

NOTE - Opinion on the consultation "PHYCOMORPH European Guidelines for a Sustainable Aquaculture of Seaweeds"

As multi-stakeholder forum, the European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform encourages research and innovation that are of high relevance to the development of the aquaculture sector in Europe. As part of its mobilisation strategy, EATiP has established Mirror Platforms, consisting of regional or national industry-led multi-stakeholder aquaculture clusters. At present, nine networks in as many different regions have been received the status of EATiP Mirror Platform, and three more are on the verge of being recognised. Together, they represent more than 500 European-based stakeholders, with a share of about 80% private companies.

The EATiP Mirror Platforms decided to reflect on experiences from the current and recommendations for the future EMFF during their meeting in Madrid on April 9, 2018. Further discussions among the representatives were taking place on a dedicated joint electronic platform. Several EATiP Mirror Platforms play a central role in efficiently communicating and using the opportunities offered through the Structural Funds.

EATiP also discussed the matter with FEAP and attended the V4 Freshwater workshop in Hungary in order to align its views and expectations from the EMFF in the post-2020 period.

In summary, EATiP recommends the following measures and adjustments when putting in to place a new program after 2020:

- Financial and participative support to operate these national / regional EATiP Mirror Platforms is highly needed. The use of structural funds for this purpose would have a multiplying effect through the provision of professional assistance to potential beneficiaries and through the exchange of best practice between the national / regional clusters under the EATiP umbrella. Joining efforts through the EATiP Mirror Platform mechanism will further drive research and innovation actions towards improved competitiveness and sustainability of the European aquaculture sector.
- Strategic priorities should be done at the implementation level, thus allowing Member States to account for regional differences and to fit the support to their own strategic development strategies and Multi-Annual Plans;
- There is a need for simplification and for a reduction of the administrative burden for both the Member States and the applicants/beneficiaries;
- Funds dedicated to the development of aquaculture should not be limited to the production of biomass for human consumption, but also the creation of knowledge, technology and innovative solutions – as these are important prerequisites for the further development of the sector;
- Aquaculture should not be excluded from other EU financing instruments and regulations, such as the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRD), because these may prove to be efficient contributors to innovation and technology development – also in the aquaculture sector;



- The promotion and exchange of best practice in efficiently distributing EMFF funds to its beneficiaries (such as the use of flat rate vouchers and the evaluation by technically competent authorities) is important to stimulate the use of the instrument and the attractiveness of the aquaculture sector;
- A result-oriented evaluation should be based on clear performance indicators that are publically available;
- Skill development in SMEs should be enhanced through better access to vocational training schemes;
- Environmental services provided by extensive aquaculture should be recognised.

EATiP secretariat
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