facilities visited, as well as additional factors. Then a rough calculation should be made with regard to what would the minimum number of participants be, to cover these costs – and in line with this, what the optimal participants' fee should be. To organise a study visit, suitable host facilities must be secured, which would allow for a group of people to learn more about the host and its operations. Logistical costs could include renting a venue, organizing set-up of the room (beamer, microphones, etc.) as well as catering.

The costs made by the Secretariat should only include the man hours from its employees that are working on the organisation of the study visit. The initial costs made for arranging the study visit should thus be borne by the institution that is expressing an interest in organizing such a visit.

### 3.4 Promotion

In order to ensure that enough participants are found that are interested in joining a study visit, the Lead and the Secretariat must join forces in promoting the study visit. This includes online promotion as well as potentially with physical material at events of strategic interest and including references to the study visits in presentations or panel sessions in which members of the South Baltic Aquaculture Alliance partake.

Promoting the study visits online can be done through numerous activities, of which the most prominent would be the SUBMARINER Network website as well as the institutional websites of the members of the Alliance. The Secretariat would host a dedicated webpage on which an outline of the study visits concept is presented, together with the reports of previously organized visits and a page where the potential host facilities are prominently displayed. Dedicated paragraphs should be included on the website that outline the benefits of participating in a study visit, as well as the benefits of acting as a host facility. Concrete ideas to engage website visitors in the study visits could include the installing of a 'one-click' button – for instance 'Please send me more information about study visits'. In addition, a dedicated FAQ section could be included on this webpage, listing the answers to questions that potential participants or hosts may have.

Additional promotional activities online may include the social media accounts of the Alliance members, as well as the inclusion of the study visits in both these and external newsletters and online event calendars. It may also be an idea to develop a brochure outlining what a study visit is, why it is interesting, and how one may express their interest to the Secretariat. Following the example of the study visit that was organized in Belgium, questionnaires should be distributed to the participants to assess their interest in attending future study visits, as well as an element of evaluation so that the next study visit may be optimized.

### 3.5 Looking forward to the study visits

Generally, the idea of continuing the study visits after project-end seems to have a good basis for success.

Looking at the responses to the questionnaire that was distributed during the study visit in Belgium, participants would be most interested in a study visit that lasts up to two days. The results showed that they would be willing to pay from €400 to €600 for such a trip, and the calculations done on the basis of the two past study visits showed that to more or less cover the costs, a participant fee should be around €550. It is therefore suggested that the first study visit that will be organised, should last up to 2 days, take place in a single country, and visit less than 6 aquaculture facilities. If we look again at the table with the indicative prices of participant fees (see below), it might be a good idea to try and keep the costs at around €8.000, so that a participant fee of €533 may be asked of 15 participants. If this number of participants is deemed too high to realise, it might be an idea to try and keep the costs at €5.000, so that only 12 participants with a participant fee of €416.67 would be needed to cover the costs. It is suggested that for the study visits to successfully launch as a permanent service offer, it would be good to develop one or two concrete suggestions and to promote these actively to selected stakeholders. This means that a certain topic would have to be selected, as well as already one or two host facilities that would be visited during the study visit. In this way, potentially more participants would be attracted to attend the study visit.

	Costs of a study visit: €5.000	Costs of a study visit: €8.000	Costs of a study visit: €10.000
10 pax	€500	€800	€1.000
12 pax	€416.67	€666.67	€833.33
15 pax	€333.33	€533	€666.67
18 pax	€277.78	€444.44	€555.56
20 pax	€250	€400	€500

Table 3: Indicate costs of future participant fees

## 4. Other possible activities of the SBAC working group

Above we developed a study visits manual that could be used a guide when the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation develops study visits in the future.

Other activities that may be realized by the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation are:

- Organise international business study visits to aquaculture sites inside and outside the BSR on a demand-driven basis
- Facilitate matchmaking events for aquaculture practitioners to find the right Baltic Sea Region partners to complete product development value chains
- Organise Summer schools, dedicated workshops and training courses on tailored topics on a demand-driven basis



- Maintain, provide promotion and end-user support to the InnoAquaTech Decision Support Tool, which addresses technological, environmental and economical dimensions of aquaculture facilities.
- Provide promotion for the InnoAquaTech project pilots and their results:
  - Feasibility report on innovative aquaponic systems production; combining lessons learnt from two pilots on aquaponic systems from Germany and Denmark
  - Prototype and feasibility study on RAS shrimp production based on geothermal technology in Lithuania
  - An evaluation of the potential of crustacean production in RAS in Pomerania, Poland
- Scan for funding and investment opportunities and dedicated partner collaboration in proposal development
- Connect to R&D, regional development actors as well as industry innovators
- Be THE One-stop-shop for relevant information on sustainable aquaculture and offered services (incl. Accessible demonstration plants)
- Make the cross-sectoral interlinkage to actors from other blue bioeconomy thematic fields, e.g. Blue biotechnology, mussel farming, algae, multi-uses of sea, beach cast, marine litter etc.
- Provide consulting services on offer through the SUBMARINER members on a demand-driven basis; e.g. assessment of business potential, technical/scientific support, product development, legal advice and financing.

These activities are inherited from InnoAquaTech projects rational and project activities, and many activities (e.g. Investment brochure, or the DST) have attached outputs that were developed during the project's lifetime.

As it was mentioned earlier, the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation activities will be provided by "expert" partners voluntarily, while SUBMARINER will have a facilitating, coordinating, or communicating role. For example, the DST, a decision support tool specially developed for RAS aquaculture investors with economic and technology references, will be maintained by partner University of Rostock that developed the tool, while SUBMARINER will promote it in all channels to end-users.

## 5. The next steps

In the last InnoAquaTech project partner meeting in Vejle, Denmark in May 2019, the InnoAquaTech project partners have joined forces to form the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation, operating as a Working Group under the SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth EEIG. This was based on a unanimous voice agreement among all project partners.

As a follow-up to this preliminary decision, the Lead Partner collected letters of support (in form of emails) by all InnoAquatech project partners that wish to be members of the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation.



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The undergoing activities, including news and events of the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation will be promoted online. SUBMARINER Network secretariat is currently updating its website, in order to create a platform for aquaculture cooperation and host the potential activities of the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation. The brand-new website will be launched by the end of summer 2019.

For more information and future developments from the South Baltic Aquaculture Cooperation, please contact the SUBMARINER Network secretariat at:

<https://www.submariner-network.eu/>