

FACTSHEET #9

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund: Operational Programme for Romania (EMFF OP) 2014-2020

1 Policy context

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are the main source of funding for investment priorities in Romania in many sectors. The business support available in the stakeholder territory is provided through several national programmes funded by ESIF or the state budget, addressing specific SMEs segments and policy objectives in a complementary manner. The overall picture of funding in the programming period 2014-2020 is focused on four types of policies which benefit of most of the EU and national funding.

1. Support for small business survival and development, increased competitiveness of SMEs is funded through the Regional Operational Programme (ROP) but also through national programmes, including Start-up Nation. Indirect funding to SMEs by business support structure is also funded through the ROP.

2. Support to increase competitiveness, research, development and innovation (RDI), technology transfer, ICT development in the context of the Digital Agenda, or investments in new technologies or innovative processes are mainly funded through the Competitiveness Operational Programme (COP) 2014-2020. Complementary National RDI Programmes fund similar measures, but to a lower extent.

3. Entrepreneurship, job creation and other employment mechanisms, vocational and management training are funded from the Human Capital Operational Programme (HCOP) targeting entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs, including social economy entrepreneurship and business development.

4. Business support for agriculture and rural development, either to support business in agri-food industries or for diversifying the rural economies for microenterprises and small enterprises is funded through the National Rural Development Programme (NRDP), which is distinct from the ROP, the latter being focused on urban territories for SMEs and on rural area for middle enterprises.

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund: Operational Programme for Romania (EMFFOP) 2014-2020 is focused on enhancing the competitiveness of the aquaculture and the processing sectors, the viability of sea fisheries sector and the sustainable development of traditionally fisheries dependent areas. The Programme also addresses the need for protection and rehabilitation of the marine environment and its living resources, the control of fisheries activities, the collection of fisheries data and the improvement of knowledge on the state of the marine environment.

The EMFFOP aims at achieving key national development priorities along with the “Europe 2020” objectives. The OP addresses the general reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and fully supports the priorities defined in the EMFF Regulation.

The total value of the programme is € 223.54 M (the European Fisheries and Maritime Fund and the national budget).

The programme is structured on the basis of the Priorities of the Union (PU) with the allocations indicated below:

- PU1. Promoting environmentally sustainable, resource efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fishing: € 6.33 M;
- PU2. Stimulating environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based aquaculture: € 119.32 M;
- PU3. Stimulating the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policies: € 16.53 M;
- PU4. Increased employment and territorial cohesion: € 49.91 M;
- PU5. Stimulating marketing and processing: € 14.7 M;
- PU6. Encourage the implementation of the integrated maritime policy: € 3.33 M;
- PU7. Technical assistance: € 13.42 M.

The support for diversification of the economic activities is funded within the PU1, PU2 and PU3.

2 Supporting aquaculture enterprises

2.1 Overview – the policy in numbers

The EMFFOP aims at:

- increasing the economic and social sustainability of the Romanian fisheries and aquaculture areas;
- creating new jobs;
- diversifying within and/or outside fisheries and aquaculture sectors and the sustainable exploitation of related products through the implementation of **comprehensive local development strategies**.

The **support for businesses** selected for this analysis includes several forms of support, including grants, as follows:

Table 1: The support for businesses including grants

No.	Type of project	Maximum value of the grant (€)	Private contribution % in total eligible budget
1	Innovation	€ 98 000 € 140 000 maximum value of the project	20% and 70% depending on the type of beneficiary
2	Counselling services: feasibility studies, professional consultancy	Between 30% and 75% of the project budget for economic operators and associations, 100% for the public entities ¹	20% and 70% depending on the type of beneficiary
3	Diversification of the activities and income in the traditionally fishery dependent areas	€ 75 000	50%
4	Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity	Set for each call	50% large enterprises and aquaculture NGOs 30% SMEs
5	Aquaculture environmental services	Set for each call	25% – 50% depending on the type of the beneficiary
6	Processing of fishery and aquaculture products	Set for each call	25% – 50% depending on the type of the beneficiary

Source: *The EMFF Operational Programme. Guide for applicants*

Eligible business support activities:

¹ Additional thresholds apply for fishery organisations or producers, up to 16 000 per fisherman.

- Development and / or introduction of new products and equipment or substantially improved in the field of fisheries;
- Development and / or introduction of new or improved processes and techniques in the field of fisheries;
- Investments on shipboard;
- Fishing tourism;
- Restaurants with fish specific;
- Environmental services relating to fishing;
- Investments in the processing of commercial fish catches that cannot be intended for human consumption;
- Investments in the processing of fishery and aquaculture products that contribute to the economy or reducing the impact on the environment, including treatment waste, for applicants with a history in the processing of fishery products and of aquaculture.

Progress in the implementation of the programme:

- At the programme level, 187 projects were contracted with a public contribution of € 77.68 M.
- Only 8 projects directly supporting businesses, with the value of € 1.26 M are contracted in the stakeholder territory².

At the level of the stakeholder territory

- 50% of the projects (4) are in Botoşani county (€ 0.764 M);
- 3 projects are based in Galaţi county (€ 0.436 MEUR);
- one project is based in Iaşi County (€ 0.076 MEUR).

The projects consist mainly in investments in tourism, as follows:

- creating or developing tourist boarding houses (1 project);
- restaurants, food and beverage units with specific fisheries (3 projects);
- creating different types of fishery specific leisure facilities (1 project); and
- projects addressing aquaculture activities (3 projects).

² Data available for May 2020 on the website of the Managing Authority (MA), available at <https://www.ampeste.ro/>.