

EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK

EUROPEAN FUND FOR STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS

STEERING BOARD

**Summary of discussions with the stakeholders**  
**held in Brussels on**  
**Thursday, 18 October 2018**

Questions concerning this note should be referred to  
EFSI Secretariat - Email address: [EFISecretariat@eib.org](mailto:EFISecretariat@eib.org)

## **Summary of discussions with stakeholders held in Brussels on Thursday, 18 October 2018**

In line with the [Stakeholders' consultation paper](#), adopted on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the EFSI Steering Board (SB) held a meeting with representatives of the sustainable agriculture, forestry, fishery, aquaculture and other elements of the wider bio-economy sectors. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the implementation of EFSI operations under the Investment and Innovation Window (IIW) through the EIB and the SME Window through the European Investment Fund (EIF) within these sectors, which became eligible for EFSI support since the entry into force of the amended EFSI Regulation in December 2017.

The representatives of the invited stakeholders were:

- Ms. M. Dáša (Envien Group)
- Mr. Prof. P. Pickel (JD European Technology Innovation Center - John Deere GmbH & Co)
- Mr. J. Elvnert (European Forest-based Sector Technology Platform)
- Mr. P. Erwes (BioMarine)
- Mr. C. Hough (Aquaculture Advisory Council)
- Mr. M-P. Buckhout (Aquaculture Advisory Council)
- Ms. O. Neagu (Copa Cogeca)

The Steering Board reiterated the importance of such discussions as a significant mean to exchange views on the EFSI Strategic Orientation.

Key elements of the discussion were: (a) the usage of financial instruments, (b) investment gaps and barriers within the specific sectors and (c) the role of EFSI in facilitating investments.

The representatives of the invited stakeholders gave an overview of investment needs in their respective sectors, thereby emphasizing the importance of access to finance for smaller promoters and an investment-friendly regulatory framework.

The participants of the meeting reiterated the significance of a value chain approach within the agriculture, forestry and bio-economy sectors and referred to the contributions of the wider bio-economy sector in the development of rural and coastal areas in Europe, thereby enhancing economic and social convergence within the EU.

It was argued that EFSI could play a considerable role in the financing of rural infrastructure and, in particular, in supporting rural broadband infrastructure to enhance the diffusion of new technologies, digitalization efforts and to promote efficiency gains.

The participants stressed the importance of access to finance and improving the capacity of small promoters. References were made to the setting up of investment platforms, framework loans, guarantee instruments and the participation of the EIB and EIF in funds as examples of how EFSI could contribute to supporting smaller projects, thereby also further crowding in private financing.

The attendees mentioned the positive results of projects in the wider bio-economy sector, which have already been supported under EFSI, while targeting at the same time other EFSI objectives, such as RDI, environmental protection and climate action.

While welcoming the establishment of EAFRD-EFSI guarantee financial instruments, it was indicated that a further simplification in rules for different financial instruments would be useful for promoters who wish to make an application for support from such instruments.

The stakeholders referred to the importance of the third pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe (IPE) in creating a favourable regulatory framework for investments in their sectors and further elaborated on the renewable energy directive in the development of biofuels.

In conclusion, the Steering Board welcomed the feedback of the different representatives on the investment needs within their respective sectors and reiterated the importance of dialogue between stakeholders and the institutions in achieving results.