AE2025 - Aquaculture for Everyone

aquaculture europe

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A legal analysis of the reuse of aquaculture effluents, fish processing waste, and algae biomass

LAND-BASED rearing of marine Pearl Oysters in India

Mediterranean Marine Finfish Aquaculture Demonstration Centre (MMF-ADC)

THE MEMBERS' MAGAZINE OF THE EUROPEAN AQUACULTURE SOCIETY

Participants together with the judging panel

Young Innovators Tackled Blue Economy Challenges at the Blue Bio Techpreneurs Baltic Hackathon

BASIA DMOCHOWSKA | UNIVERSITY OF GDAŃSK & KONSTANTINOS MADIAS, SUBMARINER NETWORK

From June 6–8, 2025, the **University of Gdańsk** hosted the **Blue Bio Techpreneurs** Baltic Hackathon, a three-day event organized under the **Blue Bio Techpreneurs** project, co-financed by the **European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund** (EMFAF) for 2021–2027.

The event brought together some of Europe's brightest young minds to develop practical, innovative solutions for real-world challenges in the **blue economy,** focusing on sustainable aquaculture and marine biotechnology.

Diverse Talent, Real Impact

Selected from 58 high-quality applications, **25 students from 15 countries** representing master's and doctoral programs in marine science, biotechnology, and aquaculture gathered for a fulfilling weekend. They worked alongside experts and mentors from various fields, including business, finance, marketing, and research, to tackle blue biotech challenges in multidisciplinary teams. With 48 hours at their disposal, the participants generated solutions for **five real regional challenges** submitted by companies and institutions and tailored to their interests.

- The challenges addressed included:
- What's the secret to building an energy-efficient recirculating aquaculture system (RAS) in the Baltic area?
- How can we make recirculating aquaculture system (RAS) production in the Baltic area sexy?
- Can we find a sustainable replacement for minerals (mica), used in cosmetics, in the Baltic?
- How can Baltic offshore wind farms be inspired to invest in regenerative ocean farming?
- How can we raise healthier fish with fewer treatments in intensive recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) in the Baltic area?

Mentorship, Collaboration & Real-World Learning

The hackathon kicked off at the **Faculty of Oceanography and Geography, University of Gdańsk** with the welcome speeches by Prof. Katarzyna Smolarz, Dean of the Faculty of Oceanography and Geography, University of Gdańsk, Hanna Łądkowska, BBT project Coordinator at the University of Gdańsk, and Katharina Kurtzweil, BBT Project Coordinator. Afterwards, industry experts introduced their challenges, including representatives from Aqua Medic Poland, SUBMARINER Network, Business Lolland-Falster, Officina Baltica, Klaipeda Science and Technology Park (Cool Blue Baltic), and K-2 Fish Farm.

After the introductions, teams headed to **UG's Water Monitoring and Protection Centre in Borucino**, by scenic Raduńskie Lake, to dive into two days of brainstorming and challenge solving with the guidance of their mentors.

During the final pitching session, participants presented their final solutions in creative ways. Each team presented their problem, proposed solution, implementation strategy, potential outcomes, and feasibility assessment.

The jury – experts from across Europe, including representatives of project partners and the academic and business communities faced a challenging task in selecting the best projects.

Photos: Hanna Dmochowska

Participants and faculty

1st place winning group receiving prizes.

Pitching session

Bonfire after the event

1st Place team

Awards and Recognition

The pitching session showcased the students' creativity, knowledge, and drive. Teams presented their challenge, solution, implementation plan, expected results, and feasibility.

The jury had a tough decision to make, but three projects stood out:

1st Place: A team proposing to replace mica (used in cosmetics) with cellulose from Baltic Cladophora algae—praised for its innovation, market potential, and environmental benefits.

2nd Place: A project focused on improving fish health in RAS systems with fewer chemical treatments.

3rd Place: An initiative aimed at improving the image and market appeal of RAS-produced fish in the Baltic region.

Winners received mentoring sessions from experts at the University of Gdańsk's Center for Sustainable Development and Technology Transfer Center, along with other prizes from the university and the Polish Trout Breeders Association.

Participant Feedback: Outstanding Across the Board

Participants, organizers, and partners unanimously praised the excellent atmosphere, professionalism, and high quality of projects. Feedback from 27 respondents showed overwhelming satisfaction. All responders found the challenges relevant and appreciated the participants' backgrounds and mentors' support. The venue, facilities, resources, and management received perfect scores, and everyone agreed the hackathon contributed to their knowledge and skills in the blue bio/tech industry. Most respondents valued networking highly and noted that the event exceeded their expectations.

Selected comments included:

"You managed to make the event a great experience - it turned out much better than I expected."

"I had a good and fun time meeting new people and sharing ideas for a sustainable future."

"Participating gave me new perspective on transferring scientific knowledge into market value."

"Mentors were helpful, and arrangements were excellent."

"A perfect event. Thank you!"

A Huge Thank You to Our Supporters

We sincerely thank the **European Aquaculture Society - Student Group**, who actively promoted the event among aquaculture students across Europe, significantly boosting outreach and engagement.

Additional thanks go to CINEA, the BBT Project Consortium partners (SUBMARINER Network, University of Southern Denmark, BlueBio Alliance, Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique), challenge owners, mentors, facilitators, jury members, University of Gdańsk, Polish Trout Breeders Association, and Hotel Adler Medical Spa.

What's Next? Join the Atlantic Hackathon in Portugal

The next Blue Bio Techpreneurs event will be the **Atlantic Hackathon** in Peniche, Portugal, with the call for participants opening in September 2025. If you're passionate about blue innovation and ready to tackle real-world challenges, don't miss this opportunity. More information is available at the BBT website.

If you are still not sure, please have a look at the recap from the Baltic Hackathon

About BlueBioTechpreneurs

The BBT Project empowers students and graduates to innovate in the blue bioeconomy through hackathons in Baltic, Nordic, and Atlantic regions, a "Transferring the Business Gene" webinar series, and free MOOC courses on entrepreneurship, digital skills, and sustainability. Running until February 2026, BBT helps shape the next generation of blue biotech entrepreneurs in Europe.

aquaculture europe 26

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AQUACULTURE IN GLOBAL CHANGE

#AE26SLO

Organized by

eas 50 european aquaculture society years

Since 1976, EAS has been bringing people together for the sustainable development of European aquaculture. As we celebrate our 50th birthday, we look back on key moments and key persons that made EAS what it is today. And we also look forward - continuing to expand our student activities and network and propose benefits for members that are suited to their profile and needs. We will celebrate this milestone throughout the year on social media, and in person at Aquaculture Europe 2026 in Ljubljana, where we invite EAS members to join the celebrations.

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