

InTerAct News

Industry Academia Interaction in the Marine Sector



The InTerAct project is funded by the Nordic Innovation Centre and includes participants from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland. The Applied Supply Chain Research Group from University of Iceland coordinates the project (see full list of partners on the last page). The project started in January 2012 and ends in December 2013. The key objective of the work is expressed by the title **InTerAct** referring to academia and industry interaction.

ISSUE 1

Content

Stakeholder meeting was held in March 2012 in Grindavík, Iceland. Fishing industry and academia collaborated on educational needs.

Business Canvas Methodology workshop

Stakeholder March meeting in Grindavík, Iceland. University of Iceland Social Science Institute is interviewing industry experts in Iceland.

More Nordic interviews scheduled

Upcoming Actions

Stakeholder workshops and Focus Group meetings planned for Denmark, Norway and Sweden

Academia aims to reach out to industry

Feedback from the aquatic industry regarding educational needs throughout the value chain is needed to guide educational developments.

Food quality, safety and value chain drivers

The Interactions between academia and the fisheries, aquaculture and processing industry includes the whole value and supply chain from origin to the markets and the consumers.

InTerAct and the AQFood Nordic master programme

The InTerAct project is a complimentary and supporting project for the Nordic Master programme Aquatic Food Production - Quality and Safety, which is an international master programme that has been launched through a collaborative effort of five Nordic universities. For more information visit the AQFood website [www.aqfood.org]. This Nordic higher educational programme focuses on the marine sector and provision of education to meet the industry requirements for recruitment of staff with an excellent scientific and technological background and innovation potential. The InTerAct project will address possible challenges occurring when establishing industry - academia interaction in education programmes and promoting

attractive career opportunities. This will be conducted using both qualitative social science research methods (interviews with managers in the industry), quantitative methods (surveys among university science students and the public) and by working together with higher educational institutes and communication experts in order to establish stronger channels of collaboration between the academia and the industry. Students from The AQFood master programme will have opportunities to work with industry based research projects as part of their thesis through improved interaction channels.

Specific Aims of the InTerAct project to compliment the AQFood Nordic master programme:

- Interact with industries in the aquatic value chain in order to align their needs with educational content
- Define what is needed to establish sustainable platforms for industry – academia interaction in educational programmes
- Promote the marine sector’s image as an attractive career opportunity for students with a higher education degree
- Strengthen the image of the Nordic marine sector by using new media to reach to students and stakeholders.



The Grindavík stakeholder workshop delivered many ideas that are being used to create basis for the interviews with key industry personnel. Also to develop targeted questionnaires and prepare the focus groups

The Grindavík Stakeholder Workshop March 21, 2012.



Participants working on the business model canvases and absorbed in the discussions.

*From left: Einar Lárusson, Þorbjörn hf,
Erla Ósk Pétursdóttir, Vísir hf
Guðbjörg Andrea Jónssdóttir, SSRI U. of Iceland*

The Grindavík stakeholder workshop in Iceland was a joint effort of two projects, InTerAct and Nordic Marine Marketing, both funded by the Nordic Innovation Centre. The workshop was carried out according to the Business Model Canvas methodology by Innovit. This implies that participants worked in small groups (3-4) and went through nine factors integral to the general business model: (1) Key partners; (2) key activities; (3) value propositions; (4) customer relationships; (5) customer segments; (6) channels; (7) cost structure; (8) revenue streams; and (9) key resources. Participants worked in groups and discussed current status, perceived challenges and opportunities for improvement.

The focus of the mapping exercise using the Business Model Canvas was solely on issues of education, and the industry requirements for educated people taking up a career in the fishery, aquaculture and seafood processing and

marketing sector, including value chain logistics etc.

There was a general agreement in comments by participants that the links between educational institutes, the industry and consumers were too weak, the cooperation between universities and the industry needed improvement and the image of the industry was that it was old fashioned, stagnated and not appealing to young people. It was noted that the importance of the fishing industry for the economy was not reflected at all in the educational system. Few study offers are



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available and there is lack of study programme that cater to the special needs of the industry, in particular there was interest to enhance vocational and hands-on training.

In general it can be said that the educational system had a weak presence in discussion on challenges and opportunities of the fishery sector.



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A theme running through comments and the general discussion was the lack of interest by the industry in university education. In discussion on “key activities”, this was described as “low demand for higher education by the industry”. While this was reckoned to pose serious problems to the industry, its rate of innovation and thus overall competitiveness, the situation was also thought to provide plenty of opportunities for amendments. Examples are the design and implementation of shorter courses in life-long learning programmes, high quality distance education that would offer more flexibility for the student and the establishment of study programme focusing on the needs of the industry in terms of business and marketing education, processing and logistics. Participants also mentioned the possibility to create stronger links between a particular study programme and the industry. This could be done by creating opportunities for students to get practical training within companies as well as taking part in R&D projects within them and through direct financing through scholarships. Hence, the companies would increase their investment in education and come to appreciate its value to a greater extent.

Different reasons for the weak connection between the educational system and the industry were mentioned. The lack of presence of fisheries in the curriculum throughout the whole educational system was thought to be very important in this regard but also the general image of the fishing sector as being old fashioned and not providing career opportunities for highly educated “modern” people. In order to change this situation it was noted that both partners, i.e. educational institutes and industry stakeholders would need to be active. The universities for instance, would need to be much more active in introducing their study offers to the industry and the studies offered would need to be more practical and thus more in line with the actual problems the companies are facing on a daily basis. It was however also noted that while the academia can be said to have little understanding of the hustle and bustle of the industry the same could be said about the understanding by the industry of academic knowledge. There is a lack of understanding of the value of basic research and how higher education in different areas (not only in business and marketing) can improve efficiency and raise the level of competitiveness. Thus, there is little/limited consciousness about how knowledge can be a resource for the industry.



Sigurður G. Bogason, ASCS/UoI and Gunnar Tómasson Manager Production & Marketing at Þorbjörn hf discuss development challenges and how education can adapt to the industry needs

The perceived challenges identified in the meeting can be categorized as follows:

- New and improved educational programme needed
- Improved connection and cooperation/interaction between educational institutes and the industry
- Low demand by the industry for university education and lack of understanding of what higher education can offer
- Limited interest in education related to fisheries by students
- The promotion of educational offers not efficient enough
- Financial support lacking

In the same way suggestions of how to tackle the current situation can be categorized as follows:

- To create new educational offers in the form of shorter courses, better and enhanced distance learning and more specific offers for the fishery sector
- Direct financial support by the industry in the form of scholarships, research grants and direct collaboration/interaction between firms and educational institutes such as universities.

Companies expressed their willingness to increase their investment in education by creating opportunities for practical training for students and to take part in R&D projects, as well as through direct financing through scholarships.

InTerAct project meetings

The InTerAct team met in Reykjavík on 5 May 2012 to discuss progress. Results from the Grindavík stakeholder workshop were reviewed, and possible implications for the AQFood masters programme, and if this would prove to be indicative for the whole Nordic region. Further stakeholder meetings are planned in the other countries to get additional inputs for the analysis.

The interview framework was discussed and its adaptation with some amendments was approved, and the Social Sciences Research Institute, University of Iceland would start interviewing fish industry managers in Iceland.



InTerAct partners in front of the Icelandic embassy in Copenhagen.

From project meeting 30 August 2012

Preliminary analysis suggests a more positive attitude towards higher education within the industry by the respondents, who all have university education, than was expressed by participants in the stakeholder workshop in Grindavík. Greater consensus is on the importance of increasing the availability of education at other educational levels within the industry.

In order to increase students' awareness of the industry as a potential professional environment, major emphasis should be on increasing and enhancing promotion of opportunities in all areas of the industry. This is needed to improve the image of the industry domestically and to take advantage of overlooked opportunities on a Nordic level.



Prof. Turid Rustad from NTNU and Andreas Petterson from SLU happily reviewing the InTerAct progress at the Reykjavík meeting in May 2012

The project team met again on 30 August 2012 to review progress, and the meeting place was the Icelandic Embassy in downtown Copenhagen, which proved to be a very good location for the meeting. The initial analysis of interviews with managers in the Icelandic marine industry gives an interesting overview of potential opportunities for improving the image of the marine sector and career opportunities in the aquatic food value chain. The interviews were semi-structured relying on a flexible interview guide, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview in response to what the interviewees say. The Social Science Research Institute conducted the interviews.



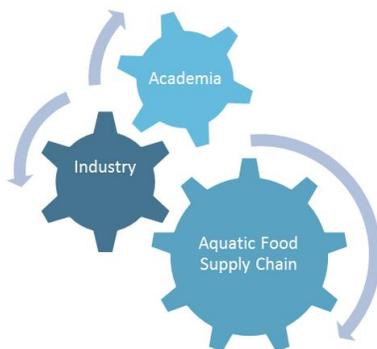
Industry and academia need to improve communications and means for interacting dialogue

AQFood Advisory Board Meeting in Copenhagen August 31, 2012

In connection with the start-up of the new Nordic AQFood international master programme an external advisory board evaluated the programme. The scope of the AQFood programme was considered very relevant for the industry and the board members advised to establish a structured industry involvement in the development of the education by inviting more industrial representatives to the advisory board. They recommended that more emphasis should be on marketing of the programme and to develop strong links to industry in the form of co-supervision of students and visits to industry through the whole value chain.



Caroline Baron, Technical Univ. of Denmark (DTU) is the coordinator of the AQFood programme



www.aqfood.org

InTerAct collaborates with Iceland Ocean Cluster with focus on education

University of Iceland representing AQFood and InTerAct has participated in a focus group on marine related education led by the Iceland Ocean Cluster. All educational institutions in Iceland which focus primarily or partly on marine education have formed a group to implement a common strategy to increase interest among new generations for marine related education. The eight institutions are emphasizing ways to increase cooperation, open the possibilities for students to take courses in different schools, and connect the education better to the industry. <http://www.sjavarklasinn.is/en/menntavitinn/>



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The InTerAct team members are also leading the Nordic Master programme

AQFood

Aquatic Food Production - Quality and Safety

www.aqfood.org