



## **EFARO POSITION PAPER**

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# **SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE POLICY UNDER FP7**



# European Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organisations

EFARO (EUROPEAN FISHERIES and AQUACULTURE RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS) is the association of European Research Organisations. It is an integrated community of Fisheries and Aquaculture research institutes supporting sustainable development through the provision of sound science for the people of Europe.

## Purpose

1. To highlight the importance of fisheries and aquaculture as a policy area for the Commission and the need to ensure that appropriate research projects are funded under the EU Framework 7 Programme.

## Background

2. The European Commission has formal competence in fishery management under the Common Fishery Policy. In support of this marine sciences and technologies have been part of EC research framework programmes since the 1970s and address many wide ranging issues such as Ocean Observation and Forecasting, Food Quality and Safety, Ecosystem Sciences, Fisheries and Transport. EU funding has been at the heart of research into:
  - the sustainable use of natural marine resources for the production of food and industrial materials,
  - the understanding of marine ecosystem functioning in a changing environment,
  - the prediction of future ecosystem patterns and
  - the protection of the marine environment and biodiversity
3. This research is key to underpinning EU policies on the environment and fisheries where the Commission has specific competence. Currently the Commission is preparing a revision of the Aquaculture Strategy and is devising a Marine Research Strategy. This highlights the need for high quality science to support policy.

## Discussion

4. The status of the seventh framework programme for research (FP7) has reached the point where the implementation of the second half of the programme is being developed and the first steps towards FP 8 is being taken. It is essential that these developments take due account of policy needs in their design. Currently, drafts of the forthcoming call under FP7 are circulating for further discussion in the EC programme committee, but

more consideration is needed for specific fisheries and aquaculture issues in view of the policy and economic importance of the sectors to the EU economy

5. In June 2005, EFARO submitted to the EU commission “Recommendations by EFARO for the future FP 7 programmes to be implemented at the EU level in the field of fisheries and aquaculture” commenting on possibilities for fisheries and aquaculture research in the outline for FP7. The paper noted that the EC has stimulated European joint fisheries and aquaculture research since FP 4, in order to support the European Common Fisheries Policy. In FP 4 and FP5 there were specific programmes (e.g. FAIR), accounting for 130 m€ (FP4) – 150 m€ (FP 5) in fisheries and aquaculture research programmes. In FP 6, the resources allocated for fisheries and aquaculture research were reduced to 60 m€ in a special priority for Scientific Support in Fisheries Policies (SPP; Priority 8) and some additional funding under the priorities 5 and 6 for Food Science and Environmental Science. Recognising this, the European Parliament decided in 2003 that additional resources were needed for the improvement of scientific support in fisheries policies at the European level.
6. However, EFARO noted that in the FP7 programme, the whole complex of fisheries, aquaculture and seafood research is subsumed into a broad context of agricultural research (Theme 2). Marine sciences and coastal zone management are included in the environmental science. The change of themes means that research on fish production is split away from fish and marine ecology, whereas the strong policy drive toward the ecosystem approach in fish production, as in the CFP and Bird and Habitat Directive, requires more integration. The profit-planet-people baseline for sustainable economic development requires that socio-economic research is also integrated in this complex of R&D related to seafood production and marine living resource management. As this is not mentioned explicitly in the FP 7 programme there is a danger that research calls will be suboptimal in attracting an integrated approach to sustainable development in fisheries and aquaculture unless steps are taken to develop appropriate topics.
7. While formulating the work programme for 2009 to be published in summer 2008 is in process, a short review is presented in this paper (see Annex), in which topics of relevance for fisheries and aquaculture research have been issued in the FP7 “Cooperation” work programmes 2007 and 2008. The analysis shows that although funding for research activities in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture in support to policy development under FP 7 has up to 2007 been appropriate, there is uncertainty about funding for 2008 and 2009. The main issue, however, is that there

appears to be a lack of overall strategy in the choice of topics to be advertised.

8. EFARO suggested in June 2005 that the following key aspects for effective policy be covered:

Action 1 - Improve scientific basis of fisheries management

Action 2 - Prepare the implementation of ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management

Action 3 - Integrate social and economic dimensions into the CFP

Action 4 - Reinforce quality in data collection, control and monitoring

Action 5 - Support sustainable development of the aquaculture industry

Action 6 - Interactive communication with stakeholders and the public

9. It is not apparent that the work programmes 2007-2009 address these subjects in a coherent way that would best benefit policy makers. In fact the topics chosen range from very broad to very specialized issues without real coverage of the actions listed above. Moreover we see a lack of more direct policy underpinning science in the fishery area in the work programme 2008 and 2009. The upcoming revision of the CFP towards ecosystem based regional management approaches, addressing fleet management and spatial planning (marine protected areas) in conjunction to fish stock management requires a solid scientific knowledge basis. While the mid-term revision of the FP7 intends to produce a road-map for the period 2010–2013, fisheries and aquaculture research institutions have been very little involved with respect of their scientific objectives and needs for cooperation, compared to former FP calls and other segments of the research community.
10. Further, it is noted by EFARO that under FP7 the success rate of fisheries and aquaculture project proposals has been lower than FP 6 with its specific Scientific Support to Policies programme. Part of this stems from the fact that even if proposals clearly pass the evaluation threshold they may still not get funded. Because fisheries research has to compete for available funds with proposals from other areas such as agriculture and forestry (theme 2) or oceanographic research and topics with a wider environmental context (theme 6) there is a danger that the policy priority for fisheries will not be recognised. Competition on quality is entirely correct, but it is important that funding also recognises priority science areas appropriately.
11. At present, the broad nature of many topics in the call for proposals results in lack of clarity leading to imprecise task description and expected impact

formulation which causes misinterpretation in the application process. There is a need for more clearly articulated research calls.

12. EFARO is pleased to acknowledge that suggestions it made have been taken into account in drafting the work programmes. Nevertheless it would be helpful if suggestions from all stakeholders including EFARO could be discussed in a more transparent way. Perhaps the procedures of Scientific Advisory Committees could be modified to allow more open discussion. The issues proposed by EFARO go beyond subjects for academic research, they are fundamental for the scientific support to Fisheries and Aquaculture policy development and operation, and consequently should also be evaluated within this context and by referees having sufficient experience in this area. The unique status of the SSP programme under FP6 enabled a productive discussion between policy makers and science suppliers on needs and priorities, resulting in work programmes that indeed reflected requirements in the short and medium term.

13. Although we acknowledge that DG MARE utilises the DCR instrument to commission studies for targeted work supporting the DCR and thus the CFP, there is a clear need for larger and more integrated research projects to be implemented under FP7 in fisheries and aquaculture research. Since the research team in DG MARE is under consideration to be moved to the DG RTD, the future of this activity could be at stake.

### **Conclusion**

14. More consideration is needed in the development of the FP7 work programme for specific fisheries and aquaculture issues in view of the policy and economic importance of the sectors to the EU. Calls need to be more clearly articulated.

15. There needs to be a transparent process to incorporate stakeholder views in the development of work programmes.

16. It is suggested the EU commission makes the cross cutting theme instrument for maritime and marine research much more effective to improve the possibilities for a more consistent integration between Theme 2 and Theme 6 in relation to Scientific Support for Policy (in particular in fisheries science which is the backbone of both the EU CFP and the Marine Strategy and an important part of the future Maritime Policy).

17. EFARO suggests that where proposals target specific research areas (such as fisheries), evaluators should be familiar with this research field and its



## European Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organisations

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policy relevance. At the final selection special attention should be given to adequate coverage of the research area.



### **ANNEX: Review topics of relevance for fisheries and aquaculture research FP7 work programmes 2007 and 2008.**

Under WP 2007, theme 2, in total 6 small collaborative projects (SCP, max. 3 Mio funding) and 2 coordination and support action (CSA, max 1 Mio funding) were issued, corresponding to in total 20 mio EUR:

- KBBE-2007-1-2-09: From capture based to self-sustained aquaculture (SCP)
- KBBE-2007-1-2-10: Improving cost-efficiency in the fisheries (SCP)
- KBBE-2007-1-2-11: Improving research in support to scientific advice to fisheries management outside EU waters (CSA)
- KBBE-2007-1-2-12: Consolidate alliances with third countries in the field of aquaculture (CSA)
- KBBE-2007-1-2-13: Mitigating adverse impacts of fisheries (SCP)
- KBBE-2007-1-2-14: The structure of fish populations and traceability of fish and fish products (SCP)
- KBBE-2007-1-4-19: Governance for an operational regional ecosystem approach to fisheries management (SCP)
- KBBE-2007-1-4-20: Addressing uncertainty and complexity – governance for fisheries management (SCP)

In 2008 additionally one large collaborative project (LCP, up to 6 Mio funding) was issued

- KBBE-2007-1-2-16: Essential biological functions related to the most relevant stages of aquaculture fish life-history

Under WP 2008, theme 2, in total 4 small collaborative projects (SCP) were issued, corresponding to in total 12 mio EUR:

- KBBE-2008-1-2-03: Assessment and mitigation of the impact of aquaculture on wild populations (SCP)
- KBBE-2008-1-2-04: Microbial control for more sustainable aquaculture (SCP)
- KBBE-2008-1-4-02: Deep sea fisheries management (SCP)
- KBBE-2008-1-4-03: Fisheries management approach based on 'maximum acceptable limits of negative impacts' (SCP)

Under WP 2009, theme 2, in total 6 small to mid sized collaborative projects (SMCP) are discussed in the Programme Committee, corresponding to in total 18 mio EUR:

- KBBE-2009-1-2-10: Improving fisheries assessment methods by integrating new sources of biological knowledge (SMCP)
- KBBE-2009-1-2-11: Improving mollusc spat production in hatcheries (SMCP)
- KBBE-2009-1-2-12: Sustainable inland extensive and semi-intensive aquaculture (SMCP)
- KBBE-2009-1-2-13: From capture based to self-sustained aquaculture (SMCP)
- KBBE-2009-1-2-14: Sustainable use of seas and oceans: importance of foraging fish in the ecosystem (SMCP)
- KBBE-2009-1-2-15: Sustainable use of seas and oceans: integration of aquaculture and fisheries in the coastal zone (SMCP)
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Within FP6, the calls issued in 2002-2005 offered annually ca. 16 Mio EUR funding for fisheries and aquaculture related research. In FP 7, under theme 2, the first call bridging from FP6 to 7 issued 26 Mio EUR, but the subsequent 2nd call offered only 12 Mio EUR, being slightly higher in



## European Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organisations

the 3rd call in 2008. For dedicated fisheries research, however, a cut-back to 2 topics in WP 2008 and 2009 is obvious, allocating max. 6 mio EUR funding per call.

From 19 topics issued under FP7, EFARO has suggested 8 (very likely supported also by others): KBBE-2007-1-2-09 and KBBE-2007-1-2-16 correspond to suggestions of EFARO to SSP5 under FP6. KBBE-2007-1-4-19, KBBE-2007-1-4-20, KBBE-2008-1-2-03, KBBE-2008-1-4-02, KBBE-2009-1-2-10, KBBE-2009-1-2-14 correspond to a suggestion of EFARO to FP7.

Theme 6, contains a series of wider research calls, in which fisheries and to a lesser extent aquaculture are handled as drivers. The list contains among others:

WP 2007, theme 6, 6 collaborative projects (CP)

- Topic 6.2.1.4.1. Contribution of biodiversity to ecosystem services (CP)
- Topic 6.2.1.4.2. Use of natural resources: the impact on biodiversity, ecosystem, goods and services (CP)
- Topic 6.2.2.1.1. Development of advanced ecosystem models and methodologies for the management and the sustainable use of resources (LP)
- Topic 6.2.2.1.2. Ecology of important marine species (CP)
- Topic 6.2.2.1.3. Habitat-marine species interactions in view of ecosystem based management in the deep-sea (LP)
- Topic 6.2.2.1.4. Dynamic of marine ecosystem in a changing environment (LP)

WP 2008, theme 6, 3 large integrating projects (LP)

- ENV.2008.2.2.1.1. Monitoring and Evaluation of Spatially Managed Areas (SMA)
- ENV.2008.2.2.1.2. Deep-Sea ecosystems
- ENV.2008.2.2.1.3. Ecosystem approach to marine environment and resources (LIP)

WP 2009, theme 6, 2 projects

- ENV.2009.1.1.6.3 Climate change and the marine environment: research results and public perception (CSA)
- ENV.2009-2-2-1.1 : Option for ecosystem based management (LCP)

This is appreciated as it fosters the integration of fisheries research into the wider marine science landscape in accordance with the Marine Strategy, but it does not compensate for the loss of core funding in fisheries and aquaculture research.