

The Flemish Government's Agriculture and Fisheries Policy Area organizes a two-day meeting on:

“IMPROVED FISHERIES AND SCIENCE PARTNERSHIPS AS POLICY DRIVERS”

VENUE: OSTEND, BELGIUM

DATES: 9 AND 10 NOVEMBER 2010

DETAILS AND INVITATION WILL FOLLOW LATER

Introduction

In the second half of 2010 Belgium will take up the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. During this 6 month period, the Flemish Minister-President Kris Peeters will chair the Fisheries Council.

One of the main issues for the marine fisheries sector is the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. The current policy, which will end in 2012, is said to have many shortcomings. The European Commission has therefore launched a reflection on how the future common fisheries policy should look like.

The Flemish government will pay a lot of attention to this issue during the Presidency, including the organization of an international stakeholder symposium on this issue.

In preparation of the symposium you are therefore invited to contribute to the issue **“Improved Fisheries and Science Partnerships as Policy drivers”**, that will become increasingly important in the future fisheries policy.

The conclusions of the symposium will be used to initiate a ministerial debate on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy during the Belgian Presidency.

Background

Scientists and the fisheries sector often hold a different view and opinion regarding the fisheries and environmental management. In respect of an eco-system approach there is a lively discussion between the fisheries sector, scientists and policy makers on the value of the scientific info used as basis to set objectives and to determine the road towards the objectives. A cooperation between fisheries sector and science leading to a common understanding can remedy this.

Producer organizations and other stakeholders often challenge the validity and interpretation of the scientific advice based on feedback from fishermen about their observations at sea. The active involvement of the fisheries sector in the scientific process can be established through their participation in scientific research and monitoring. This form of collaboration should provide a vehicle for more clear insight in the whole scientific process and build mutual relationships that yield long-term benefits to the decision making policy and the management of the marine resources.

Objectives

The symposium intends to bring together members of the European fisheries, scientific and policy communities to discuss, plan and develop a fisheries/science research partnership that can serve as a driver to improve the present knowledge base and the advisory process to policy.

Stakeholders will be invited from:

- European, national and regional research institutions dealing with scientific research and scientific advice to policy.
- Producer organizations, fishermen and their federations/associations
- ACFA
- European institutions
- Regional Advisory Committees
- European, national and regional governments
- European associations e.g. ICES, EFARO, EAFE, EAPO ...
- Other bodies that should be included?

The merits of the symposium are to generate information and tools for generic and specific approaches applicable at, respectively the large scale European geographical and the regional levels and to find answers and decisions on:

- the kind of interactive research which is needed and how it can be done,
- the adjustment and adaptation of the process to the needs of the involved stakeholders,
- the data collection and common ownership of the data and the results,
- the mutual acceptance of the results and findings,
- the cooperation between scientists and professionals on the design of the participation and advisory process,
- the long term engagement of scientists, professionals and policy makers,
- the financing of actions required by the Green Paper,
- an on-going co-education of scientists and professionals,
- other?

How can this be achieved?

We invite you to send experts and professionals to the symposium, to present showcases of ongoing projects, linked to the Fisheries and Scientists Partnerships. You are also kindly requested to inform us on ongoing activities in relation to the topic and names and contact addresses of scientists, professionals and other involved persons. We intend to invite one expert and one professional per showcase. Travel and accommodation costs will be refunded.

The two day meeting will start with one or two introductory speeches, followed by the presentation of 8 to 10 showcases and ending with an animated plenary discussion on how to proceed on improved fisheries and scientist partnerships as policy drivers within the European context. The program will be finalized based on the received input.

We would like to receive your proposals/input by **31st of January 2010**. We look forward to hear from you and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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