



How Can the Aquaculture Sector Contribute to Reducing Marine Litter?

AQUA-LIT Learning Labs Coming Soon!

Autumn will bring new exciting challenges for the AQUA-LIT project team and the European aquaculture scene.

In the upcoming months of this second half of 2019, **three interactive workshops** will bring together all range of stakeholders from the aquaculture sector in full immersion days of discussions, knowledge exchange and brain-storming on solutions and methodology for tackling marine litter **in the Mediterranean, North Sea and Baltic regions.**

Every year, millions of tonnes of litter end up in the ocean worldwide, posing environmental, economic and health problems. It is estimated that **over 150 million tonnes of plastics have accumulated in the world's oceans**, while 4.6-12.7 million tonnes are discarded every year. Ocean based sources account for 20 % of the plastic pollution. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Strategy for Plastics, the Port Reception Facilities Directive adopted by the European Commission require member states to assess, monitor, set targets and reach good environmental status with regard to marine litter. Successful implementation of national waste policies and their industries is therefore a prerequisite to avoid plastic litter entering the marine environment.

Considering that **aquaculture is the fastest growing food-producing sector** with an expansion rate of 8% per year, it is now the **time to act** in order to prevent the increase of marine litter and to support the removal of the already existing one, **so that the marine litter does not increase with the expansion of the industry.**

Therefore, the AQUA-LIT project funded by the European Union, is aiming at providing the aquaculture sector with a toolbox of preventive measures for averting the discard of litter in the marine environment. The objectives are to:

- ✓ Better understand the impact of aquaculture activities on the marine environment through litter **monitoring and quantification frameworks**,
- ✓ Provide the aquaculture industry **with preventive measures** that help reduce marine litter,
- ✓ Provide mechanisms that help **remove the existing marine debris**,
- ✓ Provide **solutions for recycling** plastic waste, aiming towards a circular economy, and
- ✓ Examine which **policies** need to be adapted or put in place to underpin these practical actions.





In order to ensure successful outcomes and achieve these objectives, the AQUA-LIT project members **believe that it is essential to work hand in hand and cooperate with aquaculture stakeholders of the entire value chain.**

The Learning Labs are a way of directly involving stakeholders in the process, getting their valuable insights and contributions, developing productive partnerships and building capacity to produce mutually valued outcomes. They will be therefore open to **all aquaculture stakeholders** such as aquaculture farmers, aquaculture gear producers, researchers, innovators, start-ups, port authorities, port staff, policy makers and NGO representatives.

The three Learning Labs will focus on three different sea basins - **Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea and North Sea** - and will be organised by different partners from the AQUA-LIT consortium.

The **Baltic Sea Learning Lab** will be held back to back with the Aquaculture Europe Congress 2019 to be held from the 7th to 10th November in **Berlin, Germany**, and will be organised by Sustainable Projects.

The **Mediterranean Sea Learning Lab** will be organised by Instituto Espanol de Oceanografia and EurOcean on the 30th November, the Aquaculture Day 2019 in **Spain**.

The **North Sea Learning Lab** will be organised by Flanders Marine Institute on the occasion of the Annual Aquaculture Conference to be held at the end of November in **Ostend, Belgium**.

The labs will be interactive workshops where participants will work in groups to identify and assess solutions and methodologies from three perspectives:



Prevention & reduction



Monitoring & quantification



Removal & recycling

The outcomes will contribute to shaping the AQUA-LIT toolbox, a set of tangible solutions and measures empowering the aquaculture sector to tackle marine litter and they will be communicated to the European Union.

**Stay tuned for further updates
and make sure you register to one of the Learning Labs.**

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