

A group of visionary and enthusiastic people started a great project 60 years ago. Led by the young professor Melquíades Pinto Paiva, alongside the biologist Rui Simões de Menezes and the pioneering team of students formed by Hermínia de Castro Holanda, José Fausto Filho, Maria Ivone Mota and Vicente Araújo Barreto, they created the Marine Biology Station at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), today called Labomar. This project was supported by Dean Antônio Martins Filho, the first dean of the UFC. Nowadays, we are privileged to participate in the celebration of the first 60 years of Labomar and to have the opportunity to write some reflections in this regard.

The investigation of the biology of species of economic value to scientifically guide commercial exploitation, without prejudice to the rate of stock renewal, was the first objective of the then Marine Biology Station. Other objectives were also established in the creation of Labomar, namely: 1) to inventory the marine flora and fauna of the Brazilian Northeast; 2) survey oceanographic data along the coast of Northeast Brazil; 3) conduct studies on fishing technology and marine fish in the Brazilian Northeast; and 4) carry out university extension and postgraduate courses on subjects related to the biology of marine organisms, fisheries, and fish technology. Prof. Melquíades pointed out that “As a university, we would have to cultivate knowledge in its intrinsic universality”. This postulates a peculiar characteristic of Labomar, which was perpetuated until nowadays: the valorisation of interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary in institutional actions. Today we can say that the objectives proposed by those people when they founded Labomar were fulfilled. Even more, as our former Director Prof. Jáder Onofre de Moraes claimed: “the expectations of those founders were exceeded”.

Certainly, many contributed to the evolution of the different stages of the institution. Labomar is the sum of the best in each of us, of all those who have been and are part of its history. The commitment of professors, technicians, and students to Education is its indelible mark.

Labomar is a national and international reference in marine and environmental sciences. We work in the development of projects, in the training of human resources at undergraduate and graduate levels and in the dissemination of science. In recent years, the number of professors with a Research Productivity grant (PQ) by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) has increased. The presence of our professors in the international rankings that qualify the impact of scientific production was highlighted. International mobility remains, and it is essential, because working in a network makes it possible to explore the diversity of complementary skills. Our researchers and students receive local, national, and international awards and distinctions, thus confirming its vocation as a Scientists’ Workshop<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Scientists’ Workshop is the definition given to Labomar by its founder and first director, Prof. Melquíades Pinto Paiva, in the article entitled “A Scientists’ Workshop” (original in portuguese, “Uma Oficina de Cientistas”), published in volume 43 of *Arquivos de Ciências do Mar*: “... Labomar has always been a workshop of making scientists, not a factory, because there

It is never too much to say that public universities in Brazil have a fundamental role in transforming society. This includes Labomar at UFC playing an important role in the training of capable and qualified professionals to solve complex problems and contribute positively to society.

Nowadays, the mission of Labomar, based on quality scientific work, is to contribute to the UFC in the search for answers and solutions not only to regional problems, but also to today's major global problems related to the sea and the environment. For this, we have qualified research laboratories, such as the Center for Coastal Environmental Studies (Ceac) and the Argo Equatorial Research Vessel, where the Multiuser Embedded Laboratory of the Equatorial Atlantic (Lemae/Finep) was installed.

Labomar has strengthened the relationship between academia and public authorities in its three spheres - national, state, and municipal - assisting in action planning projects in coastal and marine areas and, currently, with an emphasis on adaptations to climate change. In addition, Labomar has contributed to various advisory and deliberative councils and committees. At the international level, it develops collaborative projects in the Atlantic area to mitigate the effects of climate change, ocean pollution and the conservation of marine biodiversity, including marine biotechnology, seawater desalination, offshore wind turbines, decarbonization and Atlantic hydrogen.

Labomar also stands out in the integration between university and industry, acting in the expansion of an atmosphere that encourages the company to invest in scientific knowledge as the greatest asset in the industrial world and creating opportunities for projects in coastal territorial planning, food safety, degraded areas monitoring and recovery, among other sectors of the maritime economy.

In addition to all this, we collaborate with the social sector. The university extension stands out for its scale and impact on developed projects, such as the Marine Environmental Education Program (Peam), created in 1988. This is one of the most enduring and successful marine environmental education projects in marine science in Brazil.

From this perspective, the theme of this Special Issue of *Arquivos de Ciências do Mar - Conservation, management, and blue growth in the decade of the oceans* - could not be more appropriate. The project for the publication of this special issue emerged at the successful III Fortaleza's Austral Spring School, in October 2019, which connected researchers from more than 65 countries in the discussion about science, technology and innovation.

To complete six decades of existence certainly motivates a great celebration, but it also invites us to reflect and analyse how we have achieved success and, above all, to realign/redirect to be prepared for the challenges that the future holds. Labomar had several paths ahead, and it chose to grow and rejuvenate. "The future responds to the strength and daring of our will", paraphrasing Eduardo Giannetti in *Utopian Tropics* (2016).

Time has taught us that, despite the difficulties, there is something that makes us walk, which is hope. And, faced with dreams that seem impossible to reach, we continue to dream and fight. As Shakespeare said in *The Tempest*: " We are such stuff / As dreams are made on."

Labomar is permanently challenged to dream of its future, to seek answers that reconcile excellence in teaching, research, and extension to the issues of time. In this scenario, we will continue to foster and strengthen the link between quality science, technology transfer, modernization, innovation, internationalization, leadership, and participation in large-scale projects. Always committed to renewal, from a humanist perspective, inclusive and open to a holistic view.

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is no serial production of scientists. They are made one by one."

Labomar follows Dante's motto, *sail with wings*. In Dante's Divine Comedy, the verse "We of the oars made wings for our mad flight" (verse 125, from Canto XXVI 26) evokes the figure of Odysseus who, in his irrepressible desire to fly towards the future and towards perfection, invites his companions to cross the Pillars of Hercules (Straits of Gibraltar), considered the limit of the land, beyond which the oars are transformed into wings of knowledge. The metaphorical value of this time frontier refers to the frontiers of the future to which Labomar sails with wings. Wings of Science, Wings of Knowledge, and Wings of Life. Wings to fly towards a more just and egalitarian society socially, economically, and environmentally.

Congratulations, Labomar, on your first 60 years!

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