



**THE RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH
PROPOSALS
TO COMMUNITY POLICIES :**

**THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY
(CFP)**

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EVALUATION OF THE RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS TO THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY (CFP)

To support other Community policies, the 5th Framework Programme for scientific research must aim at responding to the research needs and priorities of these policies over the period 1998-2002. The Work Programme details these research priorities while the Evaluation Manual describes the selection process for the proposals to be submitted in response to calls. This manual lists the various criteria on the basis of which proposals of sufficient and equal scientific or technical quality will be ranked, among which proposals contribution to the implementation of EU policies. The present document provides additional guidance to assess proposals contribution to the Common Fisheries Policy¹.

1.1. QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF CFP RELEVANCE

To determine the potential contribution of submitted proposals to the implementation, smooth operation, and evolution of the CFP one must first and foremost assess whether the results of the proposed research, if it were successful, could be useful :

- over the short term, to the implementation of the CFP and to its improvement along the same lines as those adopted at its inception in 1983. This could be assessed in terms of :
 - making more reliable or efficient the methodologies on the basis of which scientists formulate their opinion and advice;
 - making the most of limited fish resources, given that a significant increase in fish landings is highly unlikely, by aiming at higher added value for catches and the development of alternative employment possibilities through an improvement of the quality of seafood products, including from farmed species, a reduction of the waste fraction, greater use of presently under-utilised species, including species not consumed directly to any significant extent so far;
 - supporting the development of European aquaculture as a complementary activity to fisheries, stimulating economic development in marginal areas where there are few opportunities for employment thus contributing to Community cohesion through improved knowledge on the biology of the species interesting for aquaculture, mitigating their disease problems, improving their genetic basis and avoiding the negative effects on the environment;
- over the mid term, to the implementation of the reform of the CFP along the lines adopted in 1992. This, in particular, could be assessed in terms of :
 - the improvement of the efficiency of the implementation of the CFP, in particular by reinforcing the link between the structural adaptation of the fishing fleets to the conservation of the fisheries resources and the management of the fishing fleets, thus contributing to a balance between fishing capacity and fishing effort;
 - the integration of annual decision making with regard to resources conservation in a multiannual framework;
 - the integration of the objectives of mitigating the impacts of fishing and aquaculture activities on marine ecosystems into those of the CFP;
- in the long run, research should facilitate the evolution of the CFP, in particular by identifying and comparing alternative resource management strategies within the European context and according to specific situations. Most importantly, it should clarify for decision-makers how their future choices

¹ Additional information on the Common Fisheries Policy may be found on the relevant internet site: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg14/dg14.html>

with regard to these management strategies will affect the various objectives assigned by the Treaties to the CFP.

All the above implies that:

- proposals focusing on stocks, fisheries or aquaculture activities confined to the waters of only one country are unlikely to be funded, unless it can be demonstrated that the problems addressed are of a European nature or that the expected results could be extrapolated to a European scale within the CFP;
- proposals contrary to the CFP, for example proposals which could potentially lead to greater fishing mortalities by contributing, directly or indirectly, to an increase in the catching capacity of fishing vessels or fishing fleets could not be considered for financial support;
- the longer the period over which the results of a proposal might become useful for the implementation of the CFP, the higher the scientific quality of the research to be conducted for this proposal to stand a chance of being funded. Higher scientific quality will thus be required from a proposal which would contribute to the CFP long term evolution than from one which would contribute to its implementation over the short or medium term.

1.2. QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF CFP AND OTHER COMMUNITY POLICIES RELEVANCE

Further, the likely contribution of proposals to the CFP and other Community Policies can be assessed in a more quantitative fashion by measuring some or all of the following dimension, depending on the research area involved:

- the **seriousness of the issues addressed** which will be assessed according to:
 - the degree of biological vulnerability of the stocks involved for proposals providing or improving the scientific bases for stocks conservation;
 - the proposals likely contribution to the improvement of tools and techniques for the implementation of the monitoring and enforcement of fisheries regulations;
 - the magnitude of the environmental impacts due to fisheries or aquaculture activities that proposals will address and more importantly that they may help alleviate;
- the **socio-economic importance** (in financial and employment terms) of the sectors of the industry which could benefit from the knowledge and understanding the proposal would generate;
- the **economic perspective of the sectors** likely to benefit from the results of the proposal. The latter can be assessed in terms of potential for expansion in case of a healthy sector, rejuvenation in case of a declining sector, or protection against crises in case of a fragile sector (delay or avoidance of crises occurrence, alleviation of their impacts). Thus when assessing proposals dealing with aquaculture pathologies, for example, the economic perspective of the relevant species and activities will have to be taken into account;
- the **contribution to socio-economic cohesion within the Union**, which will be assessed on the basis of regional dependence upon fisheries or aquaculture versus other economic activities such as tourism, or on the basis of regional involvement within the research programme. Thus preference can be given, in the case of proposals of similar scientific and technical quality, to the one originating from a geographical area not well covered in the research programme;
- the contribution to the reinforcement of European fisheries and aquaculture research capacities which will be assessed both in terms of **“within field”** and **“between fields” co-operation**. To reinforce the former, preference will be granted to proposals creating new working relationships over those of similar quality maintaining existing ones. Similarly, concerted actions will receive priority over shared-costs projects of equivalent scientific and technical quality, simply because they can stimulate wide ranging scientific co-operation in a cost-effective way. And to reinforce “between fields” co-operation, proposals contributing to multidisciplinary research or establishing bridges between the different fields of research will be granted priority.

Furthermore, to respond to the objectives of the workprogramme and to ensure that research is stimulated in all the domains identified herein, the final selection of proposals to be funded in response to a call must constitute a “balanced package” between all the relevant research areas.