

EN

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto
on behalf of the European Commission
(1.7.2026)

Local authorities can make use of their region's programme, which is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)¹, to mobilise funding earmarked for the issue of sargassum seaweed, both to develop research capacities and innovative solutions and to prevent risks, deal with strandings and build resilience.

This support makes it possible to finance concrete measures. For example, from 2014 to 2020 in Guadeloupe, the ERDF funded research projects on sargassum amounting to EUR 1.4 million. The municipality of Petit-Bourg received EUR 374 000 in ERDF funding for the purchase of equipment to deal with sargassum strandings. The INTERREG Caribbean programme finances two projects to combat sargassum: one focusing on prevention (SARG'COOP²) and the other on exploring the possibilities for scientific and economic exploitation of sargassum (SARGOOD³). The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)⁴ can also be mobilised for projects related to sargassum.

The increase in sargassum seaweed strandings throughout the Caribbean Basin also calls for a regional approach. Since 2023, the Commission has been running a Global Gateway investment initiative⁵ to transform sargassum into an opportunity for sustainable economic activity⁶. This coordinated strategy makes it possible to speed up research and the implementation of large-scale collection and recovery methods for sargassum in order to turn it into a circular economy opportunity. Through its 'Algae Initiative'⁷, the EU supports innovative companies such as 'Origin by Ocean'⁸ to transform sargassum into products with high added value.

¹ The ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) is the financial instrument of the European Union's cohesion policy, which aims to reduce development gaps between regions with a view to achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

² <https://sargcoop.org/en/accueil-en/>.

³ <https://interreg-caraibes.eu/sargood>.

⁴ The EMFAF supports innovative projects that contribute to the sustainable exploitation and management of water and maritime resources.

⁵ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/turning-tide-sustainable-practices-and-economic-opportunities-sargassum-value-chain-development_en.

⁶ As part of the EU's Global Gateway Investment Agenda, the EU, Team Europe and Caribbean partners are working to turn the challenge posed by sargassum into cleaner coastlines, new job opportunities and support for local businesses.

⁷ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/publications/communication-commission-towards-strong-and-sustainable-eu-algae-sector_en.

⁸ www.originbyocean.com.