

A new Fisheries Fund to support sustainable fisheries and diversification

The European Commission has tabled a proposal for a European Fisheries Fund (EFF) for the period 2007-2013, to help implement measures aimed at securing sustainable fisheries and diversifying economic activities in fishing areas. On average, € 700 million will be made available per year. This EFF will succeed the current Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). EFF measures are adapted to the changing needs of both the fisheries and aquaculture sector and the coastal fishing areas concerned. The approach is based on helping to reduce fishing pressure to allow the recovery of fish stocks and encourage the use of more environmentally-friendly equipment and practices in fishing and aquaculture and in processing and marketing of fisheries products. EFF will also provide aid for fishing regions most affected by job losses to help them diversify and strengthen their economic base. Collective initiatives and those that encourage equal opportunities will also be eligible for EFF aid. It is up to Member States to decide which mix of measures suits their regions best. As decided under the 2002 Common Fisheries Policy reform, aid to renew the fleet, export vessels or create joint enterprises will no longer be eligible under the new rules.

“The European Fisheries Fund responds to the changing needs of fisheries in the 21st century. By helping implement the Common Fisheries Policy reform, it will make a major contribution to securing environmental, economic and social sustainability in fisheries.”, said Franz Fischler, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries.

Securing sustainable fisheries and fishing areas under EFF

Technological advances mean that fewer vessels and less manpower are required. To tackle over-fishing, stock depletion and the effects of job losses, EFF targets measures designed to deliver sustainability by encouraging less and better fishing and lessening the dependence of coastal communities on fishing.

Examples:

Aid to the catching sector

- Aid will be available to vessel owners and crews, obliged to suspend their fishing activities temporarily to help fish stocks recover, or because of the non-renewal of a fisheries agreement or following natural disasters.
- Training, retraining or early retirement schemes.
- The use of fishing gear with a lesser impact on the marine environment will be eligible for aid.

- Young fishermen will benefit from specific incentives for training.
- Aid to upgrade safety and hygiene on board .
- Permanent withdrawal of fishing vessels will be financed under the EFF, conditions governing aid will be tightened.
- Support measures for the small-scale fishing fleet.

Aquaculture, processing and marketing

- EFF will support the acquisition and application of environmentally-friendly equipment and techniques.
- In view of market conditions, aid will focus on small businesses.
- Shellfish farmers, forced temporarily to suspend harvesting, will be eligible for aid.

Sustainable development of coastal fishing areas

- Initiatives that diversify and strengthen the economic base in fishing areas particularly affected by fish stock depletion will be eligible, as will projects promoting the role of women in these areas.

Collective initiatives

- Aid will be available for projects of common benefit in both fishing and aquaculture.

EFF rules will be simplified and the responsibilities of the Commission and Member States clarified.

For more detailed information see [MEMO/04/181](#)