

Latest BYTHOS project meeting hosted by the University of Malta

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The 4th Steering Committee meeting of the BYTHOS (Biotechnologies for Human Health and Blue Growth) project, funded within the framework of the Interreg Italia-Malta 2014-2020 Operational Programme I, was formally hosted by the University of Malta earlier this week. The meeting was opened by Parliamentary Secretary Hon. Dr Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi, Italian Ambassador to Malta Dr Mario Sammartino, by University of Malta Pro-Rector Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino and by Geosciences Departmental Head Dr Pierre-Sandre Farrugia.

The project brings together six partners from Sicily and Malta, with the Maltese partners being the University of Malta, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the SME Aquabiotech Limited.

Prof. Alan Deidun, resident academic at the Department of Geosciences within the Faculty of Science, is lead investigator for the University on such a project, whose main aim is the isolation of BAMs (Biologically Active Molecules, such as collagen, gelatin and omega-3 oils, for which there is a high market demand) from waste fish biomass which is normally discarded. Dr Marion Zammit Mangion, from the Department of Physiology and Biochemistry within the Faculty of Medicine, is also actively engaged within the project, with Prof. Vincenzo Arizza from the University of Palermo being the project's Lead Partner.

Such waste fish biomass could originate from bycatch, from the processing of fish sold at markets, restaurants and shops or even from the offal (the interns of butchered animals) of caged fish. In aspiring to address the management of such waste, the project also has a putative positive impact on the circular economy side.

Yet another objective of this project is the identification of less polluting feeds for aquaculture as well as the development of BYTHOS labs where the laboratory processes involved in the extraction of BAMs could be showcased to potential investors.

The project runs till the end of May 2021.

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