

EBCD REPLY TO DG MARE CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON THE ENERGY TRANSITION OF THE EU FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTORS

The **European Bureau for Conservation and Development** (EBCD) is committed to find solutions for the decarbonization of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors at the EU and global levels. EBCD organised several events, most recently at [CoP27](#), on the climate-oceans nexus focusing on the decarbonization of these sectors and on the potential of aquatic foods to achieve climate goals. On the latter, **EBCD also replied to the Commission consultation on an EU Sustainable Food System** (available [here](#)). Our organisation was also involved in the drafting of **fisheries decarbonization advice** in North Western Waters and North Sea Advisory Councils by chairing the discussions.

EBCD believes that the fisheries and aquaculture sectors represent a real asset to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises as well as to provide healthy food for a growing population. Indeed, aquatic foods are a source of low-carbon animal protein, essential for a healthy and nutritious diet. However, EBCD estimates that to fully unleash the potential of these sectors, they must be **effectively managed, and their carbon emissions reduced**. The energy transition of these sectors is therefore a necessity and - considering the fuel prices increase - an emergency. Nonetheless, this transition encounters several obstacles, such as the lack of availability of suitable technologies, their high costs, and the scarcity of decarbonization-related research and development targeted specifically at the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

In that perspective, EBCD welcomes the upcoming Commission initiative on the energy transition of the EU fisheries and aquaculture sectors and considers it timely regarding the current context.

EBCD's comments on the call for evidence:

1) General comments:

- EBCD shares the objectives of the Commission on the energy efficiency and the reduction of the GHG emissions of the sectors.
- EBCD believes that stakeholder engagement, such as through the Advisory Councils, is key to enable a swift transition towards more efficient and cleaner energies as well as to ensure legitimacy and acceptability for the end-users.
- EBCD strongly encourages the Commission to apply a multisectoral approach that engages different sectors. This would help preventing the development of technologies that only suit the interest of one sector. While taking into consideration the specificities of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, a multisectoral approach can enable synergies of funding and technologies.
- EBCD believes that appropriate funding is essential to help these sectors transitioning.

2) Comments on the specific measures proposed:

- EBCD agrees with all the propositions made by the Commission, especially regarding stakeholders' participation and guidance on available funding.
- EBCD proposes the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform for the aquaculture sector as well.

3) EBCD's proposals:

- To allocate appropriate funding for an international platform for climate connecting fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders with knowledge holders and technology providers as well as international organisations with the aim to ensure viable decarbonization pathways in aquatic food systems internationally and to stimulate exchanges of good practices.

- To divide the upcoming measures of the Commission into two categories:
 - i.Phase 1: (1) measures that focus on enabling fisheries and aquaculture to improve their energy efficiency and (2) measures to encourage and fund research on affordable fuel alternatives that are compatible with fishing and aquaculture activities.
 - ii.Phase 2: When relevant fuel alternatives are found, provide with appropriate funding and market driven solutions.
- To assess how EU funding (EMFAF, Horizon Europe, etc) is fit for purpose to enable the energy transition of these sectors and, if applicable, take appropriate actions.

EBCD stays at the disposal to the European Commission in case of comments and questions regarding this reply.