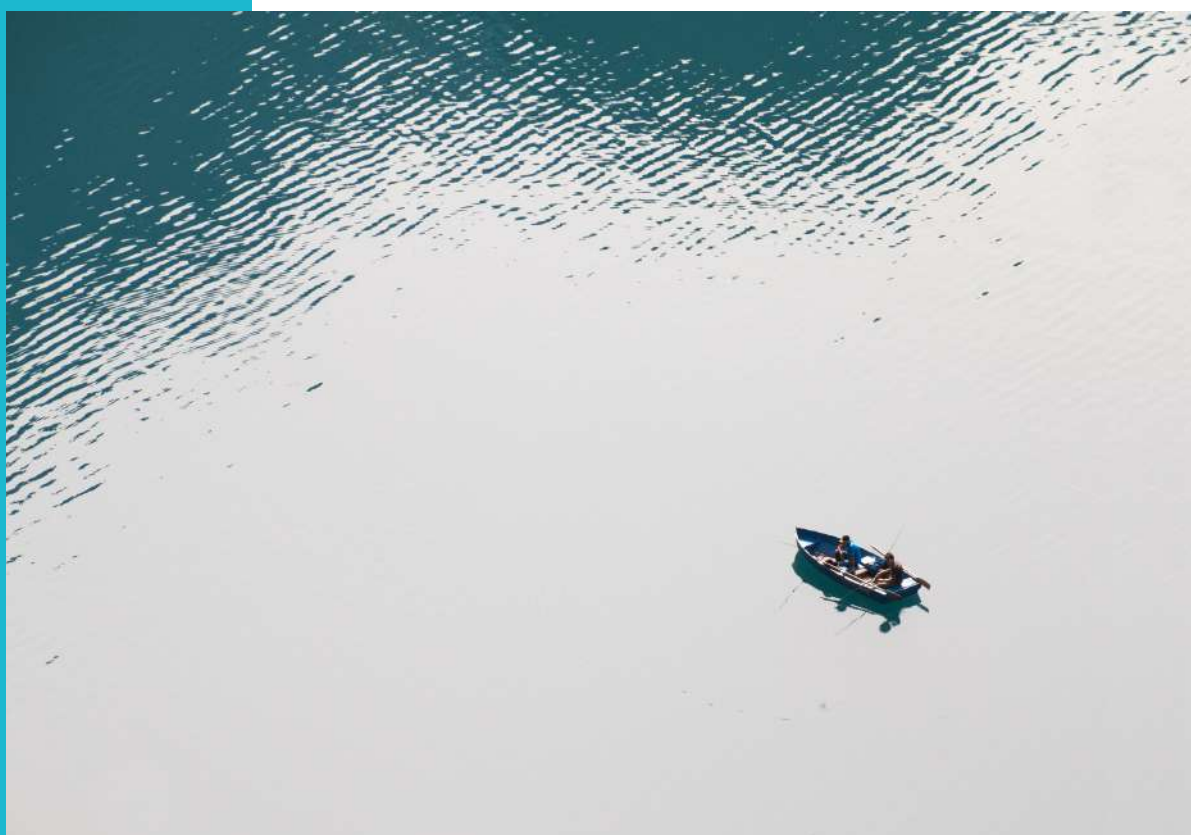


POLICY BRIEF 5

EXTRA-SMEs
Interreg Europe



EXTRA-SMEs
PROJECT

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

EXTRA-SMEs is an Interreg Europe project that aims to foster the competitiveness, extraversion, and internationalisation of rural and coastal SMEs participating in aquaculture value chains.

To that end, the project brings together 8 regions from 7 countries to join forces and exchange experiences on:

- Simplification of administrative procedures.
- Expansion and access to new markets.
- Innovative value-added product solutions.
- Personnel up-skilling.
- Resolution of stakeholders' conflicts of interests.

The partners participating in the project are:

- The Region of Peloponnese in Greece
- The Region of Liguria in Italy
- The Northern Chamber of Commerce in Szczecin (NCC) in Poland
- The Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (ADR-BI) in Romania
- The Lapland University of Applied Sciences (LUAS) in Finland
- The University of Patras (UPAT) in Greece
- The Western Development Commission (WDC) in Ireland
- The Public Institution National Regions Development Agency (NRDA) in Lithuania
- The Liguria Cluster for Marine Technologies (DLTM)



POLICY BRIEF OVERVIEW

The EXTRA-SMEs project brings together 8 partners from 7 countries to exchange experiences and practices on how to move from existing procedures in the management of aquaculture SMEs to the adaptation and greater exploitation of best practices and measures applied in the field. This policy brief reports on the conclusions from EXTRA-SMEs research activities (A1.2 & A1.3), namely “Analysis of new products and processes potential to improve EXTRA-SMEs internationalization and extraversion” and “Identifying good practices on raising the perceived economic potential of the EXTRA-SMEs sector”. Finally the policy brief provides a series of recommendations for further discussion.

IDENTIFIED AREAS OF IMPROVEMENTS

The EXTRA-SMES project has identified a series of expansion opportunities for the aquaculture industry.

These are:

- Improvement of the production process of existing species to reduce associated costs or to increase production volume and quality.
- Diversification through the breeding of new species, taking into consideration the current trends and needs of the market.
- Development of new technologies, processes and practices for the quality assurance and traceability of fish products.
- Participation in special production schemes, such as organic or environmentally and socially responsible production, adhering by the relevant standards and receiving the corresponding certifications.
- Development of marketing and branding strategies by creating or participating in, or promoting a regional brand name or highlighting the product's rich nutritional value.
- Extension of existing distribution channels, with the introduction of new products.
- Development of partner networks, by organizing sectorial meetings or other activities to create new bonds between partners.

SUCCESSFUL FACTORS AFFECTING SMEs EXTRAVERSION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Conclusions from Activity A1.3 suggest that there are three factors that can significantly contribute (combined or individually) to increasing aquaculture SMEs' extraversion and internationalization. These are:

Technological Innovations

Technological innovations are considered one of the key drivers to increase aquaculture SMEs extraversion and internationalization. The technological innovations in the aquaculture sector mainly focus on alternative feed sources, disease resistance, feed efficiency, human health and modern nutritional requirements that require, among others, technological innovations across the aquaculture value chain.

Strategic alliances and synergies

The formulation of strategic alliances and partnerships with research institutes, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector can also assist to increase aquaculture SMEs' extraversion and internationalization. More specifically, cooperation between different agents and engagement with innovation and knowledge networks can further intensify research capacities and progress, provide a place to share experiences information, facilities or equipment, and foster the establishment and expansion of networks of partners and other third party representatives.

Capacity building and awareness raising

The development of fully functioning knowledge networks through capacity building and awareness raising activities can have significant impact on innovation efficiency and effectiveness to reduce the transaction costs of knowledge diffusion, and to encourage green innovation in areas where it has not been fully developed yet. Thus, capacity building is considered as another key driver for sustainable aquaculture development and innovation adoption, which in turn will facilitate the entrance and integration of aquaculture SMEs in the international markets.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The background of the page features two fish, likely carp, one positioned upside down relative to the other. They are set against a plain white background, which makes the fish's scales and fins stand out. The fish are oriented vertically, with their heads pointing towards the center of the page.

Future directions could be explored through (but not limited to) the development of consultancy frameworks, funding schemes, marketing programs and opportunities for new markets.

Technological innovations

- Engagement with innovative technological practices and processes that will ensure fish products of the highest quality, produced according to environmental and sustainability principles and legislations.
- Access to information to explore new expansion opportunities with institutional stakeholders having a central role in the diffusion and exchange of information.
- Measures regarding the administrative procedures pertaining to aquaculture, mainly licensing and zoning, are imperative for boosting the sector's growth and consequently its extraversion.

Strategic alliances and synergies

- Further expansion in areas that can be used for aquaculture and increased fish productivity through synergies and strategic alliances as these are formed on a local, national, regional or European level.
- Increased coordination and cooperation between different agents to facilitate a holistic improvement of the European aquaculture sector.
- Increased cooperation with foreign aquaculture companies to acquire information about new technologies, trends, customer preferences, sales markets, to name a few.

Capacity building and awareness raising

- Policies that include supportive measures such training and consultation, international networking and information for third market access.
- Seminars on foreign markets, rules, conditions, marketing and individual professional consultations.
- Well defined training for small companies on feeding procedures and production processes.
- Simplification of licensing processes that could lead to expansion prospects, reducing costs and attracting new investors.

PROJECT PARTNERS



**Region of Peloponnese
(EL)**



Liguria Region (IT)



**Northern Chamber of
Commerce in Szczecin
(PL)**



**Bucharest-Ilfov Regional
Development Agency
(RO)**



**Lapland University of
Applied Sciences (FI)**



University of Patras (EL)



**Western Development
Commission (IE)**



**Liguria Cluster for
Marine Technologies
(IT)**



**Public institution
National Regions
Development Agency
(LT)**

About Us

EXTRA-SMEs is co-funded by INTERREG Europe / European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

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