

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DG RTD ON THE ROLE OF MARINE BIOTECHNOLOGY IN HORIZON 2020

Guiu Etxeberria Garbiñe

Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) – European Commission, Place Rogiers
16, 09/24, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium
E-mail: garbine.guiu@ec.europa.eu

Biotechnology plays a vital role in the competitiveness of the European economy – from health care and pharmaceuticals to industrial processing, primary production and food. Biotechnology enables the development of medicines tailored to the specific needs of individual patients, of more efficient ways to use scarce resources like biomass and water and of new processes for the production of essential chemicals, food additives and materials while protecting our environment. Europe is in the lead in many of these areas, and our biotechnology industries have an important role to play for economic growth and job creation.

With the largest part of the world biodiversity still undiscovered in the oceans, biotechnology is an essential enabling technology to open new avenues for exploring and exploiting the huge potential of marine resources for innovative products and applications.

Boosting marine innovation through biotechnology-related activities is specifically mentioned in Horizon 2020: under the priority ‘Better Society’. In particular under the Challenge ‘Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research and the bio-economy’ marine biotechnology will support the development of sustainable approaches to further explore and exploit the large potential offered by marine biodiversity and aquatic biomass to bring new innovative processes, products and services on the markets with potential application for example in sectors including chemical, biochemical and material industries, pharmaceuticals, fisheries and aquaculture or energy and biofuels supply.

Under the priority ‘Competitive Industries’, key enabling technologies marine biotechnology will be further advanced for use in multiple sectors, industries and services using a new, technology-driven approach.

At the heart of Horizon 2020 objectives will also be the need to develop cross cutting marine and maritime scientific and technological knowledge with a view to unlock the blue growth potential across the marine and maritime industries. This strategic coordinated approach for marine and maritime research across all challenges and pillars of Horizon 2020 will be key to support the implementation of relevant Union policies and to help deliver blue growth objectives.

The objective to better align and link national research efforts with European research collaborations moving towards a coherent pan-European science policy and coordination for Marine Biotechnology Research perfectly fits HORIZON 2020 aims.