

LABELFISH: The Atlantic Network on Genetic Control of Fish and Seafood Labeling and Traceability

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Traceability of fish and seafood is mandatory since 2005 within the EU. Full implementation requires an adequate management of information and also the availability of techniques which allow the verification of the information transmitted. One of the relevant aspects of the verification of traceability and labelling legislation is the capability of identify and authenticate biological species. In recent years a substantial amount of research has been invested in the development of genetic methods for the identification of commercially fish. However, there is still a need to standardize these methodologies among the user laboratories and also to update databases and genetic profiles of commercially relevant species in order to provide a standardized response regardless of the country, or laboratory, where the analyses are performed.

LABELFISH is a project funded by the Atlantic Area Programme and includes participants of six countries in Europe, mainly from the Atlantic area, which are characterized by an intense economic and social relationship with marine resources.

The main objective of **LABEL FISH** is to set up a network of laboratories and national control

bodies with experience and interest in the development of a common strategy and in the use of harmonized analytical techniques for the control of genetic traceability and labelling of seafood products which are sold in the European market and in particular in the respective countries involved in the project. This general objective will have as specific objectives: I) the development of a new database which will gather different existing genetic data (mostly DNA genetic markers) and ii) the selection of tested and validated analytical tools for the identification of the selected fish species with commercial importance in the Atlantic area regions. Expected outcomes of the present proposal are the protection of the both European consumers and SMEs involved in fisheries and aquaculture in the Atlantic regions. The former by helping to ensure their rights to correct product information and the latter by implementing reliable traceability and authentication genetic tools which will ultimately protect their own produce and protect their market niche.

Presentation 58