



European Commission

No 31 November 2006

# Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe

○ **European Fisheries Fund:  
driving sustainable development**



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A new approach to aid  
for the sector

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in Estonia**  
Aims and priorities

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by public funds**  
A few examples

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## Shows and exhibitions

### • IPA, Paris (France), 20-23 November 2006

The world food process exhibition, an international food industry event, includes numerous exhibitors specialised in fishery and aquaculture products.

#### > For more information:

Tel: +33 1 49 68 52 11

E-mail: [vdissaux@exposium.fr](mailto:vdissaux@exposium.fr)

Web site: <http://www.ipa-web.com>

### • Foodapest 2006, Budapest (Hungary), 23-26 November 2006

The leading food industry fair in central Europe, Foodapest brings together large numbers of producers of fishery and aquaculture products.

#### > For more information:

Tel: +54 11 45 55 01 95

E-mail: [foodapest@hungexpo.hu](mailto:foodapest@hungexpo.hu)

Web site: <http://www.foodapest.hu>

### • Maritima, Paris (France), 6-9 December 2006

Maritima is described as being the biggest trade fair for maritime-related activities. The European Commission will host an information stand at this year's event

#### > For more information:

Tel: +33 1 41 90 44 68

Web site: <http://www.maritima.fr>

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#### **Note to readers**

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*Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe* is a magazine published by the Directorate-General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs of the European Commission. It is distributed free on request (see subscription coupon on page 12). *Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe* is published five times a year and it is also available on the Fisheries and Maritime Affairs DG web site: [http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/index_en.htm)

Editor: European Commission, Directorate-General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Director-General.

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Production: Mostra – Printed in Belgium – Printed on recycled paper

## The EFF: driving sustainable development

**In** 2002, the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) put in place a European strategy aimed at coming to terms with the problems of the fisheries sector. The objectives of the CFP were reviewed and redirected to deal more effectively with the problems caused by overfishing, including the threat of depletion of a number of important stocks and the risks of seeing the very viability of fishing activity in the European Union undermined.

The reform introduced, among other innovations, a long-term approach based on multi-annual or recovery plans, the possibility of emergency measures, a simpler system for limiting fishing capacity so as to adapt it to available resources, stronger provisions for control and enforcement, greater integration of the environmental aspects of fishing and aquaculture activities and more active stakeholder participation in the CFP. The Common Fisheries Policy is now firmly anchored in the European Union's sustainable development policy, and incorporates its environmental, economic and social aspects.

The picture nonetheless varies appreciably from one Member State to the next. The sector does not show the same degree of economic development across the whole of Europe and available financial resources are limited. It will be easier to achieve the sustainable development objective if multi-annual funding focused on specific priorities can be guaranteed at European Union level. That is why the Common Fisheries Policy is supported by a dedicated financial instrument.

The previous financial instrument (FIFG) had already enabled the new CFP to be launched. But the FIFG was due to expire and a new instrument which was more structurally in phase with the new policy was required. The result is the new European Fisheries Fund (EFF).

The EFF will grant funding according to very strict principles.

Firstly, EFF funding is not granted independently of other support, but must be used to complement assistance provided by the Member States, whether at national, regional or local level.

The EFF functions through partnerships: between the Union and the Member State concerned, which together determine the EFF implementation strategy, but also at the national level among the different players concerned by the projects funded. Such partnerships will involve the regional and local authorities, as well as other competent authorities, including those responsible for the environment and for the promotion of equality between men and women, the economic and social partners and other competent bodies. The partners concerned will be involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of assistance.

Finally, EFF funding must be geared towards priority beneficiaries. Since the aim is to promote the development of an entire economic sector, it makes sense to focus on the least-favoured regions and sub-regions. Resources will therefore be directed in large part to the 'convergence regions', and to other fisheries-dependent regions that are grappling with economic and social difficulties.

Just what will the EFF finance? It will encourage those kinds of action that are capable of reinvigorating the sector. Its priorities are centred around the five axes described in the following pages: first, the adaptation of the community fishing fleet; second, the development of aquaculture, along with the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products; third, measures of collective interest; fourth, the sustainable development of coastal fishing areas; and fifth, technical assistance.

The EFF is more than just a financial instrument. It is the motor which will drive the entire fisheries sector on the path to sustainable development.

The Editor

# The European Fisheries Fund

## An instrument serving the sustainable development of fisheries

**A new financial instrument for the fisheries sector will come into force on 1 January 2007. The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) will take over from the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). The EFF embodies a new approach to aid for the sector, aimed at better meeting the challenges facing European fisheries in the 21st century. For the sector must now become sustainable in environmental, economical and social terms, in keeping with the strategy agreed in 2002 under the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.**

In recent years, the fisheries and aquaculture sector has come face to face with a number of vital challenges. Its response will determine its future. Dwindling resources (with some stocks in danger of collapse) are obviously at the heart of these problems. Different types of damage to the marine environment are another crucial challenge. At the same time, the sector is undergoing profound economic and social changes: the strong expansion of aquaculture, consumers' increasing preference for processed products, and the significant development of processing activities, for example. Indeed, fishing activity proper is estimated to account for only 10 to 20% of the sector's overall added value today!

All these new challenges were taken on board in 2002 with the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which defines the strategic framework for European action to ensure economically, environmentally and socially sustainable fisheries<sup>(1)</sup>. This strategy required an appropriate financial instrument. The EFF has been designed to be the instrument serving the CFP. All the stakeholders concerned were kept informed and consulted as the fund was elaborated, in particular through the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Member States and the European Parliament.

### Objectives that fit the new reality

The objectives of the new financial instrument are clearly defined in the new regulation. First and foremost, the aim is to support the objectives of the CFP. The EFF will therefore promote a sustainable balance between resources and the capacity of the Community fleet, as well as the protection of the European Union's environment and natural resources. It will also aim to strengthen the sector's competitiveness and economic viability, and to encourage sustainable development and better quality of life in marine, lake and coastal areas

affected by fishing activities. Lastly, it will promote equality between women and men in the development of the fisheries sector and coastal fishing areas.

To attain these objectives, the Fund's action will focus on five priority axes.

### ■ Priority axis one: measures for the adaptation of the community fishing fleet

Measures to protect resources have to be taken at Community level. Recovery plans and measures to adjust fishing effort sometimes result in a temporary or permanent cessation of activity for certain vessels. The EFF will provide a higher level of aid for vessel scrapping.

To help seafarers and companies to deal with the economic and social problems such measures inevitably create, aid will be offered to vessel owners and fishermen obliged to cease their activities either temporarily or permanently. Aid for temporary cessation may be granted under recovery plans, management plans, non-renewal of a fisheries agreement with a third country or in the case of fishing grounds being closed for reasons of public health or following a natural disaster.

The EFF may also grant socio-economic aid to encourage fishermen to take up a new trade, to invest in retraining or to take early retirement.

Support for small-scale coastal fishing, which is socially and economically important in certain regions, is a priority: a higher funding rate will consequently apply to a whole range of measures in this area.

The use of more environmentally-friendly fishing gears and techniques will be encouraged through subsidies, for instance, where vessels are required to change their fishing methods as part of a recovery plan or to switch to a different fishing activity.

Aid to help young fishermen become first-time vessel owners will continue to be granted provided they acquire a used fishing vessel measuring no more than 24 metres in length.

Active vessels may receive grants for alterations to improve working conditions, safety and hygiene on board.

Small-scale coastal fishing is socially and economically important in certain regions and will be granted a higher funding rate for a whole range of measures.



© Lionel Flagault

To enhance the energy efficiency of vessels, the Fund may also finance engine replacements, provided this involves a reduction of capacity.

### ■ Priority axis two: aquaculture, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products

The growing importance of aquaculture, the processing industry and modern marketing techniques is a fact. The economic performance of the European fisheries sector hinges on their development, as does the continued existence of sustainable jobs in areas where economic activity is based primarily on fishing. It is therefore vital that the EFF provide support for the development of these activities.

To be eligible for grants, whether in the field of aquaculture, processing or inland fishing, investments must help improve conditions relating to hygiene, human or animal health, and/or product quality. Any reduction in the negative environmental impact of the subsidised activity (or in some cases, the strengthening of its beneficial effect) will also be given very serious consideration. Improvement of working and safety conditions are also assessed for all the activities funded under this axis.

European aquaculture has significant development potential. During the last decade, it grew at an annual rate of 3.4%, which is still well below the world average (11%). This sector represents a real focus of development and economic activity, in particular in coastal areas that have traditionally been highly dependent on fisheries.

Funding will therefore be provided in support of the sustainable development of European aquaculture. This may include investments in the construction, extension, equipment and modernisation of production facilities. Diversification to include new species will be particularly encouraged. Priority will also be given to species with good market prospects. Aid will be available for traditional aquaculture activities and investments in equipment providing protection against wild predators.

The Fund may be used to support 'aqua-environmental' measures to encourage aquaculture activities relating to environmental protection, participation in the Community eco-management and audit scheme, and organic aquaculture.

Aid will also be available for shellfish farmers temporarily prevented from harvesting their production due to contaminations representing a threat to public health.

To meet growing consumer demand for a wide range of products, and in particular for processed and semi-processed products, the Fund may also grant support for investments in the processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products. Resources will be focused particularly on projects for the production and marketing of new products, the use of new technologies and the development of innovative production methods. In marketing, the production of premium quality products for specific market niches, and the development of little-used species will be encouraged, along with the marketing of products originating mainly in landings by local fleets and from local aquaculture.

As a general rule, public support will focus on micro and small enterprises, though bigger firms will also be eligible for grants.

Aid for certain investments in the construction, extension, equipment and modernisation of installations used for fishing in inland waterways also forms part of this priority axis. New financing possibilities will be made available to compensate for the temporary cessation of inland fishing activities due to the application of Community conservation measures and the redeployment of vessels previously used for inland fishing.

### ■ Priority axis three: measures of common interest

In order to meet the objectives of the CFP, projects going beyond the normal sphere of action of private enterprises may be useful and even necessary. These are referred to as 'measures of common interest'.

To this end, the Fund will support collective actions implemented by operators or by producers' organisations or other bodies. These may be actions to protect resources through, for example, the use of more selective fishing techniques or the development of a management plan for a local stock, or even the financing of accessories which can help reduce by-catch, such as acoustic alarms to keep dolphins and porpoises at a distance. Activities supported may also include actions to improve working and safety conditions, contribute to the transparency of markets in fishery and aquaculture products, particularly by improving traceability, and enhance the quality and safety of foods.

Another type of measures of common interest aims to protect aquatic flora and fauna. Such measures may include, among others, the installation of static or mobile installations intended to protect and develop aquatic flora and fauna or to rehabilitate inland waterways, including spawning grounds and

The EFF will support investments for the construction, extension, equipment and modernisation of aquaculture production installations. Diversification towards new species will also be encouraged.

## IN FIGURES

The total budget for the seven-year EFF programming period (2007-2013) is € 3.849 billion. Of that amount, some € 2.9 billion have been earmarked for less-developed regions.

## NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANS AND OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Projects to be funded will be chosen by the Member States, rather than at European level. Each Member State will define its specific priorities in partnership with the regional authorities and the different bodies representing the fisheries sector. These will be laid down in two documents: a strategic plan and an operational programme.

The **strategic plan** must present a comprehensive medium-term view of the development of the fisheries and aquaculture policy to be implemented by the Member State and explain how it aims to meet the objectives of the CFP. It will cover all aspects of the Common Fisheries Policy and set out priorities, objectives, estimates for required public spending and deadlines. Development of the national strategic plan will be based on dialogue between the Member State and the Commission.

The **operational programme** is meant to implement the policies and priorities part-financed by the Fund. The operational programme must be compatible with the national strategic plan. There will be only one operational programme per Member State. It must be prepared in close consultation with the regional and local economic and social partners in the fisheries sector, and with all other appropriate bodies. The operational programme must be submitted to the Commission for approval under a two-phase procedure. The criteria applicable to the programme are described in detail in the regulation, the first of which is obviously to guarantee consistency with the principles of the Common Fisheries Policy and the national strategic plan so as to achieve a stable and sustainable balance between capacity and fishing possibilities.

migration routes for migratory species. The EFF regulation establishes a link with the Natura 2000 programme in this regard.

The Fund may also support investments to modernise port facilities, for example, by facilitating the installation of an ice-making unit, improving quays so that catches can be landed more quickly, or enhancing waste processing facilities.

This axis also covers promotional activities. The EFF may contribute to generic campaigns to support certain categories of fishery or aquaculture products. It may also fund the launch of a quality label and the organisation of market surveys, provided such projects are beneficial to the entire community concerned.

Finally, this axis also provides for the funding of pilot projects on research, the use of experimental selective fishing techniques and the dissemination of knowledge relating to the protection of resources.

### ■ Priority axis four: sustainable development of coastal fishing areas

Dwindling catches resulting from the depletion or reduction of certain stocks can have serious consequences at the local level. In coastal fishing areas where economic activities other than fishing are virtually non-existent, solutions have to be found for the problems created by declining income, the loss of jobs and the cessation of activities.

The EFF – complementing other European funds – has a role to play in helping such areas adapt by promoting diversification and economic conversion. Accordingly, this axis covers support for projects designed to encourage sustainable development and improve the quality of life in coastal fishing areas. Thus, for example, the Fund may help improve the attractiveness of an area through projects related to green tourism, better access to infrastructure, the development of nature areas or restoration of the historic heritage. It may also finance training and skills improvement to facilitate access to jobs created by new development poles, particularly for women. The new activities may not run counter to the objectives of the CFP, however: for example, actions representing a threat to the marine environment or resulting in increased fishing effort would be excluded.



The EFF may support certain categories of fishery or aquaculture products with funding for generic campaigns or the introduction of quality labels.

The Member States will choose which coastal areas are to receive funding under this axis. Resources must nevertheless be channelled to areas with low population density, where fishing is in decline, or where the fishing communities are small.

Local players, who are best acquainted with the specific characteristics and potential of their area, will be in charge of developing and implementing EFF-funded projects as part of a local development strategy. To be eligible for European funds, local 'coastal action groups' bringing together public and private partners will have to be set up and local development plans will need to be drawn up.

**■ Priority axis five: technical assistance**

Financing may be granted for measures involving preparation, monitoring, administrative and technical support, evaluation, audit and inspection measures necessary for implementing the EFF. Such activities could include evaluations, expert reports, statistics and studies, as well as measures to disseminate information, build networks, raise awareness, promote cooperation and exchange experiences. This axis may also be used to help some of the new Member States set up the administrative structures they need to manage the EFF.

**An instrument serving the CFP**

The EFF has been designed to serve the sustainable development of the fisheries sector, in particular by helping to safeguard fish stocks and protect the marine environment. It constitutes an indispensable tool to support the CFP and make it more effective. With its chapters on aquaculture, processing and marketing, and the diversification and economic conversion of areas dependent on fisheries, the EFF is expected to become a true motor for development. As the European fishing sector strives to face up to numerous challenges and ensure it becomes sustainable, the choice of development pathways has a crucial role to play in guaranteeing the future of those communities and regions whose livelihood depends on the sea.

**SIMPLER RULES**

Implementation of the resources granted by the EFF will be greatly simplified. At present, aid is divided up between different programmes in the Member States. With the EFF, there will be only one programme, which will make for greater consistency and more effective measures. What is more, the preparation of a national strategic plan will make it easier to identify priorities, targets and public resources that can be used to attain objectives.

**IN A WORD:  
THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN  
THE FIGG AND THE EFF**

The EFF continues a number of measures already contained in the FIGG. Important innovative measures have also been introduced, however, in response to the difficulties and changes affecting the fisheries sector.

The following are a few examples:

- measures in support of stock recovery plans;
- encouragement for more selective fishing techniques;
- support for diversification and economic conversion in fishing areas affected by declining resources and changes in the sector;
- aid for environmentally-friendly aquaculture and inland fisheries;
- simplification and greater flexibility in Member States' implementation of rules.

# ○ National strategic plans

## Estonia prepares for a new start

**A Member State must draw up a national strategic plan in order to benefit from the European Fisheries Fund (EFF). The plan lays down the State's medium-term objectives and priorities for fisheries management. It must be submitted to the European Commission prior to the elaboration of the national operational programme for the allocation of funds. The Fisheries Minister of Estonia agreed to share with *Fishing and Aquaculture in Europe* the main points of that country's plan, which had not yet been completely finalised at the time of writing, but may still serve as an example.**

**Based** on consultation with the entire sector, the national strategic plan must set out the broad outlines of the actions the Member State plans to implement for all aspects of the Common Fisheries Policy (see box page 6).

The plan to be submitted by Estonia aims, first and foremost, to help the sector make a new start, and one which will have strong economic, social and environmental foundations.

### **Fisheries: restructuring, modernisation and infrastructure**

In Estonia, sea fishing focuses on two species: sprat and herring. Catches amounted to 79 760 tonnes in 2005. The country's fresh-water fishing activity also brings in some 2 400 tonnes a year of high-value species, including perch, pike-perch and eel. This activity takes place in the waters of Lakes Peipsi and Vortsjarv and in the east of the country.

The Estonian fleet is made up of 1 060 vessels, of which 84% are under 12 metres long, along with 350 vessels operating in inland waterways. Sea fishing is therefore mostly coastal. Following the country's accession to the European Union, Estonia used FIFG funds to start restructuring its fleet, achieving a 17% reduction in fishing capacity. That trend will likely be continued under the EFF.

In the view of the Estonian authorities, catching capacity still exceeds available resources. These have to be allocated among too many fishermen, who consequently cannot be sure of earning a decent living or of being able to invest in modern equipment. While the average Estonian salary has risen constantly over the past decade, fishermen's income has remained stable at a low level.



The fleet is ageing and many ports are under-equipped. The Ministry notes the flagrant lack of material for 'primary' processing of catches, i.e. equipment for sorting (by size and species), packing and temporary storage. Under those conditions, it is hard to compete with imports from neighbouring countries, which find favour with Estonian buyers.

This is made worse by the lack of any common organisation which would enable fishermen to group their purchases, monitor the distribution of fishing allocations and negotiate the sale of catches.

So it is no accident that the strengthening of producers' organisations is high on the list of Estonia's priorities for use of the EFF. The country's ultimate objective for the allocation of public aid is very clear: to enable fisheries sector workers to attain the average Estonian standard of living.

Doing so will require further restructuring. Fleet capacity will have to shrink further to match available resources. Premiums will continue to be paid for scrapping and re-assignment of vessels. The Ministry also plans to finance training programmes for fishermen who want to give up the trade or diversify their activities – the Estonian coast freezes in winter, a period of inactivity for many fishermen.

The remaining fleet will also have to be modernised, with investments focusing as a matter of priority on more economical engines, more selective gears and safer and more ecological equipment. Modernisation is also needed for ports, and producers' organisations will be able to apply for grants to improve landing and primary processing infrastructure.





Estonia plans to develop its trade in fishery products, especially through participation in international fairs, as seen here at the Seafood Exposition, the biggest European gathering of processors and distributors of fishery and aquaculture products, held annually in Brussels.

### Aquaculture: growing and diversifying

Estonia is counting on aquaculture in its drive to develop the sector. The goal is ambitious: to reach aquaculture production of 2000 tonnes by 2013, so as to meet 90% of domestic demand. Public aid, including funds granted by the EFF, should reinvigorate this activity.

Aquaculture is found throughout the country, which is relatively flat and has many rivers, lakes and ponds. Some 20 fish farms raise rainbow trout (around 200 tonnes), common carp (around 50 tonnes) and crayfish (a few hundred kilos).

These farms are too small however to supply the volumes demanded by mass marketing and the processing industry. Nor can they guarantee stable production, particularly because of the harsh winters. The sector needs to be given a boost, on the one hand to acquire better control of marketing, and on the other to acquire the technical capacity that is vital if it is to increase production. In that regard, the government intends to encourage the use of recirculation technologies<sup>(1)</sup> which are better suited to the country's environmental and climatic conditions.

Public funds will therefore be used primarily to create new farms, enlarge existing ones, strengthen technology, introduce new species in terms of market demand and organise the creation of associations that can provide marketing impetus.

The authorities also plan to encourage the development of related processing activities and of hatcheries, so as to free the sector from its dependence on imported eggs and juveniles.

### Industry: expanding the market

Estonia has around 90 processing firms that produce preserved fish (mostly herring) and processed foods (smoked fillets, frozen dishes, etc.). Due to the low level of domestic production, the industry has to import a large part of its raw materials, which naturally has an impact on its profitability. The aim will be to cover domestic consumption and to increase exports by using local raw materials wherever possible.

Public funds will therefore be used to help raise the share of fishery and aquaculture products in food production from 11% to 14% for 2013. This will primarily involve product diversification – notably towards the high added-value end, innovation – both technological and in terms of species exploited, and the search for new outlets – especially through market surveys and participation in international fairs.

An effort will also be made to help undertakings to comply with export and environmental standards.

### Areas dependent on fisheries: supporting redeployment

A number of Estonian communities are economically dependent on fisheries. They are located on islands (Saaremaa, Hiiumaa, Kihnu, etc.) and on the coasts of the Gulf of Riga and Lake Peipsi. The structural problems plaguing fisheries exacerbate the difficulties for inhabitants of such communities. They have no other solution but to find some form of secondary activity, which often means travelling abroad to work in construction. In the context of this deteriorating social fabric, it is hard for inhabitants to organise collectively to give new life to their communities.

In these areas, funding will focus on restructuring fishing activity so as to rebuild a profitable core of economic activity and to create new development poles in processing, fisheries tourism or some other new sector. Aid will be granted for restoration of the natural and architectural heritage.

Such projects must naturally originate with local players and the EFF will be used to help residents organise into local action groups.

In addition to its regional investment poles, Estonia also plans to invest at the national level, particularly to improve the system of fisheries quota and licence allocation, enhance monitoring and surveillance, and develop breeding for fish restocking. EFF support will be welcome for all such measures.

(1) Recirculation is a system whereby the water from breeding tanks is recycled by circulating it continuously through purification, oxygenation or even sterilisation or reheating units.

# ○ Projects supported by public funds

## A few examples

**While the EFF embodies a major change of direction for fisheries support, a good number of the guidelines imposed by the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy had already been taken into account in the projects selected for FIGG support. The following are a few examples.**

### France

#### ○ Brittany tests fuel-saving systems

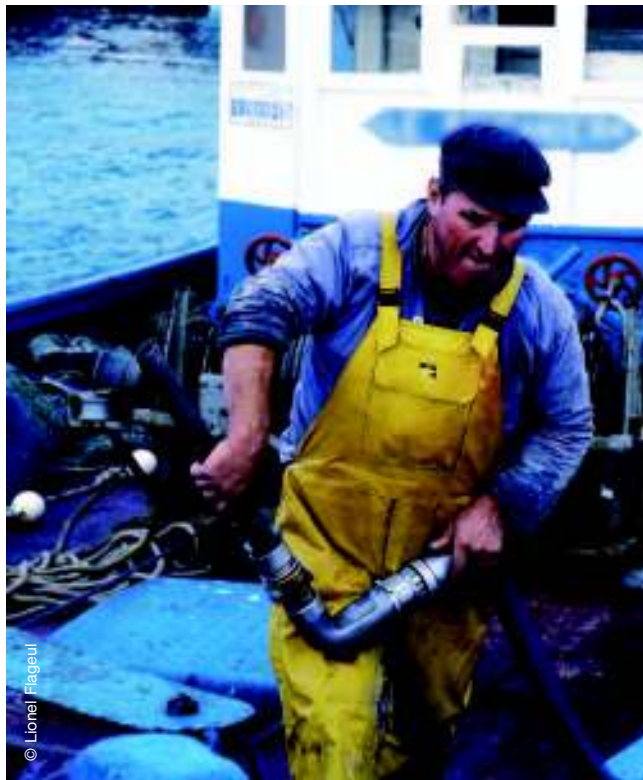
Brittany's Regional Committee for Salt-water Fishing (CRPMEM) has begun specialised experimentation with different systems designed to reduce vessel fuel consumption. Fishermen interested in lowering their fuel bill will be able to improve engine consumption by using an improved catalytic converter or a fuel additive. With today's rising oil prices, fishing vessel owners are looking for effective and low-cost solutions that can be implemented quickly and without big investments. For the moment, however, they can only base their decisions on sales pitches or on word of mouth when it comes time to choose from among the wide range of options on the market.

The CRPMEM in Brittany decided in 2006 to study this question systematically. It organised a testing bed on four engines running simultaneously to test three catalytic converters and an additive for a period of 14 weeks. In addition to

the effect on fuel consumption, the test also aims to analyse the influence of the different solutions on polluting emissions and on mechanical performance. The tests are being implemented with the support of public funds and are co-financed by the European FIGG.

The results are expected to be known by the end of 2006. They will be presented in summary sheets on the performances of the different types of equipment, which will help vessel owners make an informed choice. Brittany's CRPMEM nevertheless stresses the limits of such improvements, which will by no means be absolute solutions to the problem of the high cost of fuel. The distribution of the summary sheets to deep-sea fishermen will be matched with an information campaign on the day-to-day fishing and navigating practices that can also help keep fuel consumption in check.

The results of the testing will not be restricted to Breton fishermen alone. They will be made available to the profession as a whole.



In the context of rising oil prices, fishermen are trying to work out ways of lowering their fuel use.

### Italy

#### ○ Telematics makes its debut at the Abruzzi fish auctions

In October 2005, the Pescara fish auction introduced a telematics auction system, turning the habits of local buyers upside down. The economy of the capital of Abruzzi, as its name suggests, was formerly based primarily on fishing. Today, the 100 or so vessels that dock here operate along the Adriatic coast, landing some 2 500 tonnes of catches a year. The main species are mullet, hake, lobster and anchovy. In the summer, seven vessels are fitted with purse seines to fish for bluefin tuna.

Based on the principle that proper exploitation of stocks contributes to the sector's economic development, the town of Pescara, which regulates the auction, decided to modernise its system. It put in place telematics auction facilities, an investment financed 60% by public aid, of which the FIGG contributed half.

Restaurant operators and fishmongers no longer have to be physically present at the Pescara market to buy fish. They can do so from their computers, by connecting to the site [www.e-fish.pescara.it](http://www.e-fish.pescara.it). Bidders view batches through a webcam and take part in the remote auction. The system is a simple one. Buyers physically present at the market see



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Bluewater Flatfish Farm, based in Wales, launched environmentally friendly turbot farming in 2002. Every stage of production takes place ashore, in big tanks of seawater.

prices displayed on an electronic board and bid using a remote control. Online buyers do exactly the same thing: prices are displayed on their computer screen and they bid using their mouse and keyboard. The whole system is centralised.

The idea is gradually to expand the number of buyers. By increasing the volume of demand, the system is expected to enable every batch put up for auction to reach its fair price more easily. To help enlarge its trade area further, Pescara is also considering the possibility of setting up a delivery service to supply more distant customers.

The initiative launched by Pescara is not the only one of its kind in Abruzzi. The auction in Giulianova also went online during the summer of 2006 and likewise offers a telematics auction system. The two towns are now reviewing the possibility of creating a single virtual fish auction to be called *Meritab (Mercati Ittici Abruzzesi<sup>(1)</sup>)*, a structure that could promote the use of telematics for two other important auctions in Abruzzi, namely the markets in Ortona and Vasto.

## Denmark

### ● Investigating sustainable fishing methods

In 2004, the Danish Fisheries Ministry set up a programme for the development of sustainable fisheries. The national project covers the entire sector and aims to bolster the sustainability of Danish fisheries and improve resource management methods. Denmark hopes to reduce the environmental impact of its fishing activity, improve stock management and reduce incidental catches and discards. To do so, it is counting on the application of better technologies and management methods. The programme was put in place precisely to help identify them.

In fact, this is an umbrella programme with a budget of € 4 million 50% financed by the FIG. It coordinates around 10 projects being implemented by different players. What is special about the programme is that it involves the wide participation of specialists and stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations like the WWF, which has teamed up with scientists to study methods capable of improving fisheries management and thus the sustainability of the sector.

The programme focuses on four areas: developing new, more selective catch methods; identifying fisheries management instruments (closures, fishing days, etc.) that allow for better

compliance with quotas by reducing discards; drawing up a code of conduct for sustainable fisheries; establishing a systematic description of the sustainability of each fishery and of the impact of the new methods and techniques developed by the programme.

The goal is to give Danish fishermen a veritable 'user's guide' to sustainable fishing practices.

## United Kingdom

### ● Wales inaugurates ocean farming ashore

Raising salt-water fish ashore is the challenge being taken up by Bluewater Flatfish Farm, in the little village of Penmon, on the Isle of Anglesey in Wales. Created in 2002, this subsidiary of the Greek group Selonda is already producing a hundred tonnes of turbot for a clientele of restaurants. A halibut production unit will soon be added.

From the hatchery to processing, every stage of production is handled on the site of a former quarry, a stone's throw from the shore. The fish are raised in big tanks of sea water, isolated from the marine world. There is consequently no danger of invasion or contamination from diseases or marine pollution.

The farm's environmental impact is virtually nil thanks to a recirculation system through which the tank water is not discharged and replaced, but is constantly recycled and re-oxygenated. Organic waste is removed and processed in a lagoon operation, which consists of arranging successive ponds whose aquatic vegetation filters the water before it is returned to nature. This process has the added advantage of creating a small wetland area that contributes to the local aquatic and semi-aquatic biodiversity.

FIFG resources part-financed the creation of these innovative and environmentally friendly installations. In time, they will lead to the creation of some 30 new jobs.

(1) Abruzzi fish auctions.

## > Ban on anchovy fishing in the Bay of Biscay

For the second year in a row, the Commission has banned anchovy fishing in the Bay of Biscay. The conditions for such a ban were decided by the Member States in December 2005, when TACs and quotas were set. Those conditions dictate that if the stock of adult anchovies falls below safe biological limits during spawning time, i.e. 28 000 tonnes in the spring, the Commission has to close the fishery immediately. After estimating the stock at 18 640 tonnes, the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries (STECF) recommended that the Commission close the fishery. Anchovy fishing is therefore banned in the Bay of Biscay until 31 December 2006.

## > Simplification: the process takes its course

In December 2005, the Commission launched its action plan 2006-2008 to simplify the Common Fisheries Policy (see *Fishing and Aquaculture in Europe*, No 28, March 2006, p.11). The consultation process for the plan, during which a number of stakeholders submitted observations, has been concluded. In general, the plan has been well received by the European institutions and sectoral advisory bodies (the regional advisory councils and the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture). They stress the need for

consultation of the sector well in advance of any decision-making, and the regional advisory councils in particular recommend an approach based on individual fisheries, which is more logical for fishermen. Simplification is now entering into its implementing phase. In that context, the Commission recently adopted a Communication modifying the process for the adoption of TACs and quotas in order to allow more time for consulting stakeholders in preparation for the Council's debates.

## > Agreement with Mauritania

The European Union (EU) and Mauritania concluded in July a new fisheries partnership agreement that will enter into force temporarily on 1 August 2006, pending formal adoption by the Council of Ministers, once the European Parliament has issued its opinion. The agreement succeeds the one in force since 2001 and is the most important fisheries agreement concluded by the EU, in terms of both the amount of European financial compensation (€ 86 million a year) and the number of European fishing vessels in Mauritania's waters (around 180). The 'mixed' agreement concerns several demersal and pelagic species as well as crustaceans, cephalopods and tuna. It will cover a period of six years in terms of two-year renewable protocols. As do all the new partnership agreements concluded in the wake of the reform of the CFP, it includes an important element of support for the local

sector and for the implementation of sustainable fisheries in Mauritania's waters: part of the European financial contribution (€ 11 million a year) will be invested in the small-scale fleet, port infrastructure, monitoring, and in the protection of an internationally renowned marine zone, the Banc d'Arguin National Park. The agreement also contains provisions for scientific cooperation between the EU and Mauritania with the aim of monitoring the state of resources in Mauritanian waters. Fishing possibilities are lower than those in the previous agreement for certain sensitive stocks such as cephalopods and demersal species. On the other hand, additional fishing possibilities for small pelagic species are established for non-freezer vessels, which may land their catches locally.

Eleven fisheries are concerned:

- Crustaceans (other than spiny lobsters): 9 440 gross tonnage (GT)
- Black hake (trawlers and longliners): 3 600 GT
- Cephalopods: 18 600 GT for 43 licences
- Demersal trawlers (other than crustaceans, black hake and cephalopods): 750 GT
- Spiny lobsters: 300 GT
- Crabs: 300 GT
- Other demersal fisheries: 2 324 GT
- Tuna (seiners): 36 licences
- Tuna (pole-and-line vessels and longliners): 31 licences
- Small pelagic species (freezer trawlers): 22 licences
- Small pelagic species (non-freezer vessels): 15 000 GT.



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