



The questions on post 2020 EU Funding for fisheries and maritime sectors

The questions are taken from the Annex to the letter sent to the AC chairs and a tiny summary added.

Answers provided by Lindsay Keenan for The Fisheries Secretariat.

These answers are also fully supported by Coalition Clean Baltic and the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation.

- 1. Policy Objectives: the letter states that EU action is essential in order to create the right conditions for the Common Fisheries Policy and the integrated maritime policy**

Question: What should be the priority areas of intervention?

Answer:

1. Permanent reduction of active fleet capacity where there is risk for overcapacity, provided that the fishers concerned will effectively cease all fishing activities.
2. Research and development for e.g. seal-proof gear
3. Improvement of hygiene, health, safety and working conditions for fishers
4. Support to market development to increase human consumption of fish today used for industrial purposes such as sprat and herring.
5. There is a need for additional control to ensure current regulations are being adhered to, for example to stop the ongoing relatively high levels of illegal discarding of cod in the Baltic.

Question: What should no longer be eligible for support?

Answer:

1. Enhancement of the competitiveness and viability of fisheries enterprises that fish on stocks which are overfished or there is a risk for overcapacity.
2. Any measure that directly or indirectly maintains the capacity to catch fish for fishers who fish in part on stocks that are overfished.
3. Support to young fishers is questionable; it can in effect be a support to older fishers (if they cannot sell a license to a younger fisher the price could be expected to go down until they find a buyer). If this subsidy is needed to avoid other problems, for example caused by ITQ systems, these causes should be addressed more directly in other ways than subsidies.
4. Only allow support for aquaculture new or existing that is considered to be using Best Available Technology.

2. Regional solutions to tackle regional challenges: the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund doesn't provide for differentiated allocation of support on a regional basis, even though the challenges that face the sea basins vary very much. So should there be support adapted to the different sea basins? It would require an analysis of each sea basin.

Question:

What are the main challenges encountered by your sea basin?

Answer:

Outside fishing, pollution from agriculture and chemicals, and climate change. Within fishing, overfishing and the reluctance of MS governments to prioritize more sustainable fishing in the national distribution of fishing opportunities.

Question:

Which EMFF instruments should be adapted on a regional basis in order to tackle these challenges?

Answer:

Less important than the choice between grants, loans, tax rebates or insurance is the more effective use of tools outside the EMFF toolbox to achieve policy goals. Fish stocks need to be at healthy levels so that the fishing sector can pay for its renewal, equipment, investments etc. like other sectors.

Question:

What kind of flexibility should be granted to Member States demonstrating a good management of their fisheries?

Answer:

1. Management of fisheries has to be good on a regional level, and fish stocks have to be at biologically safe levels, otherwise there is a high probability of sub-optimisation. Beyond that, in general, the more sustainable the fisheries and the less risk for over-capacity, the more scope for flexibility.
2. A crucial element is to have more earmarked allocation of funds in a uniform way in the region. For example several countries simply do not allocate funds for certain aspects such as support to test seal safe gears and for monitoring of such work by others. This makes cooperation harder and development slower.
3. A central point here is also funds to support the regional fora BALTFISH that today has no secretariat or even a focal point. Support of basic elements such as website. If funds, even small amounts, in EMFF was earmarked for regional management cooperation it should improve chances of a more stable and transparent process.

Question:

How can future funding be even more closely aligned with CFP implementation, for example fisheries management measures?

Answer:

In general, replace EMFF measures with other measures, e.g. if the goal is vibrant coastal communities transfer the funds to regional funds; if the goal is research put the money into the research fund etc. In addition:

1. As there are both environmental, social and economic criteria, a clear hierarchy is needed (in the order mentioned above) to get better governance – otherwise there will be lack of clarity and transparency.
2. More targeted to improving control and implementation.
3. Stronger connection between the CFP and EU environmental policy, e.g. the MSFD.
4. Improved data collection and analysis, where needed.
5. Stronger conditions for good management for obtaining funding. The current connection between EMFF and capacity reduction (Article 22) is, for example, not working in practice.
6. Financing future funding more by royalties for fishing stocks where there is no overcapacity and elimination of tax rebates for fishing fuel.

3. Support for small-scale coastal fishery

74% of EU active vessels comprise small scale vessels. They currently enjoy preferential support through the EMFF. Three difficulties facing the small scale fleet are highlighted: lack of investment, lack of innovation, lack of quota.

Question:

How can EU public support tackle more efficiently these three challenges?

Answer:

1. Improve the situation of fishing stocks
2. Reducing capacity in, and competition for resources and markets from, less sustainable segments.
3. Market opportunities for users of passive gear and other sections of the small scale fleet that do not fish on overfished stocks.
4. Assist and improve possibilities for SSCF to sell their catch directly to customers for example by supporting development of internet based marketing and payment tools.

Question:

Which kind of preferential financial support would be relevant for SSCF?

Answer:

Reduction in the amount and share of support going to other segments.

Please send this with name of your organisation to em@bsac.dk by Friday 26th January 2018.