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IMPACT FISH

Maximising the value of EU-funded research in fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing

The Challenge

The development of European aquaculture, fisheries and seafood processing has benefited considerably from EU-funded research efforts. Reforms in European policies and programmes, accompanied by changing public priorities, have affected the way in which the fisheries sector is perceived and hence its further development. The Fourth and Fifth Framework Programmes (FP4 and FP5) of the European Commission in aquaculture, fisheries and seafood processing RTD were built upon specific objectives for the continued development of the sector over the period 1994-2002. But what were the actual impacts of these programmes?

Project Objective

IMPACT FISH provided an impact assessment of both programmes on the research areas mentioned above and on the fisheries industry (including aquaculture production systems). The project brought together diverse sources of information on the projects, and sought direct feedback on RTD impact from a wide range of stakeholders who produce and use the results of the projects/programmes. The assessment was divided into two phases – one of monitoring current information and one of collection and quantification in the form of questionnaires.

Key Points

- 209 respondents provided feedback to the assessment. Of these, 43% worked in the aquaculture sector, 30% in fisheries, 15% in the seafood processing sector and 12% were considered as being “cross-sectorial”.
- The scientific community represented the majority of respondents, although individual companies, associations and NGOs were also well represented.
- After ranking the participating countries based on the number of returned questionnaires, the United Kingdom, Norway and France made up the top-3, reflecting these countries’ involvement in both research programmes.

EATiP Thematic Area of Relevance

TA1: Product Quality, Consumer Safety and Health
TA2: Technology and Systems
TA3: Managing the Biological Lifecycle
TA4: Sustainable Feed Production
TA5: Integration with the Environment
TA6: Knowledge Management
TA7: Aquatic Animal Health and Welfare
TA8: Socio-Economics and Management

Key Words

Impact, assessment, fisheries, aquaculture, seafood, processing, research

Project Information

Contract number:

513651

Contract type:

Specific Support Action - FP6
Strengthening the European Research Area.

Action line:

POLICIES-1.3 The modernisation and sustainability of fisheries policies

Duration:

20 months (01/07/2004 – 30/09/2005)

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Output Highlights

- A generally good awareness by stakeholders on how the EU supports research and of the objectives of the two Framework Programmes, but a much lower knowledge of the results of the research, especially by the potential beneficiaries in the private sector.
- The scientific community has a consistently higher belief in all aspects of impact addressed in this study and especially the positive sustainability effects of research (resources and environmental benefits). However, this is not mirrored by NGOs (both environmental and consumers) and this may be linked to the lack of adapted communication of research results to them.
- EC RTD funding has led to a better understanding of aquaculture systems and seafood quality and safety, but a more neutral opinion is given for contribution of research to fisheries management. Furthermore, the private sector (including professional organisations and individual companies) tends to show less enthusiasm than the institutional partners (scientific community and policy makers) on the extent to which research contributed to a better understanding of the main issues at stake.
- While the general perception of the impact of EC RTD funding on networking and cooperation between countries was high, the seafood processing sector had a lower general perception on cooperation and communication from science to industry and society than the other sectors.
- Most respondents felt that the level of communication of the results of research must be better adapted to the target audience.
- Recommendations to the Commission on the validation of proposed research, dissemination strategies for different types of research projects and communication tools

Next Steps – Suggested Actions/Follow On



Policy

- The final report contains recommendations for stakeholder involvement in assessing the impact (especially regarding dissemination and implementation plans) of proposed research at the evaluation stage and using more adapted communication tools for targeted users.



Knowledge Transfer

- The full IMPACT FISH report was sent to all stakeholders that were initially identified (>1.000) and was widely disseminated by the two partners. It is available on the EAS website at <http://www.eason-line.org/component/content/article/1/7-impact-of-eu-research> and has received more than 23.000 hits

Related Publications/Projects

Other EU projects addressing research needs and impacts are PROFET POLICY, FEUFAR and AQUAIN-NOVA.