

“MUTFISHARE”

Bringing together European fisheries and aquaculture research institutes

In March 2002, the Commission published its Green Paper on the Future of the Common Fisheries Policy, discussing its weaknesses and challenges and presenting a number of options for its reform. According to this Paper, better data collection and availability, appropriate applied research, adequate management and increased stakeholder participation are the key factors to achieve the sustainability of fish populations and their ecosystems.

But the research needed to support the achievement of this objective is not always available.

Research institutions all over Europe have the role to increase the knowledge and provide the tools that are necessary for the CFP's implementation. Analysis of the EU's fourth (FP4) and fifth (FP5) Framework Programmes has however shown that research is lacking on certain topics which are crucial for the future of the CFP, while on other topics there are duplications and redundancies. There exists therefore a need to increase the cooperation in research topics, so as to:

- avoid duplication in research
- create synergy between the different research institutes
- create critical masses of research for different topics

The **MUTFISHARE** objectives were to **stimulate cooperation on fisheries and aquaculture science** through better information of the project partners about their national priorities and research prospects, to increase exchanges of personnel and to provide scientific expertise in giving advice for research topics in support of the CFP.

To increase dialogue between research institutes and the European Commission – DG Fisheries, EFARO – the board of Directors of the European Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organisations – was created. Three general EFARO meetings were organised, relating

to the requirements of the CFP in terms of new research activities and to the development of networks with other organisations. During these meetings, data collection programs for biology and economy were discussed, recommendations on research priorities were approved by the Directors and submitted to the EC as contribution to the preparation of the annual work programme of the EU calls. Moreover, the nature of research issues to answer specific questions was addressed for medium and long term tendencies, and a prospective document for FP 7 was produced.

In addition to these meetings, and to facilitate technical exchanges between institutes, nine scientific meetings were held on the following topics:

- Building the ERA in fisheries and aquaculture science.
- Databases for fisheries management.
- Environmental interactions of fisheries and aquaculture.
- Exchanges of boats and equipments, and evolution of the fisheries research fleet.
- Genetic tools for fisheries and aquaculture.
- How can otolith research contribute at improving fisheries sciences?
- Diversification in aquaculture.

Project acronym:

MUTFISHARE

Full title of Project:

Mutualization on fisheries and aquaculture European Research Institutes.

EU contract number:

Q5CA-CT-2002-01353

Web-site:

www.efaro.eu

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- How biologists and economists may implement research in common to support the development and the management of fisheries.
- Fisheries advisory system evaluation: an overlook.

The outcomes of these meetings and workshops were subsequently synthesised and published under the name “Trends in European fisheries and aquaculture research”. In addition to this synthesis, the extended reports of the meetings under MUTFISHARE, as well as position papers, posters and recommendations issued were placed on the EFARO website (www.efaro.eu).

MUTFISHARE has benefited greatly to both the EU scientific community in the field and the European Commission – DG Fisheries. The project can be viewed as a first step towards integrating and increasing cooperation between the main European institutes of research in fisheries and aquaculture in order to reach the CFP’s objectives.

In addition, it has also **contributed to the move towards a European Research Area (ERA)** which aims to establish ‘a common system of scientific and technical reference’ to build a common research programme. This strategic EU plan, which was adopted in January 2000 (COM (2000)6) forms the foundation for cooperative research within

Europe and is based on national programmes of research institutes. It is currently under revision, with the European Commission having adopted a Green Paper (COM(2007)161) to launch a broad institutional and public debate on what should be done to create a unified and attractive ERA, which would fulfil the needs and expectations of the scientific community, business and citizens. More info on this debate can be found on <http://ec.europa.eu/research/era>.

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