

Marine Biotechnology ERA-NET: a European funding initiative for interdisciplinary research and collaboration

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The **ERA-NET MarineBiotech** (ERA-MBT)¹ recognises that Europe's marine ecosystems and organisms are largely unexplored, understudied and underutilized, in spite of Europe's access to an extensive and diverse set of marine ecosystems, supporting an enormous marine biodiversity. This resource, through the coordinated application of marine biotechnology, has the potential to provide a major contribution towards addressing some of the most pressing societal challenges including environmental degradation, human health and delivering sustainable supplies of food and energy, amongst others regarded as the Grand Challenges for our future.

The ERA-MBT is therefore designed to deliver better coordination of relevant national and regional Research, Technology, Development and Innovation (RTDI) programmes in Europe, reducing fragmentation and duplication, and paving the way for common programmes and cooperation in the provision and use of research infrastructures. A necessity to make sustainable use of this unique resource.

ERA-MBT's 21 partners will work with stakeholders from industry and organisations to identify needs and gaps in the value chain from research and development, through optimising research results for proof of concept and industrial uptake and valorisation.

At least three transnational calls will address these challenges, and cooperation with complementing activities will be explored to add value and power to enable the development of a horizontally applicable technology like marine biotechnology.

In Belgium, close cooperation will be established with the members of the '**Mariene Biotechnologie Platform Vlaanderen**'. This platform was established early 2012 to increase the visibility of marine biotechnology in Flanders where a significant number of scientists are involved in various research aspects. Also from the industry there is a great interest in marine biotechnology research and industrial applications. This platform may contribute to the general recognition of marine biotechnology research, lead to improved cooperation between experts from academia and the industry and promote interdisciplinary collaborations and networking with European partners.

References

¹<http://www.marinebiotech.eu/>

²<http://www.mariene-biotechnologie.be/>