**Supplementary Table S2**: A SWOT analysis used to plan and assess the necessity of establishing marine biotechnology interdisciplinary networks such as COST Action CA18238 (Ocean4Biotech).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| Availability of interdisciplinary knowledge  Advances of the -omics technologies  Use the existing research infrastructures | Collaboration gap between science-industry-policy makers  Lack of collaborating opportunities  Lack of visibility for all stakeholders |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Societal challenges: health, wellbeing  Sustainable development goals, bioeconomy | Lack of national and international funding resources  Differences in national and regional legislation |

We believe this is the optimal time for establishing collaborative networks such as Ocean4Biotech. On one hand, interdisciplinary knowledge and the necessary infrastructure (which includes equipment as well as culture collections) already exist, but experts are scattered around various institutions and countries with often limited collaborating and networking opportunities. As a result, many of the potentially relevant stakeholders have limited visibility and collaboration opportunities. Especially critical, there is a communication and collaboration gap between scientists, the industrial sector and the legislative sector, which enables the development and adoption of marine biotechnology products. The COST program gives this rare networking opportunity and finances the one thing that is a critical point for establishing efficient collaborations – networking events, meetings and opportunities to exchange opinions, knowledge and personnel.

External factors, which contribute to the timing for establishing Ocean4Biotech include societal challenges of the aging population and the demand of a healthier lifestyle. Hence, the development of new products and processes, especially when sourced naturally and sustainably, is in high market demand. Moreover, there are legislative incentives that directly or indirectly promote the adoption of marine biotechnology. These are, mainly, the UN Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015[[1]](#footnote-1), the European Green Deal adopted in 2019[[2]](#footnote-2). However, there are limited national and international funding resources which might enable the finalization of development and commercialization launch for these new products. Moreover, legislation should be harmonized and adopted universally to enable a long-term adoption of any of marine biotechnology products. Hence, networking opportunities that will provide opportunities for all relevant actors in the field of marine biotechnology are essential to collect the necessary expertise and experts, propose and promote the adoption of necessary legislative processes and eventually finalize the development of the new products and processes, streamed by this evolving field of marine biotechnology.

1. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication\_en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)