

“ERMES”

European research for Mediterranean seafood

Fishing, aquaculture and the whole seafood industry chain in the Mediterranean area are mainly the preserve of small traditional companies that rarely have the resources for innovation, in contrast to Northern European fishing which is far more industrialised. These small companies tend to remain static and may have problems in coping with growing environmental and regulatory constraints. Their failure to prosper and grow would pose a risk to the whole Mediterranean seafood production because it is so dependent on smaller companies. The rationale of the ERMES project is to advise smaller companies in the region on how to get access to R&D innovation on all aspects of the seafood production chain, from wild and farmed fish to processing and distribution.

ERMES is a European project aiming at supporting access to research and development activities and to new technologies for SMEs of the seafood industry (from capture to aquaculture to processing and distribution) in the Mediterranean area. The project provides scientific and technological advice to companies on the basis of careful analysis of their innovation needs. ERMES directly involves 5 reputed research organisations from Spain, France, Italy and Greece and has a strong potential to help improving the quality of seafood processing in the Mediterranean region. The project combines the expertise of scientific institutions with that of business support organisations (Chamber of Commerce from different Mediterranean countries) in charge of contacting, informing and profiling companies likely to be assisted by the project in different countries. Scientific advice will be provided through a series of workshops, one-to-one sessions and follow-up providing links to the most adequate research organisations likely to give the response to the needs of companies.

significant number of SMEs involved in the seafood production and processing industry in the Mediterranean area.

- To provide specific targeted information and guidance through ad hoc workshops to be held in different Mediterranean countries (11 workshops in 6 different countries).
- To establish a “co-operation practice” which should bring the seafood sector companies to demand more in terms of information, relations and potential links to the world of research and technological innovation.
- To identify approximately 70-80 that have a relevant potential either in research or technological innovation and that can be supported through more advanced scientific services in different outlet scenarios.
- To provide an overall mapping of research resources in the Mediterranean region in the different sectors of seafood production.
- To increase co-operation and awareness of two non EU countries (Turkey and Tunisia) on scientific co-operation with the EU and bring their companies to better articulate their innovation and research needs.

Direct objectives of the ERMES project are:

- To spread information on research opportunities and FP6 funding in the Food Quality and Safety Programme to a



Project acronym:

ERMES

Full title of Project:

European research for Mediterranean seafood

EU contract number:

016107

Web-site:

www.ermesproject.org

Coordinator

Mr. Mauro Bianchi
Technical Support for European Organisations sprl
Avenue de Tervuren 32-34, 7th floor
1040 Brussel
Belgium

Phone : +32 2 2301090

Fax : +32 2 2301377

Email : mbianchi@teseo.be

**“IN THE LONG TERM,
ERMES WILL GIVE A MUCH-
NEEDED BOOST TO THE
SMALL PRODUCERS AND
PROCESSORS IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN
SEAFOOD INDUSTRY“**

The project aims to support approximately 80 organisations with relevant potential in research or technical innovation. This will be achieved by following three possible scenarios:

1. The company needs research co-operation.

The project will be able to set relations and a potential co-operation framework with the most appropriate scientific partner Europe wide for the specific issue the company has raised.

2. The company needs research co-operation for which initiatives and activities have already been started or for which there is already a well-established framework in another EC funded initiative.

In this case, the ERMES project will be able to direct the attention of the company to that initiative. In this perspective, one of ERMES partners (AZTI) is involved in SMEs related activities within the Seafood Plus IP, while others are involved in other food safety related initiatives (University of Florence and Etat).

3. The company needs technological innovation via transfer of knowledge.

In this case, the project will provide specific support through a specialised partner (IDMer), which deals specifically with technology of transfer in the seafood production chain.

Using this strategy, ERMES will help Mediterranean seafood SMEs – which make up the backbone of its fishing industry – to weather global competition by helping them tap into the latest R&D in the sector. Technical innovation derived for northern fisheries will be adapted for the Mediterranean region. Research institutes for the marine environment and marine resources will focus more on Mediterranean problems. Finally, the project will also facilitate technology transfer to and encourage Turkey and Tunisia to co-operate in EU research.

In the long term, ERMES will have the following socio-economic impacts:

- It will give a much-needed boost to the small producers and processors in the Mediterranean seafood industry.
- It will help SMEs to define and structure their research needs.
- It will encourage greater co-operation between the various phases of bringing seafood to market.
- It will contribute to the quality and safety of Mediterranean seafood, in EU countries and beyond.
- It will promote a long-term dialogue between companies in the seafood production chain and scientific bodies that can help them to prosper.