

Biomarine Business Convention

7 – 9 September 2011, Nantes, France

The **Biomarine Business Convention** is a high-level international business convention dedicated to Marine Bio-resources. The event takes place every year, bringing together the major participants of the marine world and providing opportunities to initiate or develop partnerships between companies, with the goal to develop small, medium and national companies on the international stage. The event includes company presentations, exhibits and power breakfasts featuring industry experts.

On behalf of the MG4U consortium, a delegation from the *Station Biologique de Roscoff* (CNRS-UPMC) attended, including **Bernard Kloareg** (MG4U coordinator) and **Damien Guiffant** (MG4U project manager), as well as **Johanna Wesnigk** from the German *EMPA* and **John Benzie** from *University College Cork*.

Important topics discussed during the convention were:

- Marine biotechnology, including animal feed, fish meal and oils,
- Algae (for biofuel, cosmetics, health)
- Bio-marine resources (cultivating, sustainability, efficiency)
- Funding and investment opportunities in the bio-marine fields

Among the many interesting talks and debates, four items were specifically featuring MG4U elements:

- Presentation of the MG4U and other genomic projects during a power breakfast entitled; From bioresources to biotechnologies: EMBRC, MG4U and IDEALG, a set of new instruments to accelerate “blue growth”.
- A panel discussion dedicated to Marine Genomics with Catherine Boyen (former *Marine Genomics Europe* coordinator from CNRS Roscoff) as a panellist.
- 15 partnering meetings with research institutes and companies.
- Poster presentation of MG4U, including a short talk.

1- From bioresources to biotechnologies: EMBRC, MG4U and IDEALG, a set of new instruments to accelerate “blue growth” in Europe

On 7th September, a one-hour power breakfast was devoted to promoting several projects that can be considered as a set of instruments to accelerate the “blue growth” in Europe. Prof. Bernard Kloareg introduced the *Station Biologique de Roscoff* strategy at European level. Several projects illustrating it were more precisely described by colleagues:

- Ian Probert talked about the ESFRI research infrastructures known as “European Marine Biological Resource Center” (EMBRC, FP7), which provides a variety of enabling technologies and resources in marine genomics;
- John Benzie informed the audience on the EC FP7 project Marine Genomics for Users (MG4U), whose aim is to enable transfer of the concepts, data and resources in marine genomics to potential end-users including scientists, government and industry;
- Philippe Potin presented the IDEALG project, a major “Investissement d’Avenir” programme in France. This



To present MG4U, John Benzie took the floor in front of a forty people audience.

project will capitalize on the recent breakthroughs in algal genomics to develop several applications from seaweed bio-resources.

Concerning the MG4U project, John Benzie engaged the audience in a dialogue to find out about the various expectations of the audience. Attendees, coming from diverse research fields and various companies, showed an interest in the MG4U approach, making this session very encouraging. It became clear that this kind of initiative is very important and that an efficient methodology must be developed to inform them on the project's pioneering technology development and knowledge outcomes.

2- Marine genomics, a crossroad between Life Sciences, Ecology, Environment, Bioinformatics and High Technologies

The network of excellence *Marine Genomics Europe* (MGE, FP6) was the major predecessor of *MG4U*. It was coordinated by Catherine Boyen (Head of Unit in Roscoff), one of the panellists in this session. She demonstrated, together with two other panellists, the huge potential of this field. Nowadays, marine genomics is in its infancy but it is clear that a strong community has been built over the past years, particularly through Europe. All of the panellists agreed that research into this domain and related disciplines can help to develop new pathways between academia and industry; therefore, cross-disciplinary cooperation is needed.

3- One-to-one meetings

Johanna Wesnigk, John Benzie and Damien Guiffant had the opportunity to meet people from varied backgrounds (research institutes and private companies) during one-to-one partnering talks with 15 companies. The aim of these meetings was not only to promote MG4U but also to obtain some information about needs of potential end-users with the help of a questionnaire developed by [EMPA](#). With the answers, we will be able to better define the methodologies to present marine genomics research and services of interest in alignment with the expectations of users. EMPA staff is analysing the replies, which will be complemented with answers from the [Biotechnica event](#) in October 2011, to derive the best methodologies for involving industrial partners in marine genomics outcomes.

4- Several media to present MG4U

MG4U was strongly represented during this convention, particularly thanks to the help of:

- [Capbiotek](#), a cluster that aims to develop biotechnologies in Brittany (France) and to promote natural bio-resources, who gave Damien Guiffant the opportunity for a formal presentation of MG4U during one networking coffee-break and to present a slideshow during the meeting.
- [Biogenouest](#), a network of platforms in life science and environmental fields in the west of France. A poster dedicated to MG4U was presented at their booth.

MG4U [factsheets](#) were also available at both these booths for interested Biomarine attendees.



Johanna Wesnigk in front of the MG4U poster, Biogenouest stand.