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Date: 10 December 2018
Our reference: 1819/PAC08
Subject: Pelagic AC recommendation on EU funding for scientific research projects
CC: PELAC Member States (Germany, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, Poland, UK, Sweden, Spain)

Dear Mr Machado,

It is my pleasure to present to you the unanimous recommendation of the Pelagic AC as regards EU funding for scientific research projects under the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Bearing in mind the process of co-legislation, this recommendation is also addressed to Member States.

In case you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jesper Raakjær'.

Jesper Raakjær
Chairman Pelagic AC



Annex I

Recommendation on EU funding for scientific research projects

December 2018

Introduction

In June 2018 the Commission presented its proposal 2018/0210 for a regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The Pelagic Advisory Council (Pelagic AC), understanding the importance this fund entails for the fisheries sector, appreciates the opportunity to provide recommendations in addition to the recommendations shared with the European Commission on post 2020 EU funding for fisheries and maritime affairs earlier this year, dated April 2018 (reference 1718/PAC 127).

The Pelagic AC is conscious that this opinion paper is not relevant for the European Commission at this time as the proposal has already been tabled. This paper is therefore addressed to Member States, bearing in mind the long term process of co-legislation.

The Pelagic AC limits its opinion to the remits of its work. In this regard, this opinion follows a pragmatic approach commenting directly on the articles provided on the proposal 2018/0210.

Role Advisory Councils & EMFF

The Pelagic Advisory Council is a stakeholder led advisory body that advises the European Commission and relevant Member States on the management of pelagic stocks under its remit, to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy 1380/2013 (CFP).

The Pelagic AC has always considered the engagement and collaboration with the scientific community as key to delivering on its work programme. Core activities of the Pelagic AC include the development of multi-annual management plans for pelagic stocks, as well as contributing to increase scientific knowledge and data collection. However, the lack of funding for scientific research projects remains a fundamental issue in the progress of the work of the Pelagic AC.

The EMFF is the main instrument of financial support to achieve the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy. In this regard the current EMFF addresses six Union priorities, two of which are especially relevant from the perspective of the Pelagic AC. The first priority relates to “*promoting environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fisheries*”, the second to “*fostering the implementation of the CFP*”. Both EMFF priorities have a number of specific objectives including the avoidance and reduction of unwanted catches and the improvement and supply of scientific knowledge as well as the improvement of the collection and management of data.

Article 40 of the Commission proposal on the implementation of the CFP (*Priority 1 Fostering sustainable fisheries and the conservation of marine biological resources, Title III, Chapter 1*) states that the EMFF shall support the implementation of the CFP through:

(c) the functioning of Advisory Councils established in accordance with Article 43 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, which have an objective forming part of, and supporting, the CFP;

The CFP fully recognises in several articles and in the preamble the value of Advisory Councils as the appropriate fora for dialogue with stakeholders. It specifically states number (65) of CFP:

“Dialogue with stakeholders has proven to be essential for achieving the objectives of the CFP. Taking into account the diverse conditions throughout Union waters and the increased regionalisation of the CFP, Advisory Councils should enable the CFP to benefit from the knowledge and experience of all stakeholders.”

However, article 40 (c) of the Commission proposal only provides funding to the ACs for administrative purposes. It does not provide funding for ACs to carry out markets, technical, scientific, and economic projects of direct relevance to the ACs to fully enable the ACs to fulfil its advisory role as envisaged under the CFP.

The Pelagic AC is requesting that capital funding is provided under the EMFF to ACs to carry out well defined costed projects of direct relevance to the ACs and their role under the CFP.