UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Photo: Johanna Valero

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MARELIFE BIOMARINE INNOVATION NETWORK

DANSK SKALDYRCENTER

mare novum
CENTRUM FÖR MARIN INNOVATIONS- & NÄRINGSLIVSUTVECKLING

Detta projekt medfinansieras av

VÄSTRA GÖTALANDSREGIONEN

REGION NORDJYLLAND

THE NORD-OSTRON PROJECT

[Scandinavian oyster consortium]

Photo: Annika Söderpalm

Nord-Ostron is a tree-year project within the EU Interreg programme (Interreg IVA Kattegat-Skagerrak). The aim of the project is to develop collaboration in the marine sector between Swedish, Norwegian and Danish universities, organizations and enterprises. Farming of the European flat oyster, Ostrea edulis, provides a model case study for the long-term goal of building collaborative structures that support business growth in the marine sector. The Nord-Ostron project was launched June 1st, 2009.

Beneficial to the environment

Sustainable use of marine resources is a common responsibility for the three countries in the KASK region. Aquaculture of marine fish and shellfish is an expanding sector producing healthy and ecologically sound alternatives to traditional marine fishery. Additionally, mussel and oyster farms have positive effects on the marine environment since filter-feeding bivalves have the potential to reduce eutrophication effects. Hence, increased bivalve farming is in line with the European strategies for the development of a sustainable aquaculture sector.

Ostrea edulis is a valuable resource

The European flat oyster, *Ostrea edulis*, is highly sought after. It has been cultured for more than a century along the Atlantic coast. However, in the 1970s the production was drastically reduced due to infectious parasitic diseases. There is now a growing industrial interest to develop techniques for the farming of *Ostrea edulis* in the Kattegat-Skagerrak (KASK) region. This region has favorable characteristics for farming of filter-feeding bivalves due to the high nutrient content in coastal waters, which results in rapid growth rates and produces a premium quality shellfish. The Scandinavian oyster population is a unique and valuable resource, which has motivated trans-national efforts to both protect the naturally occurring resource and to develop a commercial oyster aquaculture industry.

The Nord-Ostron Project establishes collaborative efforts

Technological development of farming methods adapted to the region is needed for expansion of the aquaculture industry. The shellfish industry in the KASK region is currently dominated by small companies, who lack of financial resources to invest in research and development for oyster farming. The Nord-Ostron project therefore establishes collaborative efforts between actors in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, so that scientists, shellfish producers, biotech companies, equipment suppliers, and marine innovation network centers are able to work together with the critical mass needed to develop an oyster farming industry.

Nord-Ostron partners

Partners of Nord-Ostron include one marine innovation network center from each country: mare novum from Sweden, Dansk Skaldyrcenter (DSC) from Denmark and MareLife from Norway. The participating universities are the University of Gothenburg in Sweden and the Norwegian University for Life Sciences. Additional partners are the Center for forskning og forvaltning av skaldyr (CFFS) in Denmark and the oyster hatchery Ostrea Sverige AB. The project is also financially supported by Västra Götalandsregionen and Region Nordjylland. In order to establish an active cluster working with marine innovation, the project requires interaction with other actors in the marine sector for collaboration, networking and exchange of knowledge.

New techniques and communication are keys to success

The three main issues of the project are collaboration to stimulate innovation, development of new technologies for oyster farming, and communication. Technologies for farming involve optimizing methods for spat production in hatcheries, culturing of microalgae for food production, and developing growout techniques for farming of oysters in coastal waters.

Industrial farming of shellfish takes place in coastal regions which are also recreation areas. There are many stakeholders competing for access to marine space in the areas where oyster farming occurs. In addition, property laws require permission from land owners to place growout equipment in nearshore waters. Thus, the success of the project will, to a large extent, be dependent upon a positive public attitude towards shellfish farming. Open and transparent communication with the public is therefore an important part of the project.