



SPECIALIZIMI
INTELIGJENT



PROGRESS REPORT – FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

PROJECT DETAILS:

1. Title: *The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process in Albania: Partnership with the quadruple helix Actors for developing the country “Smart Specialization Strategy” – Fisheries and Aquaculture*

2. Location and Venue: The workshop for the fisheries and aquaculture industry was the second consecutive activity organized on October 26, 2022, at the premises of the "Agriculture University of Tirana", it being the largest university in the country for studies in agriculture-related subjects, including fisheries and aquaculture.

3. Panel Members and A Brief Description of Their Professional Commitments

- **Mr. Arben Shkodra:** Secretary General of Albania Manufacturing Union (AMU), Member of the Inter-Institutional Working Group for the Smart Specialization Strategy and moderator of the event
- **Prof. Assoc. Edmond Hala:** Deputy Dean of the Faculty of “Agriculture and Environment” for Institutional Relationships and Public at “Agriculture University of Tirana”
- **Prof. Assoc. Erjola Keci:** Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Professional Studies at “Aleksander Moisiu University Durrës”, and coordination of international projects on water management.
- **Prof. Assoc. Elvira Beli:** Head of the department of the “Fisheries and Aquaculture” at “Agriculture University of Tirana”

4. Event Organizers

With the support of the European Commission's Joint Research Center (JRC) and the Policy Answer Project (Horizon Europe GA 10105887) this activity was organized by Future Center in collaboration with Inter-Institution Working Group, particularly Mrs. Albania Tole, who has played a key role in identifying and engaging strategic actors from the public sector and academia; as well as the Albanian Agriculture Council (KASH) and Albanian Manufacturing Union (AMU) which were selected by Future Center to assist in reviewing the contact lists prepared for the business helix and to urge the representatives from this helix to participate at the event.

5. Event Participants

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Businesses: 13 Participants; Academia: 6 Participants; Government: 2 Participants; Civil Society: 1 Participant

ACTIVITIES & OUTPUT

1. PLANNING

Planning for this event followed the same procedure as the used for all agriculture-related events: first, we identified representatives of the quadruple helix that must be present in all events pertaining to the agriculture sector (primarily



from the academic, government, civil society helix, with only a small fraction from the business helix), and then we identified business helix representatives of the fisheries and aquaculture sector only.

Moreover, during the planning phase Future Center was responsible for the preparation of all advertising materials, such as banners, info sheets, roll-ups etc. the identification and engagement of relevant business organizations to support in the organization of this activity, for which we contacted the Albanian Manufacturing Union (AMU) and Albanian Agriculture Council (KASH), as well as the preparation of action plan /methodology for the logistics coordination and moderation of the activity, which was also discussed with the members of the interinstitutional working group, among other matters such as the activity's format, the approximate number of participants, and the roles and responsibilities of each individual within the EDP working group.

2. COORDINATION & PROMOTION

As for the coordination and promotion of the activity, Future Center made some final adjustments to the contact list for this event with the assistance of AMU, KASH, and Mrs. Albana Tole, obtained permission to hold the activity on the premises of the Albanian Agriculture University, as well as coordinated with the representatives of this university and catering service providers in order to ensure that every logistics need of the activity was covered. Other aspects that Future Center took care of during this stage was also the preparation of an instructive document on the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process and the main topics to be discussed during this activity, which was provided to all selected members of the discussion panel in order for them to prepare in advance. Following the above indicated steps, Future Center created and sent the invites, edited and printed promotional materials, confirmed the availability of those invited to attend, and sent a last reminder with the main activity details.

3. EXECUTION

During this activity, Future Center was responsible for two main aspects: 1) addressing all the logistics needs of the activity, including the preparation of the attendance list, collecting the feedback from the roundtable discussions, photographing the key moments of the event, and coordinating the attendees and catering service providers; and 2) facilitating/moderating the discussions amongst the participants according to the methodology designed during the planning phase. This activity began with a greeting from Mr. Shkodra and a presentation from him on the smart specialization strategy, the results of the mapping phase, and the role of EDP, followed by a greeting from the rest of the panel's members, and then there were two discussion sessions. The object of the first was to conduct a SWOT analysis of an Albanian fisheries and aquaculture sector as well as to define a vision for the development of this sector, whereas the second to discuss the strategic objectives and relevant measures required to boost this sector's performance.

4. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ At the beginning of the event, a representative of academia indicated that the Albanian fisheries and aquaculture industry is composed of 3 main pillars respectively being Aquaculture (48% of production), 2. Marine Fishing (28% production) and Inland Water Fishing (19% of production). According to the business helix, the aquaculture sector in Albania is steadily growing, indicating in return the very significant potential this sector represents for boosting the country's economic development.
- ✓ Furthermore, the majority of the products produced within this sector are not only destined for export, but moreover the companies in this sector claim that there is a growing demand for their products in the foreign market, which they are currently unable to fulfill as a result of a series of factors such as the lack of capital to invest, employees etc. As for the processing of fish products in Albania, representatives of the business



Industry referred to this sector as a "Textile Sector," in which the vast majority of processed fish products are imported from other countries.

- ✓ One of the main obstacles identified by the business helix for the development of this sector was the low domestic demand for seafood products because of the low standards of living within the country rather than the absence of a culture to consume seafood products. (Albania has a significantly lower seafood consumption rate than the global average of 20.2 kilograms per capita per year, at 5.3 kilograms). Another major barrier identified by the business helix was also the unreliability of the results issued by veterinary checks both from public (AKU) or private institutions which tend to create problems for the export of the Albanian products, the poor management of the fishing ports facilities, their inability to leverage the full production capacity, the lack of manpower, lack of skills and expertise to transfer knowledge, and the high cost and difficulty attributed to obtaining international certifications. One of the representatives of the business helix also indicated that the existing programs in support of this sector (offered by AZHBR) have been ineffective and discriminatory as a result of the following factors:
 - A. The size-based exclusion of certain businesses from benefiting from these programs.
 - B. The request to be equipped with the new aquaculture certification, as well as the obstacles that Albanian businesses are encountering in this regard because of the recent changes made by the Ministry of Agriculture on the aquaculture designated areas, a circumstance that has also resulted in a decline in investments in this sector
- ✓ Moreover, according to the business helix, Albania is one of the few countries in the region that lacks a contemporary wholesale fish market and auction market, which according to them is necessary to ensure that the fishermen are adequately paid for their products. The absence of a well-structured and active fisheries organization that contributes to promoting domestic and fisheries aquaculture goods, was also highlighted as a significant barrier to the development of the sector that must be addressed.
- ✓ Lack of research centers and infrastructure, institutional measures for the management of transboundary pollution, implementation of existing strategies that target the development of this sector and periodic performance reporting from the National Environment Agency were also reported as problematic in this sector.
- ✓ According to the representatives of the business helix, innovation and scientific research should be encouraged in this industry so that production can be ramped up, product lines can be diversified, labor shortages can be mitigated, product quality can be maintained at every stage of the value chain, and sustainable business practices can be developed. In particular the quadruple helix actors required the implementation of the following measures:
 - A. The establishment of Albanian Research Centers whose purpose is not only to conduct analyses but also to interpret them and make recommendations regarding the approach that the Albanian government/enterprise should apply to solve existing problems or take advantage of the opportunities presented in this sector.



B. The creation of agencies to promote innovation and scientific research in this sector , with a particular emphasis on fostering the collaboration between the Albanian business helix and academia , encouraging the participation of the business helix representatives in international programs and fairs, and the identification of the best international practices and technologies used in this sector.

C. The implementation of a legal and fiscal framework that supports innovation and scientific research in this sector.(ex: improve the productivity and resource efficiency of the seafood processing enterprises)

- ✓ Other aspects mentioned during the activity was also the importance to improve the sector overall performance by fostering the collaboration across the domestic supply chain, increasing the country's export quotas, adopting ethical agriculture production methods, increasing the capacities required to develop this sector's performance and improving the existing working conditions. In addition, the academia emphasizes the necessity to find ways for better monitoring the performance of this sector, such as by creating a data management platform for the fishing and aquaculture sector in Albania.