MEDAC - Registered Office Via XX Settembre, 20 - c/o MIPAAF - 00187 Rome (Italy) - Tax identification number 97534810581 - Association registered with the Prefecture of Rome as a legal entity n.1224/2017

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Object: MEDAC contribution on EMFAF Strategies

Following the debates on the EMFAF already held in the MEDAC, and according to the DG MARE invitation in sending contribution on possible strategies to be implemented through the EMFAF, the MEDAC members provided the ideas and suggestions reported below. The contributions are ranked according to the level of priority given by MEDAC members to each idea.

Priority 1) Fostering sustainable fisheries and the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources.

1. Innovations in fishing activities (gears, engines, etc.), energetic efficiency, automation, and robotics systems.
    a) The replacement of engines should be as fast as possible in the whole fleet and enforced by an urgent coordinated Plan between DG MARE and MS to reach 0 CO_2 emissions. Moreover, it is urgent a self-produced fuel (hydrogen and similar[1]) because it does not depend on the pressure of external markets (fossil) and a natural source (sea, non-polluting) is available. This is particularly relevant in the Mediterranean Sea considering the length of the coastline and the fishing economy based on a large percentage of small family and self-employed units with a strong social root in coastal communities.
    b) There is a great need of engines replacement by combining the importance of an instrument ensuring the safety of navigation with the reduction of harmful emissions. However, it is necessary to deal with the financial limits provided by art. 5, par. 5, and art. 18 (LOA up to 24 meters) of the cit. Reg. (EU) 2021/1139. "Lump-sum" funding could be provided for pilot projects to enable the rapid development of effective and applicable technologies for the sector in the use of low-impact engines. It should also be supported the action of testing alternative engines that can then be applied on a greater number of vessels, in case of positive results.
2. Innovations in the selectivity of fishing tools: it has been raised up as one of the first actions that should be supported by EMFAF to reduce the impact on marine ecosystems and the achievement of MSY objectives.

[1] *PEPMA - Replacing the engine with a new one, with the same horsepower but with 20% lower fuel consumption, or 20% lower emissions, are ideas not applicable to fishing vessels, to which new technologies cannot be applied, such as e.g. Exhaust gas recycling, nor the use of alternative fuels such as hydrogen or gas, which require pressure tanks, which in a humid and corrosive environment, you realize that they turn into a bomb, which threatens the boat itself and its occupants.*
The engines of fishing vessels must be simple without many electronic control systems, which due to humidity could lead to failure and often unpredictable shutdown of the engine.

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info@med-ac.eu
+39 06.46.65.21.12 T

med-ac.eu
Via XX Settembre, 20
00187 Roma (Italy)

Co-funded by the European Union

3. Innovations for the reduction of waste in sea and support for the replacement of consumable plastic materials used for fishing with biodegradable materials.

4. Support for the direct marketing of the products with new technological instruments

5. Development of insurance systems for fisheries: in addition to the support to fishermen for protection from adversity, it would be expected the intervention of EMFAF to contribute to the conclusion and financing of insurance policies for fishers, exactly as it happens, through the EAFRD [Rural Development Fund - art. 37, Reg. (EU) No 1305/2013 - sub-measure 17.1] for the payment of crop, animal, and plant insurance premiums to cover losses of production of farmers. The Direction tools for the risk management basically consists in making the operating conditions to intervene to cover the premium that fishermen and fish farmers would pay to insurance companies for losses caused by adverse weather, absence of the vessel's master (for illness, accident, etc...) that does not allow the vessel's work, environmental emergencies, international crisis. The measure would give impetus to ex-ante interventions (before any claim occurs), rather than ex-post (to cover the damage that has already occurred), with benefits also for the National Administration. At a time when the fight against climate change is recognised as a priority, this "adaptation and mitigation" measure could give a strong signal to fishermen and fish farmers, allowing them to take out subsidized policies to cover possible serious economic and other damages. Without similar experience in other Mediterranean Member States, pilot projects could be launched to assess the interest of fishing vessels and insurance companies.

6. Investments for security, safety, working conditions.
    a) There is a great need of engines replacement by combining the importance of an instrument ensuring the safety of navigation with the reduction of harmful emissions.
    b) Investments in legal fisheries protection especially for the risk up to the entrepreneur.
    c) Investments in technologies improving safety on board, such as GPS tracking systems, blockchain etc., and according to the harmonization with Council Directive (EU) 2017/159 of 19 December 2016 on the implementation of the International Labor Organization Convention 2007, on fisheries work concluded on 21 May 2012 between the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives of the European Union (COGECA), the European Federation of Transport Workers' Unions (ETF) and the European Union of Fisheries Organizations of the European Union (European Union)) [OJ 25 / 31.1.2017].
    d) Improvement of the networking at sea through technological systems for on-board connection and communication.

7. Development of agreements between MPAs and fishermen. With a view to integration and synergy with other Union strategies (e.g. biodiversity), Marine Protected Areas could

propose a focus on the spill-over effect, with studies carried out by management bodies and scientific institutes with the close collaboration of fishermen. Under the same heading as the MPA, EMFAF assistance (equal to the average profitability of a fishing day) could be granted to the same fishermen when, instead of going fishing, they spend their working day to the control of the MPA, to the collection of marine waste, or also for voluntary closures etc.

8. Promote and enhance integration with other Funds.

9. Innovations to increase the shelf life of the caught product.

10. Support of an Integrated Supply Chain Approaches involving several interventions and bringing together more beneficiaries.

11. Development and implementation of a sustainable fisheries certification systems, improving the food safety and quality through actions such as the cold chain and traceability.

Priority 3) Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities.

1. Strengthening the bottom-up approach in policies, improving the cooperation between fishing enterprises and scientists. Promotion and support of training for fishermen (in the areas of sustainable resource management, environment, biodiversity, serious infringements, and the fight against illegal fishing, etc.) during closed seasons.

2. Flat-rate contributions for ecological transition.

3. Improvement of the generational turnover. Proposed actions:
    a. The payment of a premium and by encouraging, through the provision of financial resources, the establishment and development of competitive, environmentally friendly and integrated coastal enterprises. Such as the activation of an integrated business package (Youth Package) consisting of different measures of the EMFAF Programme coordinated with each other by a business plan. In addition to the start-up premium, the package should support the investments to improve the sustainability and the activities of the enterprise and the investments for the development of the activities diversification in the blue economy framework.
    b. By providing for a first location premium as in agriculture where a non-repayable premium is granted. The amount varies according to the areas (intensive areas/inland areas) from 40.000 to 60.000 euros with the constraint to carry out the activity for at least five years.

4. Investments for the creation and development of diversification of business activity.
    a. Conversion of fleet segments insisting on overexploited resources (or stocks) to other fisheries targeting less exploited species. For this reason, special (traditional)

fisheries could be promoted and recovered as a means of transmission of traditions, which otherwise would be lost, while at the same time easing the pressure on suffering stocks. Lastly, it could be considered the possibility, at least for some of these special fisheries, to suggest Unesco awards... etc

b. Promotion of pilot actions between fisheries and touristic enterprises.
c. Transversal projects covering multi-layers measures, also at regional level, should be allowed to the enterprises to avoid waste of time waiting for each theme supported by different calls and aimed to promote an integrated development.

5. Innovation on-board: communication and connection systems towards networking at sea

6. Develop insurance systems for fisheries for the compensation measure for wildlife damages.

7. Collective actions. FLAGs consider necessary:
   a. the review of the operational modalities and rules defining the partnerships in order to simplify their action, primarily with regard to relations with the public administration responsible for monitoring and controlling expenditure, exceeding the bottlenecks observed in the current programming.
   b. The FLAGs aggregation to have an appropriate operational dimension and to avoid proliferation. Moreover, the strengthening of the National Network of FLAGs can become the platform needed for the technical support between regions and FLAGs. A possible pilot action could be the selection of a restricted number of FLAGs to be recognised enough organized to try the experience of FLAGs coordination.

8. The inclusion of provisions in the intervention measures for conservation, processing and marketing for the conclusion of sectoral contracts between fisheries, processing and marketing enterprises.

Priority 4) strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed.
No contribution received on this topic.

And other suggestions:
- Creation of "Managements units" (based on the Italian model of mollusc management consortia - Co.ge.Mo), with a focus on fisheries, financing for this purpose preliminary studies, specialist advice, monitoring and compensation measures.
- In the case of emergency financial assistance due to force majeure, environmental events, health crises, etc., the inadmissibility of applications should not apply, in the event of a serious fishery infringement, or provision for recovery of the aid amount, if the entity commits a serious fishing offense for the next 5 years after disbursement. The reason is that this financial aid is of a

humanitarian nature, it has the meaning of compensation for damage and not the classic, financial aid for modernization

- Regarding modernization, the allocation of financial aid money to third parties (suppliers, banks, etc.) should be explicitly provided for, in order to make it possible for any interested party to join equipment programs, because there is indeed a lack of liquidity, as is very right mentioned in the regulation.