



# FAMENET

## CT 3.1 EMFF implementation report 2023

**Final**

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# EMFF implementation report 2023

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*EUROPEAN COMMISSION – Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries*

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## List of abbreviations

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CIR	Commission Implementing Regulation
CISE	Common Information Sharing Environment
CLLD	Community-led Local Development
CMES	Common Monitoring and Evaluation System
COM	European Commission
CPR	Common Provision Regulation
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Funds
ESI Funds	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
FFR	Fishing Fleet Register
FLAG	Fisheries Local Action Group
IB	Intermediate Body
IMP	Integrated Maritime Policy
IMSS	Integrated Maritime Surveillance
LAG	Local Action Group (see FLAG)
LO	Landing Obligation
MA	Managing Authority
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSs	Member State
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OP	Operational Programme
PO	Producer Organisation
RI	Result Indicator

SCO	Simplified Cost Options
SME	Small or Medium-sized Enterprise
SO	Specific Objective
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSCF	Small-scale Coastal Fishing/Fishery
TA	Technical Assistance
TO	Thematic Objective
UP	Union Priority

## Executive summary

The EMFF implementation report 2023 describes how the available EMFF financial support has been used by the Member States. The impact of the EMFF on key policy objectives and specific topics is highlighted. Reporting is based on the latest data available, which pertains to all operations supported between January 2014 and December 2023. The report aggregates and analyses the data provided by Member States on each operation they have supported (Infosys reporting). Additional context is taken from information provided by Member States in their Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs).

EMFF implementation faced two unexpected factors: the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the market disruption caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Both significantly influenced OP implementations across Europe.

2023 was the final year of the EMFF implementation. In line with Article 65 of the Common Provision Regulation (CPR),<sup>1</sup> expenditure is considered eligible if it has been incurred by a beneficiary and paid up to 31 December 2023. The overarching objective was therefore to achieve maximal absorption of the available funding by re-allocating the remaining funding towards those priorities and measures where demand is present, finalising already-approved projects, and submitting payment claims for ongoing operations.

This report does not take into consideration any EMFF-related transactions that took place after 31 December 2023 – beneficiaries continued to receive payments in relation to their eligible expenditure from MAs also in 2024. Implementation results reported in 2023 will be modified accordingly during the procedure of submitting closure documents and paying the final balances.

In total, the EMFF supported more than 145 000 operations. In 2023 alone 33 554 new operations were reported. One-third of all operations related to temporary cessation (EMFF Article 33). Spain, Greece and Italy together have 76 000 operations, or 52% of the total number of operations.

During 2023 implementation of the EMFF continued to advance. Data collection is a frontrunner in terms of amounts committed, with EUR 626.8 million (an increase of EUR 31.4 million from 2022). Implementation of local development strategies speeded up significantly: commitments increased by EUR 51 million, from EUR 573.2 million in 2022 to EUR 624.2 million in 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).



Compensation related to the Ukraine crisis<sup>2</sup> aided the absorption of EMFF funding. Uptake of this support increased significantly during 2023: 10 MSs committed EUR 162.8 million (or 2.9% of total EMFF allocation) in 16 404 operations.

EMFF implementation is rather concentrated, with around 57% of all commitments relating to just six EMFF Articles.

### **Commitments**

By the end of 2023, EUR 6.0 billion of EMFF funding had been committed, corresponding to 108% of the total EMFF funding available under shared management. Commitments made during 2023 were EUR 485 million, or around 9% of the total EMFF allocation. This is less than in previous years (EUR 644 million in 2022, EUR 843 million in 2021, EUR 797 million in 2020). Reasons for the reduction include the fact that 2023 was the last year of the programming period, with most funding already committed, and the extraordinarily high commitments related to compensation in 2020 and 2021.

Notwithstanding a very high average level of EMFF commitments across the EU, differences between MSs persist – commitment rates range from 61% to over 150%.<sup>3</sup>

### **By Thematic Objectives<sup>4</sup>**

EUR 3 134 million of the support committed – 52% of the total – contributes to the objective of enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, most of which operate in remote communities.

EUR 1 960 million (32%) was committed to preserving and protecting the environment, for example by protecting Natura 2000 areas and promoting resource efficiency and waste reduction.

The remaining EUR 955 million is committed to a variety of topics, which notably include promoting quality employment and labour mobility, mostly via support for local development strategies.

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<sup>2</sup> Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/500 of 25 March 2022 establishing the military aggression of Russia against Ukraine as the occurrence of an exceptional event causing a significant disruption of markets.

<sup>3</sup> Over-commitment can be a deliberate process to ensure the best absorption of funding: MSs commit funding to new operations, considering that some operations approved earlier could be abandoned. For several non-EUR MSs, this over-commitment results from fluctuation of currency exchange rates: commitments are reported in national currencies and later converted to EUR using fixed exchange rates. Another factor which impacts the reported commitments is interrupted and abandoned operations (Infosys state of progress codes 1 and 2): MSs do not always adjust the amounts initially committed in the light of partial implementation or entire abandonment of operations. The impact of incorrect reporting of abandoned and interrupted operations can be estimated at EUR 500 million of total commitments.

<sup>4</sup> Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

## By Union Priority

**EUR 1 559 million**, or 113.9% of the available allocation for the priority, has been committed to **Union Priority 1** “Promoting environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fisheries”. UP1 has the largest commitments compared to all other UPs – 26% of total commitments are attributed to this UP.

**EUR 1 047 million** or 108.4% of the available allocation for the priority has been committed to **Union Priority 2** “Fostering environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based aquaculture”. In total, 17% of all commitments are attributed to UP2.

**EUR 1 191 million** or 112.6% of the available allocation for the priority has been committed to **Union Priority 3** “Fostering the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy”. In total, 20% of all commitments are attributed to UP3.

**EUR 641 million** or 110.0% of the available allocation for the priority has been committed to **Union Priority 4** “Increasing employment and territorial cohesion”. In total, 11% of all commitments are attributed to UP4.

**EUR 1 295 million** or 97.3% of the available allocation for the priority has been committed to **Union Priority 5** “Fostering marketing and processing”. In total, 21% of all commitments are attributed to UP5.

**EUR 62 million** or 105.5% of the available allocation for the priority has been committed to **Union Priority 6** “Fostering the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy”. In total, 1% of all commitments are attributed to UP6.

## By Measure

Six of the 51 measures in the EMFF account for EUR 3.5 billion, or 57.4% of all EMFF funding committed to date. These are: **data collection** (EUR 626.8 million), **local development strategies** (EUR 624.2 million), **processing** of fisheries and aquaculture products (EUR 590.2 million), productive investments in **aquaculture** (EUR 573.8 million), **control** (EUR 564.7 million), and **fishing ports** (EUR 489.4 million).

## Expenditure declared

Expenditure declared by beneficiaries reached EUR 4.8 billion (85.5% of total EMFF funding) since the beginning of the programming period. Beneficiaries claimed EUR 1 billion, or 18.3% of the total EMFF allocation, in 2023. This is a record amount and significantly exceeds even the total paid in 2021 (EUR 756 million), when compensation payments related to the coronavirus outbreak were at their peak.

With more than EUR 0.8 billion left still to be paid out, MSs may face significant challenges in finalising all operations and processing payments for the remaining funding available.

The level of expenditure varies significantly between MSs, ranging from 39.7% to 100%. Overall, of every EUR committed, EUR 0.79 has been claimed by beneficiaries.

## **EMFF contribution to specific topics**

This report provides dedicated sections on each of the topics below, with a full breakdown of relevant details; here is a short overview:

- **Support to the fishing fleet**

Of a total EMFF commitment of EUR 6 049 million, EUR 1 703 million (28.2%) was dedicated to operations linked to a Fishing Fleet Register (FFR) vessel number. EMFF spending on vessel-specific operations amounted to 29.5% of the total EMFF spending. During 2023 EMFF commitment and spending on these operations continued to increase. During 2022 the number of operations increased from 62 600 to 85 628 (an increase of 37%). As of the end of 2023 the EMFF supported 30 037 fishing vessels. Compared to the 23 626 vessels supported as of the end of 2022 this is an increase of 27%.

- **Small-scale coastal fisheries (SSCF)**

Of 85 628 operations linked to a vessel number, 42 602 (49.8%) were for SSCF vessels. This segment received 46% of the EMFF spending dedicated to specific vessels (EUR 650 million out of EUR 1 418 million).

- **Landing obligation**

MSs selected 5 447 operations related to the landing obligation (LO), based on the FAMENET “broad approach”, with total EMFF funding of EUR 188.5 million. The FAMENET “narrow approach” identified 4 069 operations with total EMFF funding of EUR 136.5 million. Of these, about one-third of EMFF funding committed was implemented in relation to added value, product quality and use of unwanted catches (Article 42).

- **Innovation**

Operations related to innovation were selected under each operational programme: overall 1 440 operations with a total EMFF budget of EUR 302.2 million. As of the end of 2023, nearly half of all the commitments to innovations related to aquaculture (Article 47).

- **Natura 2000**

In total, EUR 551.8 million of the EMFF funding was committed, and EUR 459.8 million spent, under measures directly or potentially supporting the Natura 2000 network.

- **Biodiversity**

A wide range of EMFF measures potentially contribute to protecting and restoring biodiversity and ecosystems. MSs committed EUR 2 176 million of EMFF funding over a total of 66 697 operations.

- **Diversification**

In total 4 201 operations and EUR 168.1 million of EMFF commitments contributed to diversification as of the end of 2023. Most diversification-related operations were implemented under Article 63 CLLD, with EUR 146.9 million committed. Under productive investments in aquaculture, 140 operations with EUR 10.0 million in commitments were reported as related to diversification. In the

fisheries sector, angling tourism was supported by 178 operations and nearly EUR 6.5 million committed.

- **Climate change**

Overall, the EMFF contribution to climate change objectives by the end of 2023 was EUR 1 020.3 million, or 17.4% of the total EMFF funding committed to date. The corresponding number for total EMFF funding already declared by beneficiaries was EUR 820.6 million, or 17.1% of total EMFF funding declared.

- **Outermost regions**

Overall, EUR 283.8 million of the EMFF was committed towards 7 087 operations in the outermost regions, considering all operations implemented by ES, FR and PT with the relevant Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS). The largest part – EUR 117.8 million – was committed towards 4 986 operations implemented under the EMFF Article 70 compensation regime.

- **Mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic impact and Ukraine crisis**

Overall, EUR 211.9 million of the EMFF funding in 22 179 operations was committed to mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This corresponds to 3.5% of total EMFF funding committed at the end of 2023. 59.1% (EUR 125.2 million) of the funding was allocated via the temporary cessation of fishing activities (Article 33).

Compensation related to the Ukraine crisis helped stakeholders deal with the negative effects of various market disruptions. The number of this type of compensation grew significantly in 2023 and reached 16 404 (compared to 2 595 as of the end of 2022). EMFF funding committed also increased several times: from EUR 13.4 million in 2022 to EUR 162.8 million in 2023.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The key mission of FAMENET is to support stakeholders in implementing the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) in three core areas:

- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the EMFF and the EMFAF;
- implementing community-led local development (CLLD) in fisheries and aquaculture areas to foster a sustainable blue economy; and
- communicating the results of the EMFAF through written stories and videos, and supporting the INFORM EU network.

One of the primary responsibilities of FAMENET is to furnish reports on the advancement of EMFF implementation.

The managing authorities (MAs) of the EMFF operational programmes (OPs) report implementation progress according to:

- Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 (Common Provision Regulation, CPR) Article 50 and Regulation 508/2014 Article 114 (EMFF Regulation), specifying that MAs shall prepare and submit an **annual implementation report (AIR) by 31 May each year**, from 2016 up to and including 2023. In 2023 AIR has an extended format and also includes parts B and C.<sup>5</sup> AIRs are subject to an admissibility and acceptance procedure by the COM. Quantitative data from AIR tables 1 to 4 are presented as of 30 September 2024. At that date the AIR acceptance procedure was not yet finalised for all MSs, so any subsequent AIR modifications are not taken into account in this report.
- Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014 **Article 97(1)(a)**, Regulation (EU) No. 2017/788 and Regulation (EU) No. 1242/2014 (Commission Implementing Regulation), specifying that MAs shall, **by 31 March each year**, provide the COM with relevant cumulative data on operations selected for funding up to the end of the previous calendar year, including key characteristics of the beneficiary and the operation itself. The Article 97(1)(a) report is often colloquially referred to as “Infosys”. Infosys contains various complementary data that are not available in the AIR.

FAMENET aggregates the data from the Infosys reports and AIRs submitted by MAs with the purpose of presenting the state of play in terms of implementation of the operational programmes, and to demonstrate the effect of this on various policy objectives and specific topics. Compared to the AIRs, the structure of the Infosys data allows for more detailed analysis and the detection of reporting errors. Infosys data thus serve as the basis for the quantitative part of the EMFF report. Infosys data are compared to AIR data and explanations are provided where there are significant differences.<sup>6</sup> The greatest value added from AIR reports comes from the qualitative information (for example, issues

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<sup>5</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1362/2014 of 18 December 2014 laying down rules on a simplified procedure for the approval of certain amendments to operational programmes financed under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and rules concerning the format and presentation of the annual reports on the implementation of those programmes OJ L 365, 19.12.2014, p. 124–136.

<sup>6</sup> See FAME SU: CT03.1 working paper EMFF AIR and EMFF Article 97(1)(a) reports differences, October 2018.

affecting the performance of the programme and the corrective measures taken; and descriptions of activities related to evaluation plans).

Contextual data regarding indicative allocated amounts are derived from the 2023 Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs).<sup>7</sup>

Several calculations are based on the methodology developed by FAMENET, which links EMFF articles to the various policy objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) and the EU 2020 Thematic Objectives (TOs), as well as towards contributions to the horizontal objectives and specific topics. Annex 1 of this report gives an overview of the methodology.

To ensure comparability with previous EMFF implementation reports, UK data are included in all aggregations.<sup>8</sup>

## **1.2 Purpose and target groups**

The aim of this report is to highlight the most important achievements of the EMFF implementation, as provided through Infosys and the AIR, in a way that is timely and can be directly used for communication purposes or decision-making by the COM and MSs.

## **1.3 Structure of the document**

The report broadly follows the structure of the AIR and represents the state of EMFF implementation as of 31 December 2023.

The report addresses the state of EMFF implementation at the level of Union Priorities (UPs), sea basins and MSs. It provides an overview of the main achievements of the OPs in relation to the CFP, the IMP objectives and the EU 2020 Thematic Objectives, as well as contributions to the horizontal objectives and specific topics. It also addresses EMFF absorption at the level of individual measures and provides an overview of the result indicators reported.

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<sup>7</sup> In line with Table 4 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 1362/2014 the content of the annual implementation report shall include financial data at the level of each measure. The AIRs are the only documents that provide indicative allocations for each measure. To ensure consistency, the contextual data for indicative allocations per measure from Table 4 of AIR 2022 is used everywhere for aggregations, even if more recent aggregated contextual OP data is available. The admissibility and acceptance procedure for AIR 2022 had not been finalised at the moment this report was compiled. Contextual AIR data may therefore not always be up-to-date in cases where an MS modified its EMFF operational programme after 31 December 2022.

<sup>8</sup> In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, the UK has continued to honour its payments to the EU budget after 31 January 2020. The adopted EMFF programme continues to be implemented and EU budget commitments respected. This report will continue to present data on the financial execution and achievements of the programmes involving the UK until their closure.

## 2 Overview of the implementation of the operational programmes

### 2.1 Key developments

In the AIR section “Overview of the implementation of the operational programmes”, managing authorities (MAs) provide a concise summary of key implementation issues for the relevant year, utilising both result and output indicators. This section offers a comprehensive view of the overall progress of the programmes, focusing on significant elements, including external factors, and where possible presenting general conclusions on the progress achieved.

In line with Article 65 of the CPR Regulation expenditure is eligible if it has been incurred by a beneficiary and paid by 31 December 2023. The total EMFF funding available paid to beneficiaries stood at 85.5% by the end of 2023. It can be assumed that during 2024 beneficiaries will provide additional invoices to paying agencies and that the total EMFF funding paid to beneficiaries will increase.

The Commission approved 32 OP modification requests in 2023 (compared to 14 in 2022, 15 in 2021 and 32 in 2020). Individual countries saw the number of OP modifications ranging from four up to 12 for the entire period up to the end of 2023. Several OP modifications were also adopted in 2024.

A non-exhaustive overview of the content MSs presented in the AIR section concerning the implementation of their operational programmes includes the management of the OPs and their amendments, calls for proposals, financial implementation, achievement of output and result indicators, factors impacting OP implementation, findings of national and EU audits, and certification of expenditure in relation to the n+3 rule.<sup>9</sup>

To achieve the commitment of the entire funding available, among the solutions mentioned by MSs were modifying the OP, reallocating funding between measures and UPs, and adjusting output and result indicators. Additionally, MSs paid increasing attention towards the completion and monitoring of projects. They organised informational events and maintained regular communication with beneficiaries, provided training in public procurement, introduced simplified cost options, and implemented online platforms. They also resorted to reallocating funding between measures and regions in the case of regionalised OP implementation. Efforts were made to speed up payments to beneficiaries. Several MSs also used the possibility of over-commitments,<sup>10</sup> although this solution depended on national legislation and was not always permitted.

During 2023, the implementation of EMFAF programmes picked up the pace and for some MSs it created additional challenges related to managing both programmes simultaneously.

The negative consequences arising from market disruptions due to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine were commonly mentioned. These issues included sharp rises in the prices of key production inputs such as energy, fishing materials, logistics, packaging costs and fish feed, as well as a loss of export markets. Many of these challenges were mitigated through compensation measures. Compensation

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<sup>9</sup> The so-called “n+3” rule means that all 2014-2020 cohesion policy funds must be spent by the end of the third year after their allocation. For example, for funds allocated in 2020, the final year to spend them was 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Over-commitments can be a deliberate process to ensure the best absorption of funding: MSs commit funding to new operations, taking into account the fact that some operations approved earlier could be abandoned.

measures to alleviate the consequences of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine on fishing activities and the supply chain of fishery and aquaculture products were provided according to the relevant amendments of the Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014.

For non-EUR countries, exchange rate fluctuations have in some cases forced them to carefully monitor the level of commitments (HU, PL, SE, UK).

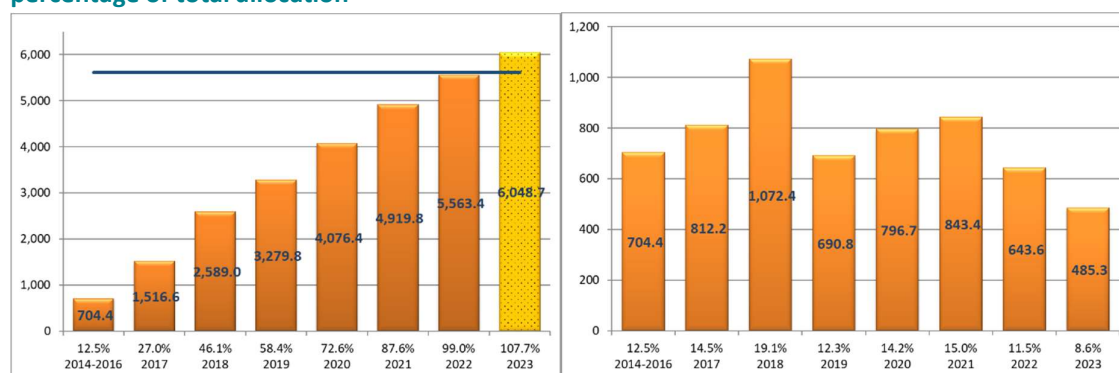


## 2.2 EMFF implementation progress

2023 was the final year of EMFF implementation. The overall EMFF commitments as reported in Infosys reached EUR 6.1 billion and correspond to 107.7% of the total EMFF allocation (Figure 1). A certain level of overcommitment is possible at the end of implementation period to optimise absorption of the available funding. However, the magnitude of overcommitments raises questions related to data quality. Following analysis of Infosys reports the most obvious reason for a high level of commitments is incorrect reporting of interrupted and abandoned operations. If an operation is interrupted following partial implementation, or abandoned, then initial commitments must be adjusted (decreased) accordingly. FAMENET estimates that around EUR 0.5 billion of such commitments were reported in Infosys. In previous years it was observed that abandoned operations were excluded from the AIRs. However, according to aggregated data provided in the 2023 AIRs, in total commitments stood at EUR 5.9 billion and corresponded to 104.7% of the entire EMFF allocation.

It is expected that the inconsistencies in Infosys will be addressed during the submission of closure documents and payment of final balances in line with Article 141 of the CPR.

**Figure 1: EMFF funds committed – cumulative (left) and per year (right) – in million EUR and as a percentage of total allocation<sup>11</sup>**



Source: Infosys 2023

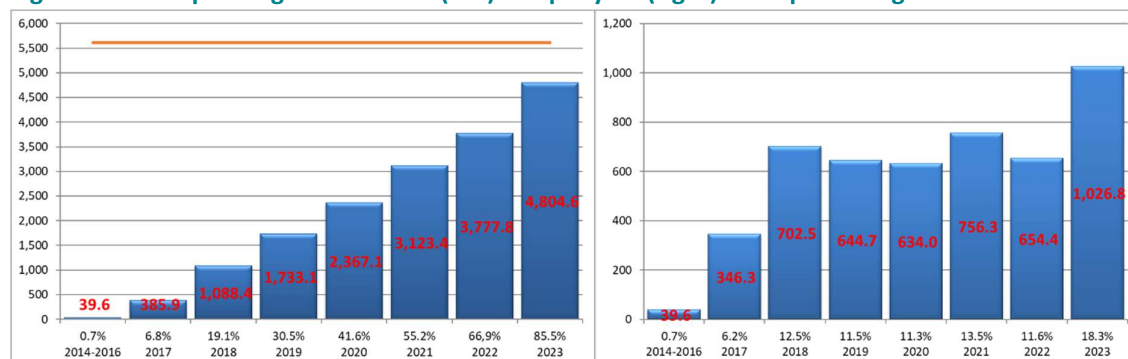
Commitments vary from year to year (Figure 1). Commitments in 2020 and 2021 were slightly higher, thanks in part to mitigation measures provided by the European Commission in relation to coronavirus. Commitments were lower in 2023 as most of the available EMFF financing has already been committed, and the emphasis shifted towards successfully finalising operations in progress and processing payments to beneficiaries.

With expenditure of EUR 4.8 billion declared by beneficiaries, the total EMFF absorption rate has reached 85.5%. Figure 2 shows that 2023 was a peak year in which MSs paid beneficiaries more than 18% of the total EMFF allocation. This can be explained mostly by the approaching end of the implementation period: operations approved earlier were maturing, and this accelerated payments.

<sup>11</sup> Infosys data on annual EMFF funding committed are calculated by date of approval of each operation (Infosys field 13 "Date of approval"). Annual time series of EMFF funding committed are subject to MS-introduced modifications related to earlier reporting periods (for example, correction of errors and changes to approval dates). The total EMFF allocation is also subject to change due to decommitments. As a result, time series presented in EMFF reports may change each year.

According to data reported in Infosys and AIR, around EUR 0.8 billion had not yet been paid to beneficiaries. Payments to beneficiaries could continue to be processed in 2024. It can be assumed that the total amount paid to beneficiaries will increase notably.

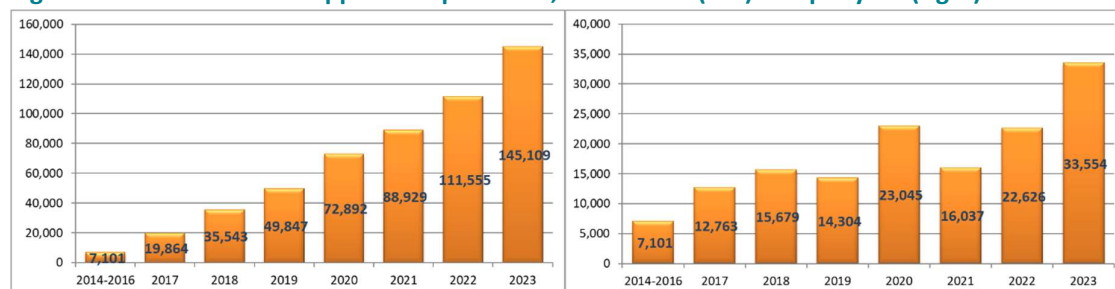
**Figure 2: EMFF spending – cumulative (left) and per year (right) – as a percentage of total allocation<sup>12</sup>**



Source: Infosys 2023

More than 145 000 operations have been reported during the 2014-2023 period. In 2023 more than 33 000 new operations were reported. Before this, the two peak years by number of operations were 2020 and 2022. This is partially explained by the wide introduction of compensation measures (Figure 3). For example, more than 48 000 operations were reported under just one measure related to temporary cessation.

**Figure 3: EMFF number of approved operations, cumulative (left) and per year (right)**



Source: Infosys 2023

### 2.2.1 EMFF implementation per UP

The EMFF pursues the following Union Priorities for the sustainable development of fisheries, aquaculture and related activities (Table 1):

- Union Priority 1 – Promoting environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fisheries
- Union Priority 2 – Fostering environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based aquaculture
- Union Priority 3 – Fostering the implementation of the CFP

<sup>12</sup> Calculating spending is to some extent less straightforward than calculating commitments. Infosys data on annual EMFF spending are calculated by subtracting the previous year's data from the current year's data. Moreover, this approach encounters the same challenges as those involved in calculating commitments. As a result, time series presented in EMFF reports may change each year.

- Union Priority 4 – Increasing employment and territorial cohesion
- Union Priority 5 – Fostering marketing and processing
- Union Priority 6 – Fostering the implementation of the IMP

**Table 1: EMFF implementation per UP**

UP	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
UP1	1 368 489 197	1 558 541 504	113.9	1 190 318 862	87.0	72 562
UP2	965 337 576	1 046 581 202	108.4	820 124 720	85.0	14 451
UP3	1 058 344 968	1 191 476 961	112.6	968 700 946	91.5	2 157
UP4	583 243 009	641 361 107	110.0	429 329 541	73.6	15 120
UP5	1 331 619 720	1 295 026 717	97.3	1 131 907 590	85.0	38 268
UP6	58 756 593	61 971 894	105.5	54 550 823	92.8	278
TA	251 024 173	253 774 031	101.1	209 647 594	83.5	2 273
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 616 815 235</b>	<b>6 048 733 415</b>	<b>107.7</b>	<b>4 804 580 077</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>145 109</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

Over-commitments are practiced by some MSs at the end of the programming period in order to achieve maximum absorption of the available funding, in case some approved operations are cancelled or fail to deliver. As explained above, the overstatement of the overall level of commitments seems to be due to incorrect reporting of abandoned operations.

UP1 accounts for 72 562 operations, or half of all EMFF operations.

The overall EMFF absorption rate is 85.5% (67.2% in 2022). UP6, the “smallest” UP, leads here with 92.8% absorption (EUR 54.6 million). It is followed by UP3 with 91.5% (EUR 968.7 million) of the total available EMFF funding already paid to beneficiaries. UP3 covers data collection and control, which are usually performed by state-governed entities. This implies an easier path to implementation, and as a result UP3 is the second-highest performer in relation to total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries.

In absolute terms, under UP1 beneficiaries received EUR 1 190.3 million. Payments under UP2 and UP4 continued to progress during 2023 and reached 85.0% and 73.6% of the total allocations to these priorities. However, UP4 remains the slowest in terms of payments to beneficiaries.

### 2.2.2 EMFF implementation per sea basin

Looking at the various sea basins, for the purpose of this report FAMENET applied a simplified approach based on a common agreement with DG MARE from 2017. Under this arrangement, MSs are grouped by sea basin in the order below, ignoring the fact that several MSs have operations in more than one basin:

- Black Sea – BG, RO
- Mediterranean Sea – CY, GR, HR, IT, MT, SI
- Atlantic Ocean – ES, FR, IE, PT, UK

- North Sea – BE, DE, DK, NL
- Baltic Sea – EE, FI, LT, LV, PL, SE
- Landlocked – AT, CZ, HU, SK

The most significant part of the EMFF funding – EUR 2.43 billion – is allocated to the Atlantic basin (Table 2). Commitment in the Atlantic basin has exceeded the total EMFF allocation and reached EUR 2.5 billion, or 102.9% of the total planned EMFF allocation. In monetary terms, the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea basins are the next most significant, with EUR 1.6 billion and EUR 1.1 billion respectively in commitments. The number of operations is highest in the Atlantic (56 633) and Mediterranean (52 691), mostly due to the numerous cessations, both permanent and temporary.

In terms of absorption, the leader again is the Atlantic basin with EUR 2.2 billion or 90.0% already claimed by beneficiaries. Absorption remains slower in the Black Sea (74.4%), Landlocked (78.6%) and Mediterranean Sea (79.4% declared).

**Table 2: EMFF implementation per sea basin**

Sea basin	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
Atlantic	2 428 351 010	2 497 891 112	102.9	2 186 169 541	90.0	56 633
Baltic	1 030 005 010	1 073 906 494	104.3	884 222 308	85.8	24 762
Black Sea	249 245 098	243 001 882	97.5	185 420 200	74.4	1 834
Landlocked	84 221 834	82 694 268	98.2	66 202 377	78.6	1 956
Mediterranean	1 253 771 292	1 586 366 033	126.5	995 829 544	79.4	52 691
North Sea	571 220 991	564 873 627	98.9	486 736 107	85.2	7 233
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 616 815 235</b>	<b>6 048 733 415</b>	<b>107.7</b>	<b>4 804 580 077</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>145 109</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

### 2.2.3 EMFF implementation per MS

EMFF implementation per Member State varies (Annex 2).<sup>13</sup> However, due to the issues with incorrect reporting of abandoned operations, the level of commitments should be analysed with caution. According to both Infosys and AIR, the highest level of overcommitment can be observed in Greece, Croatia and Cyprus. Slovakia's commitment rate of 60.7% remains the lowest in the EU, despite nearly doubling its committed amounts in 2023.

The highest numbers of operations are for Spain (31 624 operations), Italy (24 595) and Greece (19 785). The lowest number of operations was implemented in Slovakia – only 42 operations as of the end of 2023.

Progress in EMFF absorption also differs notably among MSs. In relative terms it is led by Austria, Finland and Ireland, with respectively 100.0%, 99.0% and 97.7% of the total EMFF funding available to

<sup>13</sup> Data provided in the AIR compared to data reported in Infosys are not always coherent, and for some MSs the discrepancies are significant. In Annex 2 are two tables that relate to EMFF implementation per MS: one is based on Infosys data and the other is based on the AIR. Analysis in this section is based on Infosys data.

beneficiaries already paid. Spain, having the largest EMFF budget, paid beneficiaries 90.7% (an increase from 67% as of the end of 2022) of the total EMFF funding available. 17 MSs have absorption rates between 70%-90%, only Slovakia has an absorption rate lower than 50%.

Table 3 compares commitment and absorption with the size of the OP allocation. The OPs were divided into three groups:

- total EMFF allocation below EUR 100 million (11 MSs: AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, FI, HU, LT, MT, SI and SK);
- total EMFF allocation from EUR 100 million to EUR 300 million (10 MSs: DE, DK, EE, HR, IE, LV, NL, RO, SE, UK);
- total EMFF allocation above EUR 300 million (6 MSs: EL, ES, FR, IT, PL, PT).

As EMFF implementation approaches its final year, commitment and absorption rates converge between these three groups. The higher commitment rate for the group with the largest allocations is mostly explained by over-commitments and erroneous reporting of abandoned and interrupted operations.

The level of EMFF expenditure declared is very similar for all three groups. Three-quarters of all operations implemented are in the six MSs with total EMFF allocations above EUR 300 million.

**Table 3: EMFF implementation by size of Operational Programme**

Total EMFF allocation per MS (EUR million)	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate (%)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate (%)	Number of operations
< 100	529 707 492	536 983 594	101.4	458 891 766	86.6	11 907
100–300	1 601 270 611	1 617 362 596	101.0	1 353 459 475	84.5	23 270
> 300	3 485 837 132	3 894 387 225	111.7	2 992 228 836	85.8	109 932
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 616 815 235</b>	<b>6 048 733 415</b>	<b>107.7</b>	<b>4 804 580 077</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>145 109</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

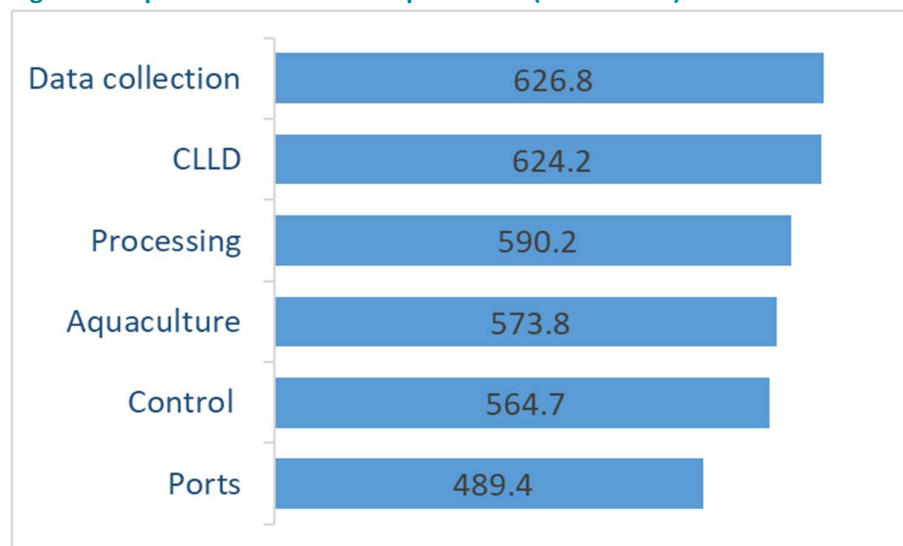
### 2.2.4 EMFF implementation per measure

Annex 3 includes two tables related to EMFF implementation per measure: one is based on Infosys data and the other is based on the AIR. Analysis in this section is based on Infosys data.<sup>14</sup>

Implementation per Article varies considerably in terms of the EMFF funding committed and paid for, and in relative terms when compared to the planned allocation. We also observe that 57.3% of total EMFF commitments are concentrated under only six Articles (Figure 4). At the end of 2023, Article 35 (Mutual funds for adverse climatic events and environmental incidents) remains the only one where MSs have not made commitments.

In absolute terms, Data collection (Article 77) achieves the highest uptake with EUR 626.8 million in commitments as of the end of 2023. Significant progress in implementation of CLLD (Article 63) led to EUR 624.2 million of EMFF commitments, followed by Processing of fisheries and aquaculture products (Article 69) with EUR 590.2 million. The three next-largest Articles are Investments in aquaculture (Article 48) with EUR 573.8 million, Control and enforcement (Article 76) with EUR 564.7 million, and Investment in fishing ports and landing sites (Article 43(1,3)) with EUR 489.4 million in commitments.

**Figure 4: Top 6 – EMFF committed per Article (EUR million)**



Source: Infosys 2023

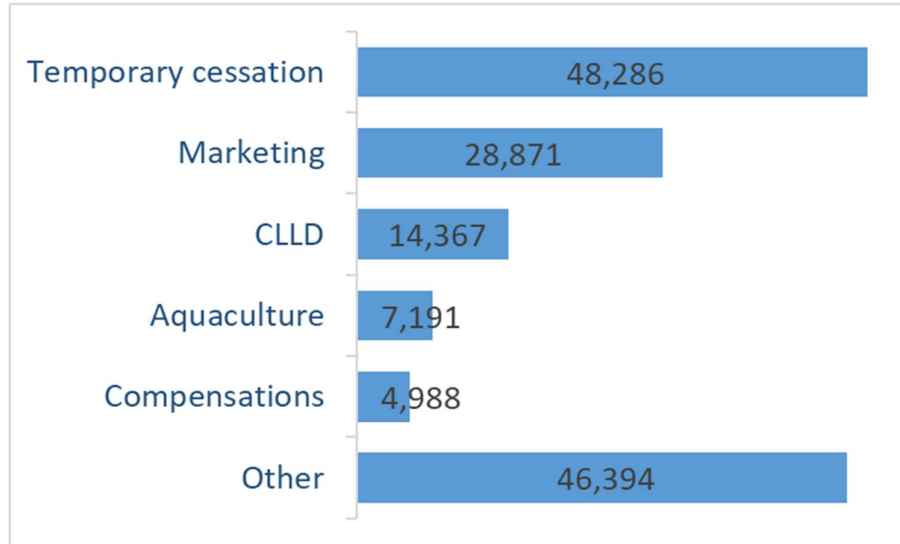
Measures attracting the least interest relate to conversion to eco-management, audit schemes and organic aquaculture (Article 53), with only one operation, and to trainees on board SSCF vessels (Article 29(3)), where 56 operations have been implemented.

One third, or 48 286, of all EMFF operations (Figure 5) have been implemented under Article 33 (Temporary cessation). This number grew rapidly over the years (cumulatively): 12 496 by end 2019,

<sup>14</sup> Data provided in the AIR compared to data reported in Infosys are not always consistent. For the EMFF funding committed the differences are significant due to the issues of incorrect reporting of abandoned operations in Infosys. For the EMFF funding spent, however, most of the differences can be judged as negligible at the level of general observations.

23 239 by end 2020, 31 955 by end 2021, and 44 173 by end 2022. In monetary terms the commitment under this Article is moderate: EUR 240.4 million. 19 327 (40%) of these temporary cessation operations were reported as related to coronavirus impact mitigation.

**Figure 5: Number of operations per Article**



Source: Infosys 2023

### 2.2.5 Types of operations for selected Articles

The EMFF is the only ESI Fund to ensure reporting at the level of operations. This allows FAMENET to compile data related to EMFF contributions to various specific topics. Infosys also provides the opportunity to analyse EMFF support for specific measures by the type of operation or investment (Infosys data fields 20 and 21). Such detailed statistics have proved helpful in preparing the answers to various data requests and also for tailoring certain policy decisions.

In this section we analyse the following selected measures according to their type of operation or type of investment:

- Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment (Article 38)
- Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity (Article 40(1)(b-g,i))
- Replacement or modernisation of main or ancillary engines (Article 41(2))
- Productive investments in aquaculture (Article 48)
- Aquaculture providing environmental services (Article 54)
- Implementation of local development strategies (Article 63)
- Marketing measures (Article 68)
- Processing of fisheries and aquaculture products (Article 69)
- Control and enforcement (Article 76)
- Promotion of protection of marine environment and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources (Article 80(1)(b)).

A complete breakdown is shown in Annex 4.

In total, EUR 25.0 million through 1 795 operations were committed in accordance with **Article 38: Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment and adapting fishing to the protection of species**. More than half of the funding related to gear selectivity, with EUR 13.2 million in 1 023 operations. EUR 4.8 million in 295 operations helped to reduce discards or deal with unwanted catches, and EUR 4.7 million in 353 operations contributed to protect gear and catches from mammals and birds.

EUR 254.5 million through 2 978 operations is committed in accordance with **Article 40(1)(b-g,i): Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity – contribution to a better management or conservation, construction, installation or modernisation of static or movable facilities**. There are seven types of operations under this Article (Annex 4). 41% (1 224 operations) of all operations relate to other actions enhancing biodiversity, with EUR 97.9 million committed, followed by management of resources, with 1 343 operations and EUR 77.7 million in commitments. These two types of operations comprise 69% of all EMFF committed funding under this Article.

There are two types of operations under **Article 41(2): Energy efficiency and mitigation of climate change – Replacement or modernisation of main or ancillary engines**. More than three-quarters (EUR 2.5 million for 626 operations) of the total commitment was allocated to engine replacement; the remainder was for engine modernisation.

**Article 48(1)(a-d,f-h): Productive investments in aquaculture** is the measure with the fourth-highest uptake: EUR 573.8 million of EMFF funding committed. About 62% (EUR 357.9 million) of these commitments were classified as productive investments. Modernisation was the second most popular type of operation, with EUR 177.6 million in commitments. The remaining 7% of commitments were spread amongst five other types of operations (quality of products, restoration, diversification, complementary activities, and animal health).

Of the EUR 53.6 million committed in **Article 48(1)(e,i,j): Productive investments in aquaculture – resource efficiency**, 65% (EUR 34.8 million) targeted the development of closed recirculation systems.

2 104 operations with EUR 100.1 million committed are funded under **Article 54: Aquaculture providing environmental services**. This Article has three types of operations. The largest proportion of the EMFF budget relates to aquaculture operations including conservation and improvement of environment and biodiversity, for EUR 56.5 million in 1 557 operations.

**Article 63: Implementation of local development strategies** is the second-highest performing measure, with EUR 624.2 million in EMFF commitments. The most popular types of operations are Adding value and Diversification, together covering over 50% of the support provided. Socio-cultural operations cover 20%, while Environmental and Governance-related operations cover 10% and 2% of the support respectively. The budget for Running costs and animation is about 15% of the measure.

Infosys also provides a detailed split of CLLD operations per type of beneficiary. 5 608 operations (39% of total number of operations) with EUR 228.8 million (37% of total commitments) in EMFF commitments are implemented by legal persons. Public authorities implement 3 395 operations (24%) with EUR 194.2 million (31.1%) in commitments. Natural persons oversee 2 679 operations (19%) and EUR 83.7 million (13%) of commitments. NGOs are reported as responsible for 966 operations (7%) and EUR 62.0 million (10%) of EMFF committed. The rest is implemented by fishers' and producers' organisations, research centres/universities, and by mixed types of beneficiaries.



The total EMFF funding committed to **Article 68: Marketing measures** increased by EUR 206.4 million compared to 2022, and reached EUR 382.2 million. The number of operations grew from 5 002 at the end of 2022 to 28 871 operations. In total under this Article 16 357 operations were reported as related to the Ukraine crisis.

Five out of the 12 types of operations in this measure cover around 97% of the total number of operations. Finding new markets and improving marketing conditions leads, with 12 467 operations and EMFF commitment of EUR 119.2 million. This is followed by communication and promotional campaigns (4 705 operations with EUR 105.2 million); standard contracts (3 344 operations with EUR 61.9 million); and promoting quality and value added with focus on direct marketing (4 126 operations with EUR 46.8 million committed). To promote transparency of production, 3 336 operations with an EMFF commitment of EUR 18.8 million were implemented.

The EMFF supports the creation of producer organisations, associations and inter-branch organisations, with 145 operations and EUR 2.8 million.

In terms of EMFF commitments **Article 69: Processing of fisheries and aquaculture products** comes third after Data collection and CLLD, with EUR 590.2 million for 3 655 operations. New or improved products, processes or management systems cover 55% of the operations, followed by Improved safety, hygiene, health and working conditions (21% of operations) and Energy saving or reducing the impact on the environment (18% of operations). These three types (out of six in total) cover 93% of EMFF support under Article 69.

The fifth-highest commitment amount relates to **Article 76: Control and enforcement**, with a total of EUR 564.7 million of EMFF funding. Of 12 types of investment, the top four were Purchase, installation and development of technology; Purchase of other control means; Operational costs; and Modernisation and purchase of patrol vessels, aircraft and helicopters. These types of investment together attracted 81% of the funding.

Under **Article 80(1)(b): Promotion of protection of marine environment and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources** EUR 12.0 million was committed. Of this figure, EUR 8.5 million relates to marine protected areas and EUR 3.5 million to Natura 2000. In total 81 operations were implemented.

#### **2.2.6 Average EMFF support per UP and per measure**

Variations amongst UPs are notable, with the average EMFF support per operation ranging from EUR 21 479 for UP1 to EUR 552 377 for UP3 (Table 4). The average amount of EMFF support per operation across all UPs and technical assistance (TA) is close to EUR 42 000.

Measures for UP3 (Data collection and Control and enforcement) are usually implemented by state-governed institutions, and often cover a wide range of tasks and long time periods of implementation, which explains the high average EMFF support. UP3 is followed by UP6, where average EMFF commitment amounts to EUR 222 920.

The average size of EMFF commitment per operation for UP1, UP2, UP4 and UP5 does not exceed EUR 100 000. However, these averages are impacted by outliers. There are nearly 2 000 operations with EMFF commitments of less than EUR 100, for instance, while at the other end of the spectrum there are several large operations. The highest commitment for one operation under UP1 is close to

EUR 33 million – support provided under Article 41(1)(3) (Fishing ports). For example, under UP3 Spain reported one operation related to Article 76 Control and enforcement with EUR 65 million committed, and two operations related to Article 77 Data collection with EUR 43 million and EUR 42 million in commitments respectively. Italy reported one data collection operation with EUR 33 million committed and another operation related to control and enforcement with EUR 32 million committed.

**Table 4: Average and maximum EMFF committed to an operation per Union Priority**

UP	Number of operations	Average EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Maximum EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)
UP1	72 562	21 479	32 647 415
UP2	14 451	72 423	9 217 646
UP3	2 157	552 377	65 293 992
UP4	15 120	42 418	5 561 441
UP5	38 268	33 841	60 900 000
UP6	278	222 920	3 000 000
TA	2 273	111 647	6 783 102

Source: Infosys 2023

### 2.2.7 Average EMFF support by Member State

This section presents information on the average and maximal size of a single operation in each MS (Table 5). The average size of an operation may depend on such factors as the type of measure (for instance, Data collection and Control and enforcement includes large operations); the size of the EMFF budget (MSs with larger budgets may have larger operations); and the progress of EMFF implementation (MSs with fewer operations may have distorted averages).

The average amount of funding per operation varies widely amongst MSs, ranging from EUR 22 292 in FI to EUR 205 842 in NL. In a number of MSs the averages are impacted by a few large operations with EMFF funding exceeding EUR 30 million.

The MSs with the highest average amounts are NL, MT, RO, BE, SK and LV. Those with the lowest average funding per operation are FI, IT, CZ and EL. The EU average is EUR 41 684.

**Table 5: Average and maximum EMFF funding committed to an operation per Member State**

MS	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations	Average EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys 31/12/2023)	Maximum EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys 31/12/2023)
AT	7 742 171	225	34 410	495 000
BE	49 875 977	393	126 911	5 335 836
BG	80 239 945	931	86 187	2 864 831
CY	47 103 415	1 589	29 643	5 561 441
CZ	33 001 718	1 247	26 465	303 349
DE	199 973 398	4 178	47 863	23 079 394
DK	204 898 975	2 127	96 332	12 210 012
EE	95 996 766	2 293	41 865	5 545 667

MS	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations	Average EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys 31/12/2023)	Maximum EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys 31/12/2023)
EL	572 400 074	19 785	28 931	28 775 127
ES	1 049 472 053	31 624	33 186	65 293 992
FI	73 718 546	3 307	22 292	14 071 480
FR	610 889 284	7 194	84 916	9 215 808
HR	311 726 643	6 350	49 091	13 310 830
HU	37 252 760	442	84 282	2 251 149
IE	145 537 847	3 717	39 155	17 465 331
IT	610 106 818	24 595	24 806	32 784 646
LT	62 325 595	1 066	58 467	3 763 032
LV	137 006 569	1 357	100 963	12 480 993
MT	22 800 721	114	200 006	5 989 173
NL	110 125 276	535	205 842	17 595 889
PL	604 275 995	15 678	38 543	32 647 415
PT	447 243 000	11 056	40 453	8 561 643
RO	162 761 937	903	180 246	6 783 102
SE	100 583 023	1 061	94 800	4 370 737
SI	22 228 362	258	86 156	1 832 657
SK	4 697 619	42	111 848	890 853
UK	244 748 927	3 042	80 457	12 652 656
EU	<b>6 048 733 415</b>	<b>145 109</b>	<b>41 684</b>	<b>65 293 992</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

### 2.2.8 Average EMFF support by measure implemented

This section presents information on the average and maximal size of EMFF commitment to individual operations, broken down by measure (Table 6).

The average values range from EUR 2 166 for protection and restoration of marine biodiversity (Article 40(1)(h)) to EUR 2 146 512 for data collection (Article 77). The second-largest average operation size (EUR 496 444) is for integrating maritime surveillance (Article 80(1)(a)) and the third-largest (EUR 450 742) is for support for systems of allocation of fishing opportunities.

Support for fishing ports and shelters to facilitate compliance with the landing obligation (Article 43(2)) as well as to improve the infrastructure of fishing ports and auction halls, and construction of shelters to improve safety of fishers (Article 43 (1,3)), are other measures that are apparently implemented via larger-scale projects, since the average operation size here is around EUR 300 000.

**Table 6: Size of operations by measures implemented**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations	Average EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys 31/12/2023)	Maximum EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys 31/12/2023)
Article 26	53 097 429	353	150 418	2 219 160
Article 27	7 657 739	96	79 768	1 297 607
Article 28	56 261 431	239	235 403	4 371 963
Article 29(1,2)	20 111 274	1 445	13 918	883 194
Article 29(3)	459 026	56	8 197	16 000
Article 30	11 207 821	382	29 340	58 946
Article 31	8 814 217	298	29 578	56 250
Article 32	51 260 711	3 811	13 451	457 035
Article 33	240 378 944	48 286	4 978	375 493
Article 34	120 380 331	1 825	65 962	907 029
Article 36	9 465 575	21	450 742	1 643 447
Article 37	36 899 060	445	82 919	1 701 698
Article 38	24 961 643	1 795	13 906	409 780
Article 39	41 543 280	202	205 660	1 509 399
Article 40(1)(a)	23 658 743	667	35 470	1 708 183
Article 40(1)(b-g,i)	254 491 708	2 978	85 457	25 444 560
Article 40(1)(h)	6 203 333	2 931	2 116	157 419
Article 41(1)(a-c)	17 008 749	1 270	13 393	355 616
Article 41(2)	3 253 130	752	4 326	36 480
Article 42	62 570 673	2 910	21 502	2 249 928
Article 43(1,3)	489 365 226	1 736	281 892	32 647 415
Article 43(2)	19 491 461	64	304 554	3 236 292
Article 47	151 309 539	646	234 225	3 744 962
Article 48(1)(a-d,f-h)	573 785 035	7 191	79 792	9 217 646
Article 48(1)(e,i,j)	53 617 910	285	188 133	2 213 866
Article 48(1)(k)	8 322 722	285	29 203	345 662
Article 49	18 789 601	133	141 275	2 210 915
Article 50	10 385 206	233	44 572	878 525
Article 51	21 999 458	112	196 424	2 085 237
Article 52	12 108 886	86	140 801	2 083 305
Article 53	9 000	1	9 000	9 000
Article 54	100 094 307	2 104	47 573	1 599 541
Article 55	65 533 379	2 831	23 148	1 500 000
Article 56	23 953 521	409	58 566	2 889 108
Article 57	6 672 637	135	49 427	387 068
Article 62(1)(a)	4 922 673	262	18 789	86 867
Article 63 CLLD	624 200 544	14 367	43 447	5 561 441
Article 64	12 237 890	491	24 924	848 768
Article 66	127 809 456	676	189 067	9 003 434
Article 67	16 060 022	78	205 898	5 698 562

EMFF Article	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations	Average EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys 31/12/2023)	Maximum EMFF committed per operation (EUR) (Infosys 31/12/2023)
Article 68	382 182 808	28 871	13 238	5 477 668
Article 69	590 239 519	3 655	161 488	12 480 993
Article 70	178 734 911	4 988	35 833	60 900 000
Article 76	564 695 559	1 865	302 786	65 293 992
Article 77	626 781 402	292	2 146 512	42 865 758
Article 78	253 774 031	2 273	111 647	6 783 102
Article 80(1)(a)	17 375 556	35	496 444	3 000 000
Article 80(1)(b)	11 940 927	81	147 419	946 183
Article 80(1)(c)	32 655 411	162	201 577	2 692 535
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 048 733 415</b>	<b>145 109</b>	<b>41 684</b>	<b>65 293 992</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

### 2.2.9 EMFF contribution to CFP objectives

Regulation (EU) No. 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council sets several objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy. To estimate the EMFF contribution to each of these objectives, FAMENET applied a methodology to link the EMFF articles to the objectives (Table 7 and Annex 1).

**Table 7: EMFF contribution to CFP objectives**

CFP objective	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
CFP Article 2(2,3)	934 406 378	709 726 782	9 565
CFP Article 2(4)	626 781 402	550 691 926	292
CFP Article 2(5)(a,b)	103 522 134	90 405 840	4 323
CFP Article 2(5)(c)	1 878 266 368	1 342 836 118	23 901
CFP Article 2(5)(d)	370 224 850	325 158 640	50 132
CFP Article 2(5)(e)	1 046 581 202	820 124 720	14 451
CFP Article 2(5)(f)	266 625 944	249 269 974	10 378
CFP Article 2(5)(g)	316 547 040	283 695 581	18 073
CFP Article 2(5)(h)	190 395 818	168 251 103	11 443
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 733 351 136</b>	<b>4 540 160 683</b>	<b>142 558</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

The following paragraphs show the EMFF breakdown across the nine CFP objectives:

- **Exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield; Fisheries activities avoid the degradation of the marine environment (CFP Article 2(2,3)).** MSs have

selected 9 565 operations with a total EMFF funding of EUR 807 million.<sup>15</sup> The money spent amounted to EUR 472 million.

- **Collection of scientific data (CFP Article 2(4)).** At the end of 2023, MSs selected 292 operations with a total budget of EUR 627 million, of which EUR 551 million was declared by beneficiaries.
- **Gradually eliminate discards, by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches, and by gradually ensuring that catches are landed; where necessary, make the best use of unwanted catches (CFP Article 2(5)(a,b)).** By the end of 2023 MSs had selected 4 323 operations with a total EMFF funding of EUR 104 million, and spent EUR 82 million.
- **Provide conditions for economically viable and competitive fishing capture and processing industry and land-based fishing-related activity (CFP Article 2(5)(c)).** MSs selected 23 901 operations with a total EMFF budget of EUR 1 878 million, and spent EUR 1 343 million. Nearly one-third of all EMFF funding and 16.8% of the number of operations refer to this CFP objective.
- **Adjust the fishing capacity of the fleets according to fishing opportunities (CFP Article 2(5)(d)).** MSs selected 50 132 operations with a total EMFF allocation of EUR 370 million, and spent EUR 325 million. Under this CFP objective fall 35.2% of all operations.
- **Promote the development of sustainable aquaculture activities (CFP Article 2(5)(e)).** MSs selected 14 451 operations with a total budget of EUR 1 047 million, and spent EUR 820 million. In terms of total EMFF commitments this is the second-largest CFP objective, with an 18.3% share.
- **Contribute to a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities (CFP Article 2(5)(f)).** MSs selected 10 378 operations with a total budget of EUR 267 million, and spent EUR 249 million.
- **Contribute to an efficient and transparent internal market for fisheries and aquaculture (CFP Article 2(5)(g)).** MSs selected 18 073 operations with a total EMFF allocation of EUR 317 million, and spent EUR 284 million.
- **Take into account the interests of both consumers and producers (CFP Article 2(5)(h)).** MSs selected 11 443 operations with a total EMFF allocation of EUR 190 million, and spent EUR 168 million.

#### 2.2.10 EMFF contribution to IMP objectives under shared management

Regulation (EU) No. 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council stipulates several general and operational objectives for further development of an Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP).

To estimate EMFF contributions to the relevant objectives, FAMENET applied a methodology linking EMFF articles to the objectives (Table 8 and Annex 1). The eligible operations for the IMP measures financed by the EMFF under shared management are listed in EMFF Article 80 ('Contribute to achieving the objectives of the IMS', 'Protect the marine environment' and 'Improve knowledge of the state of the marine environment'). During 2023 only nine operations were funded (the peak of implementation was during 2017-2021 with 242 operations).

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<sup>15</sup> To calculate Infosys values, all operations are filtered by the codes of operation implementation data and only operations relevant to a specific CFP objective are considered. For several CFP objectives, AIR values differ from Infosys values.

- MSs selected 81 operations with a total EMFF allocation of EUR 11.9 million, or 91.8% of the total planned EMFF allocation, under the IMP objective: **Promote the protection of the marine environment, in particular its biodiversity, and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources (IMP Article 2(c))**. MSs have paid EUR 10.8 million (83.2%) to beneficiaries.
- MSs selected 35 operations with a total budget of EUR 17.4 million, or 134.1% of the total planned EMFF allocation, related to the IMP objective: **Development of the Common Information Sharing Environment for the Union maritime domain, in line with the principles of the Integrated Maritime Surveillance (IMP Article 3(2)(a))**. MSs have paid EUR 12.7 million (97.9%) to beneficiaries.
- **Development of a comprehensive and publicly accessible high quality marine data and knowledge base (IMP Article 3(2)(c))** is the most popular amongst the IMP objectives. MSs assigned 162 operations with a total budget of EUR 32.7 million, or 99.6% of the total planned EMFF allocation, to this objective.

**Table 8: EMFF contribution to IMP objectives**

IMP objective	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
IMP 2(c)	13 011 506	11 940 927	91.8	10 820 823	83.2	81
IMP 3(2)(a)	12 955 540	17 375 556	134.1	12 686 690	97.9	35
IMP 3(2)(c)	32 789 547	32 655 411	99.6	31 043 311	94.7	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>58 756 593</b>	<b>61 971 894</b>	<b>105.5</b>	<b>54 550 823</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>278</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

**2.2.11 EMFF contribution to the Europe 2020 Thematic Objectives**

Common Provisions Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 sets 11 thematic objectives for the ESI Funds and Common Strategic Framework. The relevant objectives for the EMFF are TO3, TO4, TO6 and TO8 (Table 9).

**Table 9: EMFF contribution to the Europe 2020 Thematic Objectives**

EU 2020 TO	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
TO3	2 966 865 843	3 133 996 838	105.6	2 533 303 981	85.4	110 741
TO4	26 921 412	28 584 602	106.2	21 208 959	78.8	2 307
TO6	1 757 691 394	1 960 061 332	111.5	1 586 828 822	90.3	12 934
TO8	614 312 413	672 316 613	109.4	453 590 720	73.8	16 854

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

To estimate the EMFF contribution to these TOs, each EMFF Article was linked to a TO according to the methodology provided in Annex 1 of this report.

- MSs selected 110 741 operations with a total budget of EUR 3 134 million, or 105.6% of planned EMFF allocation, for **TO3: Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**, under which fall 76% of all operations and 52% of the total committed amount. Under this TO the highest amounts committed were to operations implemented under EMFF Article 69 – Processing of fisheries and aquaculture products; Article 48(1)(a-d,f-g) – Productive investments in aquaculture; and Article 43(1,3) – Investment in fishing ports and landing sites. Around 44% (48 286 operations) of all operations under this TO were implemented under Article 33 – Temporary cessation of fishing activities.
- MSs selected 2 307 operations with a total budget of EUR 28.6 million for **TO4: Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors**. This TO has the lowest number of operations and committed amounts compared to other TOs. According to the methodology provided in Annex 1, operations implemented under the following EMFF Articles are considered relevant: Article 41(1)(a-c) – Energy efficiency and mitigation of climate change – on board investments; energy efficiency audits and schemes; studies to assess the contribution of alternative propulsion systems and hull designs (EUR 17.0 million committed); Article 48(1)(k) – Productive investments in aquaculture – investments increasing energy efficiency and promoting the conversion of aquaculture enterprises to renewable sources of energy (EUR 8.3 million committed) and Article 41(2) – Energy efficiency and mitigation of climate change – replacement or modernisation of main or ancillary engines (EUR 3.3 million committed).
- MSs selected 12 934 operations with a total budget of EUR 1 960 million, or 111.5% of the planned EMFF allocation, for **TO6: Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency**. Under this TO the largest commitments were allocated to Article 77 – Data collection and Article 76 – Control and enforcement.
- MSs selected 16 854 operations with a total budget of EUR 672 million, or 109.4% of the planned EMFF allocation, to **TO8: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility**. The implementation of local development strategies (under EMFF Article 63) accounted for EUR 624 million, or 93%, of all commitments towards this TO.

#### 2.2.12 Contribution to the EMFF objectives, Article 5

Article 5 of the EMFF Regulation ((EU) No. 508/2014) sets four EMFF objectives. In order to establish the EMFF contribution to each objective, links were established between the Article 5 objectives and the Union Priorities (Table 10). UP1, UP2 and UP5 contribute to promoting competitive, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible fisheries and aquaculture. UP3 contributes to fostering the implementation of the CFP, and UP4 to promoting a balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas. UP6 contributes to fostering the development and implementation of the Union's IMP in a manner complementary to cohesion policy and to the CFP.

- MSs selected 125 281 operations with a total budget of EUR 3 900 million, or 106.4% of the total planned EMFF allocation, to the objective: **Promoting competitive, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible fisheries and aquaculture (EMFF Article 5(a))**. This corresponds to 86% of all the selected operations and to 64% of the total EMFF amount committed to all Article 5 objectives.



- MSs selected 2 157 operations with a total budget of EUR 1 191 million, or 112.6% of the total planned EMFF allocation, to the objective: **Fostering the implementation of the CFP (EMFF Article 5(b))**.
- MSs selected 15 120 operations with a total budget of EUR 641 million, or 110.0% of the total planned EMFF allocation, to the objective: **Promoting a balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas (EMFF Article 5(c))**.
- MSs selected 278 operations with a total budget of EUR 62 million, or 105.5% of the total planned EMFF allocation, to the objective: **Fostering the development and implementation of the Union’s IMP in a manner complementary to cohesion policy and to the CFP (EMFF Article 5(d))**.

**Table 10: EMFF contribution to the EMFF objectives**

Article EC 508/2014	UP	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
Article 5(a) EC 508/2014	UP1 UP2 UP5	3 665 446 493	3 900 149 423	106.4	3 142 351 171	85.7	125 281
Article 5(b) EC 508/2014	UP3	1 058 344 968	1 191 476 961	112.6	968 700 946	91.5	2 157
Article 5(c) EC 508/2014	UP4	583 243 009	641 361 107	110.0	429 329 541	73.6	15 120
Article 5(d) EC 508/2014	UP6	58 756 593	61 971 894	105.5	54 550 823	92.8	278

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

### 2.2.13 EMFF contribution to horizontal principles

In line with the CPR ((EU) No. 1303/2013), MSs shall ensure arrangements, in accordance with their own institutional and legal frameworks, to involve bodies responsible for gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.

**Table 11: EMFF contribution to horizontal principles**

Specific objective	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
Gender	35 695 019	38 900 875	109.0	27 828 764	78.0	1 578
Sustainability	2 336 013 787	2 464 030 589	105.5	1 887 569 405	80.8	67 821

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

According to the FAMENET methodology (Annex 1), only EMFF Article 29(1,2) contributes directly to gender equality and non-discrimination. MSs selected 1 578 operations with a total EMFF budget of EUR 38.9 million (Table 11).

Environmental, economic and social stability are fundamental elements of investments from the ESI Funds. MSs selected 67 821 operations with a total budget of EUR 2 464 million to support sustainability. In total, 26 EMFF Articles are attributed to this horizontal principle. In terms of EMFF funds committed, operations implemented under Article 63 – Implementation of local development strategies (EUR 624 million) and Article 48(1)(a-d,f-g) – Productive investments in aquaculture (EUR 573 million) contributed the most to sustainability.

#### 2.2.14 EMFF support for climate change objectives

The EMFF supports operations related to climate change and energy efficiency in accordance with the headline target of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The coefficients for calculating amounts of support for climate change objectives are provided in Annex III of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 1232/2014. MSs have to provide the data regarding amounts of support for climate change objectives in Table 4 of AIR (Table 12).

**Table 12: EMFF contribution to climate change of operations selected for support**

MS	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Climate change amount of total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Climate change / EMFF allocation (%)	Climate change / EMFF committed (%)
AT	6 965 000	7 687 616	–	–	–
BE	41 746 051	49 425 283	11 535 578	27.6	23.3
BG	80 823 727	80 127 067	12 952 866	16.0	16.2
CY	39 715 209	47 082 971	12 800 707	32.2	27.2
CZ	31 108 015	33 565 986	971 853	3.1	2.9
DE	219 596 276	199 345 346	57 060 039	26.0	28.6
DK	208 355 420	209 429 024	33 378 869	16.0	15.9
EE	100 970 418	100 007 550	13 549 473	13.4	13.5
EL	379 745 523	560 147 276	118 776 434	31.3	21.2
ES	1 057 143 957	1 032 660 825	161 393 989	15.3	15.6
FI	74 393 168	75 100 170	20 783 264	27.9	27.7
FR	587 980 173	615 498 378	75 776 850	12.9	12.3
HR	252 643 138	295 279 039	43 204 799	17.1	14.6
HU	38 412 223	38 259 220	4 309 310	11.2	11.3
IE	147 601 979	145 599 943	11 311 326	7.7	7.8
IT	537 262 559	545 888 927	119 609 265	22.3	21.9
LT	63 432 222	62 350 520	8 446 446	13.3	13.5
LV	139 833 742	136 688 103	20 245 093	14.5	14.8
MT	22 627 422	22 803 649	4 781 729	21.1	21.0
NL	101 523 244	110 093 033	13 430 194	13.2	12.2
PL	531 219 456	531 574 395	98 256 053	18.5	18.5
PT	392 485 464	425 200 257	73 124 759	18.6	17.2

MS	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Climate change amount of total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Climate change / EMFF allocation (%)	Climate change / EMFF committed (%)
RO	168 421 371	162 732 549	34 228 150	20.3	21.0
SE	120 156 004	120 101 149	26 846 300	22.3	22.4
SI	21 777 441	21 934 503	4 133 270	19.0	18.8
SK	7 736 596	4 668 869	210 356	2.7	4.5
UK	243 139 437	245 951 741	39 210 256	16.1	15.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 616 815 235</b>	<b>5 879 203 389</b>	<b>1 020 327 232</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>17.4</b>

Source: AIR 2023

Overall, the EMFF contribution to climate change objectives by the end of 2023 was EUR 1 020.3 million, or 17.4% of the total EMFF funding committed to date. The corresponding number for total EMFF funding already declared by beneficiaries was EUR 820.6 million, or 17.1% of total EMFF funding declared.

### 2.2.15 EMFF contribution to specific topics

The EMFF is the only ESI Fund that ensures reporting at the level of operations. Because of such unique Infosys datasets, it is possible to provide a detailed analysis of EMFF contributions to various specific topics. Several topics deserve specific attention due to their political significance, in particular operations involving: vessels, outermost regions, innovation, landing obligation, energy efficiency, climate change, Natura 2000, biodiversity, marine litter, and coronavirus mitigation measures.

#### 2.2.15.1 Operations involving vessels

Article 3(14) of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014 (the EMFF Regulation) defines “small-scale coastal fishing” (SSCF) as “fishing carried out by fishing vessels of an overall length of less than 12 metres and not using towed fishing gear as listed in Table 3 of Annex I to Commission Regulation (EC) No. 26/2004”.

The EMFF Regulation recognises the importance of SSCF in the environmental and social context of coastal communities, and stipulates that operations related to small-scale coastal fisheries may benefit from higher aid intensity (+30 percentage points as defined in Annex I of the Regulation). While SSCF may benefit from this preferential treatment, the EMFF reporting streams (AIR and Infosys) do not contain detailed reporting provisions on SSCF.

Infosys contains the so-called Common Fleet Register (CFR) number only when a vessel is involved in an operation. In that case it can be referred to the FFR to identify to which vessel class it belongs. The following vessel classes were defined (Table 13):

- SSCF vessels defined according to Article 3 of Regulation EU 508/2014<sup>16</sup>
- other vessels under 12 m
- vessels between 12-24 m
- vessels above 24 m.

EMFF support to operations involving vessels is significant – 85 628 operations (59.0% of all operations) were reported as related to vessels. Of a total EMFF commitment of EUR 6 049 million, EUR 1 703 million (28.2%) was dedicated to operations linked to an FFR vessel number (Table 13). EMFF spending (EUR 1 418 million) on vessel-specific operations amounted to 29.5% of the total EMFF spending.

During 2022 and 2023 EMFF commitment and spending on these operations continued to grow. This can be partially explained by the active use of compensation measures related to mitigation of the coronavirus outbreak and compensation related to the Ukrainian crisis. At the end of 2021 the number of operations was 48 088; in 2022 it was 62 600, and during 2023 the number of operations increased to 85 628 (a year-on-year increase of 37%).

During 2022 the number of operations related to SSCF vessels increased from 18 987 to 27 389 (an increase of 44% compared to 2021). As of the end of 2022 the number of operations related to SSCF vessels represented 44% of all operations related to vessels. This segment received 46% of the EMFF spending dedicated to specific vessels (EUR 525 million out of EUR 1 147 million). During 2023 the number of operations related to SSCF continued to increase, reaching 42 602 (an increase of 56% compared to 2022); this segment accounted for 46% of the EMFF spending dedicated to specific vessels (EUR 650 million out of EUR 1 418 million).

More than 30 000 unique vessels received EMFF support. The number of unique vessels supported increased by 27% (from 23 626 in 2022 to 30 037 in 2023).

Average EMFF commitment per supported vessel amounted to EUR 56 690, while the average EMFF spending was EUR 47 202. The average EMFF commitment for each operation<sup>17</sup> related to a vessel amounted to EUR 19 886, while the average EMFF spending was EUR 16 558. For comparison, average EMFF commitment per supported SSCF vessel amounted to EUR 42 207, while average spending was EUR 34 573. The average commitment for each SSCF-related operation was EUR 18 611, and average spending was EUR 15 245.

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### Table 13: General overview of all vessel-related operations (EU total)

<sup>16</sup> Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No. 2328/2003, (EC) No. 861/2006, (EC) No. 1198/2006 and (EC) No. 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No. 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

<sup>17</sup> An individual vessel may receive support more than once.

Vessel size	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	% of total	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	% of total	Number of operations	% of total	Number of vessels	% of total
SSCF	792 857 484	46.6	649 457 066	45.8	42 602	49.8	18 785	62.5
Other vessels under 12 m	61 205 738	3.6	47 650 644	3.4	4 097	4.8	1 878	6.3
Vessels between 12–24 m	428 172 473	25.1	364 975 886	25.7	29 489	34.4	6 551	21.8
Vessels above 24 m	343 324 057	20.2	305 409 819	21.5	8 031	9.4	1 841	6.1
Unspecified	77 221 982	4.5	50 309 164	3.5	1 409	1.6	982	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 702 781 735</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1 417 802 580</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>85 628</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>30 037</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Infosys 2023, FFR

FAME presented a detailed analysis of SSCF in the scope of the ancillary task “FAME SU: AT01.2 SSCF periodic reports, sample report 2, August 2020”.

In AIR section 6 MSs have to provide a summary of actions taken on progress to achieve the provision set out in EMFF Article 41(8) with regard to the priority that up to 60% of the public assistance is reserved for the small-scale coastal fishing sector, including data on the actual share of small-scale coastal fishing within the operations financed under the measure of Article 41(2) – Energy efficiency and mitigation of climate change. Several MSs have said that this AIR section is not relevant to their OPs – AT, BE, CZ, DK, EL, HU, LV, NL, SE, SI, SK. For the rest, the following list covers several issues related to SSCF that have been reported in the AIRs:

- Prioritisation of the SSCF sector is secured in the guidelines for applicants on two levels: (1) higher aid intensity (BG, FR) and (2) prioritisation in the ranking when projects are assessed (BG, HR, LT).
- BG, CY, DE, EE, ES and MT noted that the number of upcoming and approved projects was rather poor, as interest from beneficiaries remained low.
- EL noted that the measure under Article 41(2) for the replacement or modernisation of main or auxiliary engines has not been activated.
- ES reported that in total 63 operations were approved, of which 59 were SSCF-related. The implementation of this measure remained low – 68% of planned amounts were committed, and of that, 71% was SSCF-related.  
Low implementation of this measure may also be in part linked with the conditions to be met by the beneficiaries with regard to Article 10 of the EMFF Regulation. The economic situation of the SSCF sector is sensitive, and a hypothetical case in which beneficiaries are penalised and asked to repay grants they have received is considered a risk.
- FR noted that in 2023, 93% of vessels receiving support under Article 41(2) were small-scale coastal fishing vessels (163 files out of the 174 committed).
- In IE there are two schemes of relevance to SSCF: the New Fishermen Scheme (one SSCF vessel was acquired) and the Inshore Fisheries Conservation Scheme (six onshore refrigeration

facilities and a trading website). More generally, the priority for SSCF is the preferential grant rate of 70%: in 2021 two SSCFs received grants for engine replacement.

- In IT, this measure is not very attractive due to the complexity of the procedures and the low rate of public contribution (30% of the eligible expenditure). This discouraged potential beneficiaries from applying.
- In LT only three applicants received support by the end of 2023.
- PL notes that support for the replacement or modernisation of main or auxiliary engines may only be granted for vessels belonging to a fleet segment for which the capacity report referred to in Article 22(2) of Regulation (EU) No. 1380/2013 shows a balance with the fishing opportunities available to that segment. Since the beginning of the implementation of the OP, fishing segments have not been balanced, so the measure cannot be implemented. The Managing Authority has taken measures to transfer funds from this measure.
- In PT, 131 operations were approved by the end of 2023. 115 of those were SSCF-related, which corresponds to 85% of the total number of operations and 57.3% of the total amount committed. PT also provided a detailed description of its SSCF segment.
- RO pointed out that the measure was removed from its OP. RO considers that when aid intensity is less than 100% it is hard to believe that fishers or boat owners could afford such investments in the future, especially with the rise in fuel prices related to the conflict in Ukraine.
- In the UK, 49 Article 41(2) projects have been approved since the start of the programme, with public assistance of EUR 344 000 awarded. 65.5% of the total public support allocated to Article 41(2) is committed to SSCF operators. Of the 49 projects selected, 43 relate to SSCF, with total public support of EUR 216 000 awarded.

#### 2.2.15.2 Landing obligation

The landing obligation (LO) is established under the “fisheries management” pillar of the Common Fisheries Policy.<sup>18</sup> Article 15 of the CFP sets out the obligation to retain all species subject to catch limits or minimum sizes<sup>19</sup> caught either in European Union (EU) waters or by Union fishing vessels outside EU waters without prejudice to international obligations. The LO was implemented in phases:

- 2015 – the landing obligation began to cover small and large pelagic species, industrial fisheries and the main fisheries in the Baltic.
- 2016 – it was extended to demersal fisheries for the North Sea and the Atlantic.
- 2019 – full implementation, i.e. land all species subject to catch limits and, in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, to minimum conservation reference sizes (MCRS).

The EMFF (EU Regulation 508/2014) has general and specific measures designed to support the implementation of the LO. The EMFF introduced, among other measures, a focus on increased gear selectivity, with gear technology development and sea trials continuing the work started under the EFF in 2007-2013.

Actions to support the LO include for example:

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<sup>18</sup> The other three pillars being international policy, market and trade policy, and funding of the policy.

<sup>19</sup> As defined in Annex III to Regulation (EC) No. 1967/2006.

- improved selectivity of fishing gear to minimise unwanted catches,
- specific on-board equipment, and/or
- adaptation of landing sites to handle and commercialise unwanted catches.

However, there is no explicit LO earmarking at the level of individual operations. In May 2018 FAME completed a report on the implementation of LO-relevant measures under the EFF and EMFF. The approach to identifying relevant operations was based on:

- the relevance of the measure under which the operation was implemented;
- a combination of relevant Infosys implementation data and/or result indicators such as a “change in unwanted catches”; and
- validation of the above through an interview with the MS authorities.

While this approach proved fruitful, it was also too demanding to be repeated annually. For this reason, FAME introduced two additional ways to identify EMFF contributions to the LO implementation:

- A broad approach based on the measure alone (with the exception of Article 68: Marketing measures, where a combination of measure and operation implementation data is applied) (Table 14 and Table 15). The broad approach is easier to apply but might also include operations that are marginally relevant.
- A narrow approach combining the measure with Infosys operation implementation data. This is harder to apply, but more precise (Table 16). However, it should be assumed that not all operations selected by the narrow approach contribute directly to the LO.

One or other of these two complementary approaches is chosen based on the information required.

**Table 14: EMFF contribution to landing obligation (Infosys – broad approach)**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Article 37	36 899 060	31 582 971	445
Article 38	24 961 643	23 129 463	1 795
Article 39	41 543 280	30 302 588	202
Article 42	62 570 673	53 977 245	2 910
Article 43(2)	19 491 461	17 137 839	64
Article 68 code 118	3 049 406	2 838 392	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>188 515 522</b>	<b>158 968 499</b>	<b>5 447</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

The broad approach takes into account all operations related to the following articles:

- Article 37: Support for the design and implementation of conservation measures;
- Article 38: Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment and adapting fishing to the protection of species (+ Article 44(1)(c) Inland fishing);

- Article 39: Innovation linked to the conservation of marine biological resources (+ Article 44(1)(c) Inland fishing);
- Article 42: Added value, product quality and use of unwanted catches (+ Article 44(1)(e) Inland fishing);
- Article 43(2): Fishing ports, landing sites, auction halls and shelters – investments to facilitate compliance with the obligation to land all catches.

The only exception is operations implemented under Article 68: Marketing measures. Here, only operations with Infosys code 118 (Find new markets and improve marketing) are counted.

According to the broad approach (Table 14), at the end of 2023 MSs selected 5 447 operations with a total EMFF funding of EUR 188.5 million for the landing obligation. In terms of numbers of operations, most were implemented under Article 42 (2 910 operations) and Article 38 (1 795 operations). About one-third of the funding committed to supporting the LO was for operations implemented under Article 42.

**Table 15: EMFF contribution to landing obligation (AIR – broad approach)**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Article 37	37 556 131	31 922 868	442
Article 38	24 939 827	23 235 627	1 868
Article 39	42 286 862	30 242 993	205
Article 42	61 428 779	53 586 965	2 873
Article 43(2)	19 759 342	17 044 600	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>185 970 941</b>	<b>156 033 053</b>	<b>5 454</b>

Source: AIR 2023

A slightly modified approach to the AIR data, with Article 68 (marketing measures) excluded from the calculations, gives the results shown in Table 15.

**Table 16: EMFF contribution to landing obligation (narrow approach)**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Article 37 RI 1.4	14 063 975	11 618 646	251
Article 38 codes 35,36, RI 1.4	9 853 265	9 551 566	676
Article 39 RI 1.4	26 539 518	22 162 370	137
Article 42	62 570 673	53 977 245	2 910
Article 43(2)	19 491 461	17 137 839	64
Article 68 code 118	3 049 406	2 838 392	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>135 568 298</b>	<b>117 286 058</b>	<b>4 069</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

The narrow approach takes into account operations under the same articles described above. However, operations are also selected by means of Infosys codes according to their relevance to the



LO. Operations under Article 37 and Article 39 are taken into account provided they are linked to result indicator 1.4: Change in unwanted catches. Operations under Article 38 are counted provided the following conditions are met: they have Infosys codes 35 (selectivity of gear) or 36 (reduce discards or deal with unwanted catches) and they are linked to RI 1(4): Change in unwanted catches.

According to the narrow approach (Table 16), at the end of 2023 MSs selected 4 069 operations for the LO with a total EMFF funding of EUR 135.6 million. Under Article 37, 251 operations out of 445 were attributed to the LO. For Article 38, the LO figure was 676 out of 1 795 operations. For Article 39, 137 out of 202 operations were clearly connected to the LO.

In 2017 FAME undertook an Ancillary Task (AT) to explore mainly how the EMFF, and to a lesser extent the EFF and other (EU and national) funding, had been used to date by MSs to support the implementation of the LO. In 2021, FAME did a follow-up to this AT. Conclusions drawn are provided in the EMFF implementation report 2020.<sup>20</sup> Another LO-related follow-up AT<sup>21</sup> was performed in 2024. Conclusions of the report are provided in the text box below.

**Conclusions from the FAMENET report “Support on implementation of the landing obligation”**

At the end of the EMFF operational programme implementation, Infosys reports there were 5 447 LO-related operations across 21 coastal Member States, with a total commitment of EUR 185.8 million (of which EUR 159.0 million – 84% – had been spent) by the end of 2023.

At the time of the previous review (using data at the end of 2020), the MSs had committed EUR 147.7 million to 4 111 operations (FAME, 2021). This indicates that 75% of the total operations and 79% of the final commitments had already occurred at the time of that review.

Taking a broad approach to determine LO relevance (by including all expenditure under certain articles) is expected to result in some overestimation of LO-related expenditure. For example, Germany’s significant expenditure under related articles was in fact related to eel stock management measures rather than the LO. As noted previously, this overestimate is balanced out (to an unknown extent) by certain operations under other articles supporting LO implementation. As far as EMFAF monitoring is concerned, it is left to MSs to report which operations are LO-relevant. Finally, EMFF result indicators proved to be ill-suited to capture the EMFF contribution to LO implementation.

*The EMFF common result indicator “change in unwanted catches” – lessons learned:*

*Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No. 1014/2014 defined among others 28 common result indicators; one of them was the indicator “change in unwanted catches” expressed as tonnes or in %.*

*While the indicator seemed ideal to capture the EMFF contribution to LO implementation, the results were not very satisfactory, for various reasons:*

*- the indicator was rather complex and difficult to capture in the field; additionally, beneficiaries might have an incentive to under-report;*

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<sup>20</sup> [https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-09/emff-implementation-report-2020\\_en.pdf](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-09/emff-implementation-report-2020_en.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> EUROPEAN COMMISSION – Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Unit D.3 (2024): FAMENET, Support on implementation of the landing obligation, report, Brussels

- the indicator is subject to many external factors and thus is not fully suitable to capture the direct medium-term effect of the EMFF intervention (for example the reduction in unwanted catches that can be attributed exclusively to a change of fishing gear);

- several errors were made in reporting, for example reporting kilograms (as per custom on board a smaller vessel) instead of tonnes (as per indicator unit) or reporting mixed negative and positive values (a positive value would mean an increase in unwanted catches, where the reporting body probably meant a decrease).

All these factors led to the indicator not being consistently applied to allow for a realistic and robust quantification of the EMFF's impact. Under the EMFAF this was remedied by focusing on marking the operation as LO-relevant in the monitoring, and retaining the impact assessment for the evaluation exercises of the MSs and the European Commission.

In the final three years of the EMFF operational programme implementation, MAs continued to use EMFF funding to support LO implementation. But, as would be expected, commitment rates slowed after peaking in 2020, coinciding with the full implementation of the LO in 2019.

Poland remained the MS with the largest single expenditure on LO-related articles. As reported previously, a large proportion of this money related to the closure of the Baltic cod fishery, with continued support to the sector in dealing with reduced fishing opportunities.

The UK had the second-largest expenditure under LO-related articles. It adopted a comprehensive approach to LO implementation: research and investment in more selective gear along with enhanced checking systems, including vessel monitoring systems (VMSs) for inshore vessels below 12 m in length.

In terms of the impact of the LO, MAs suggested there has been little change since the 2021 report. In most instances the impact of the LO was less than may have been expected considering an MS's reliance on quota species. For several MSs (BE, FR, IT, NL, PT) this is mainly due to their efforts (coordinated through Regional Advisory Councils) to show the need for exemptions based on survivability or de minimis (disproportionate costs would be incurred).

Other MSs (DK, IE, SE, UK) suggest a combination of approaches to LO implementation; the sector and fisheries management authorities worked towards seeking exemptions, but they also noted significant behavioural changes and the adoption of more selective gear.

For Baltic MSs, the impact of the LO was lessened due to the effective closure of the main demersal fishery, Baltic cod. The remaining species subject to quota are mainly small pelagics, which are less problematic in terms of by-catch.

LO-related activities funded by the EMFF fall within four main areas:

- \* survivability of discards (fundamental for eligibility for derogations),
- \* gear selectivity and net innovations,
- \* supporting research, and
- \* processing and marketing (of unwanted catch).

MSs for which the LO was likely to have significant impact recognise that the EMFF did help the sector deal with implementing it. Without EMFF support, the negative impact of the LO on the sector would have been greater (e.g. EMFF-funded research to evidence exemptions) and the fishing industry's change in response to the LO (e.g. its adoption of more selective gear) would have been slower. More

broadly, operations implemented under EMFF Article 76 'Control and enforcement' and Article 77 'Data collection' in each MS have contributed to LO implementation

MAs have also implemented multiple management measures, such as improved quota management systems, international quota swaps, awareness-raising within the industry, and other fisheries management developments to help the sector cope with the LO.

Some MSs noted changes in support since the previous review. BE reported a shift from managing by-catch volumes towards reducing by-catch through more selective gear. DK also noted that the emphasis changed from dealing with the anticipated immediate consequences of landing unwanted catch towards innovative gear to avoid this by-catch, as well as on doing more with what is landed. ES saw demand for LO-related investments reduce and re-allocated funds away from these Articles.

The EMFF operations reflect both the anticipated impact of LO implementation and the sector needs resulting from it:

- \* investments in anticipation of having to deal with the landing of unwanted catch;
- \* research effort to provide evidence for exemptions related to survivability and de minimis;
- \* development and testing of gear with improved selectivity;
- \* adoption of more selective gear to the extent necessary after exemptions and other policy levers are applied.

Overall, MAs recognise that the EMFF played an important role in enabling European fisheries to continue catching fish as the landing obligation was implemented. The stark outcome of fishing fleets having to stop fishing after becoming 'choked' by a lack of quota did not materialise. This continuation was achieved by utilising several policy levers and developing an evidence base to gain exemptions, as well as by increasing gear selectivity to reduce by-catch.

For the EMFAF the intent stated by MAs is generally 'more of the same', with an expectation that overall demand will be less as the industry has mostly come to terms with LO requirements – although it faces many other ongoing challenges, such as fuel costs and labour. For some MSs, increased use of an LO-related EMFAF measure is expected to support small-scale fishing fleets in managing the impact of the LO.

With the introduction of the new EU control regulation, which aims to ensure more effective control of the LO requirements, there is a focus across all MSs on improved fisheries control. This includes the digitalisation of control operations and the limited adoption of remote electronic monitoring in 2028. The EMFAF will be critical in supporting the MSs' control authorities and the industry in adopting new control requirements. With increased scrutiny of LO compliance, the EMFAF may well be required to support the further adoption of more selective gear.

### *2.2.15.3 Innovation*

The EMFF supports investment in innovation to increase the competitiveness and economic performance of fishing activities and aquaculture, and to conserve marine biological resources.

Operations related to innovation were selected by all 27 MSs: in total 1 440 operations with a total EMFF budget of EUR 302.2 million (Table 17). Around half of all the commitments to innovation related to aquaculture (Article 47). Amongst the MSs, FR committed the most (EUR 47.3 million),

followed by PT (EUR 30.7 million), ES (EUR 30.0 million) and NL (EUR 27.8 million). The average size of EMFF commitment to an innovation operation was EUR 209 869. The average size of EMFF commitment to an innovation operation under Article 26 (Innovation) was EUR 150 418; under Article 28 (Partnerships between fishermen and scientists) it was EUR 235 403; under Article 39 (Innovation linked to the conservation of marine biological resources) – EUR 205 660; and under Article 47 (Innovation) – EUR 234 225.

**Table 17: EMFF contribution to innovation**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
Article 26	53 934 256	53 097 429	98.4	37 618 144	69.7	353
Article 28	56 673 756	56 261 431	99.3	44 463 649	78.5	239
Article 39	40 704 817	41 543 280	102.1	30 302 588	74.4	202
Article 47	144 747 209	151 309 539	104.5	108 462 281	74.9	646
<b>Total</b>	<b>296 060 037</b>	<b>302 211 679</b>	<b>102.1</b>	<b>220 846 662</b>	<b>74.6</b>	<b>1 440</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

#### 2.2.15.4 Natura 2000

The EMFF supports operations to protect and restore marine biodiversity and ecosystems in the framework of sustainable fishing activities. The EMFF contains, under shared management, a series of measures directly or potentially supporting the Natura 2000 network (Table 18). Directly related measures are Article 40(1)(b-g,i) (Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity – Natura 2000 sites), Article 40(1)(h) (Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity – schemes for compensation of damage to catches caused by mammals and birds), Article 54 (Aquaculture providing environmental services), and Article 80(1)(b) (Promotion of the protection of the marine environment, and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources).

**Table 18: EMFF contribution to Natura 2000 (directly related EMFF measures)**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
Article 40(1)(b-g,i)	222 838 966	254 491 708	114.2	195 453 917	87.7	2 978
Article 40(1)(h)	5 746 948	6 203 333	107.9	6 168 523	107.3	2 931
Article 54	102 429 752	100 094 307	97.7	96 698 980	94.4	2 104
Article 80(1)(b)	12 955 540	11 940 927	92.2	10 820 823	83.5	81
<b>Total</b>	<b>343 971 206</b>	<b>372 730 276</b>	<b>108.4</b>	<b>309 142 242</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>8 094</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

In 8 094 operations, the MSs together committed EUR 372.7 million to these measures. The biggest contributors are ES with EUR 77.9 million and PL with EUR 52.4 million in commitments. FI has the highest number of operations (1 588). Of the total EMFF budget committed to the articles directly related to Natura 2000, Article 40(1)(b-g,i) and Article 54 jointly account for 95%.

**Table 19: EMFF contribution to Natura 2000 (potentially contributing EMFF measures)**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
Article 28	56 673 756	56 261 431	106.5	44 463 649	84.1	239
Article 38	25 411 965	24 961 643	87.2	23 129 463	80.8	1 795
Article 39	40 704 817	41 543 280	98.1	30 302 588	71.5	202
Article 40(1)(a)	22 351 825	23 658 743	100.5	21 753 638	92.4	667
Article 80(1)(c)	32 789 547	32 655 411	96.0	31 043 311	91.3	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>181 417 067</b>	<b>179 080 508</b>	<b>98.7</b>	<b>150 692 649</b>	<b>83.1</b>	<b>3 065</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

Articles directly related to the implementation of the Natura 2000 network are further analysed according to their type of operation in section 2.2.5 of this report.

Table 19 lists the EMFF measures that potentially support the implementation of the Natura 2000 network. Potentially supporting measures are Article 28 (Partnerships between fishermen and scientists), Article 38 (Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment and adapting fishing to the protection of species), Article 39 (Innovation linked to the conservation of marine biological resources), Article 40(1)(a) (Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity – collection of lost fishing gear and marine litter) and Article 80(1)(c) (Improving the knowledge on the state of the marine environment).

In total, EUR 551.8 million of EMFF funding has been committed and EUR 459.8 million spent under measures directly or potentially supporting the Natura 2000 network.

#### 2.2.15.5 Biodiversity

A wide range of EMFF measures potentially contribute to protection and restoration of biodiversity (Table 20). Taking this range of measures into account, MSs committed EUR 2 176 million of EMFF funding over a total of 66 697 operations.

**Table 20: EMFF contribution to biodiversity**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate (%)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate (%)	Number of operations
Article 33	233 773 619	240 378 944	102.8	224 805 659	96.2	48 286
Article 34	93 962 155	120 380 331	128.1	92 058 183	98.0	1 825
Article 36	8 616 212	9 465 575	109.9	8 294 798	96.3	21
Article 37	33 734 467	36 899 060	109.4	31 582 971	93.6	445
Article 38	25 411 965	24 961 643	98.2	23 129 463	91.0	1 795
Article 39	40 704 817	41 543 280	102.1	30 302 588	74.4	202
Article 40(1)(a)	22 351 825	23 658 743	105.8	21 753 638	97.3	667
Article 40(1)(b-g,i)	222 838 966	254 491 708	114.2	195 453 917	87.7	2 978
Article 40(1)(h)	5 746 948	6 203 333	107.9	6 168 523	107.3	2 931
Article 42	59 022 712	62 570 673	106.0	53 977 245	91.5	2 910
Article 49	16 103 921	18 789 601	116.7	12 104 741	75.2	133
Article 54	102 429 752	100 094 307	97.7	96 698 980	94.4	2 104
Article 76	472 272 184	564 695 559	119.6	418 009 021	88.5	1 865
Article 77	586 072 784	626 781 402	106.9	550 691 926	94.0	292
Article 80(1)(b)	12 955 540	11 940 927	92.2	10 820 823	83.5	81
Article 80(1)(c)	32 789 547	32 655 411	99.6	31 043 311	94.7	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 968 787 414</b>	<b>2 175 510 497</b>	<b>110.5</b>	<b>1 806 895 787</b>	<b>91.8</b>	<b>66 697</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

#### 2.2.15.6 Outermost regions

In line with EMFF Article 70, the EMFF may support the compensation of additional costs incurred by operators in the fishing, farming, processing and marketing of certain fishery and aquaculture products from the outermost regions. EMFF Article 13 (5) stipulates that in total EUR 192.5 million of the budgetary resources under shared management shall be allocated to the compensation of outermost regions.

In the context of this report, to yield an overview of the EMFF contribution to the outermost regions all operations implemented by ES, FR and PT with the relevant Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) codes were selected.

ES, FR and PT supported 7 087 operations in the outermost regions with a total committed EMFF budget of EUR 283.8 million (EUR 268.5 million as of the end of 2022) (Table 21). Most of these were from PT: 4 985 operations with a total EMFF contribution of EUR 105.4 million. PT was followed by FR with 1 524 operations and EUR 120.6 million committed.

**Table 21: EMFF contribution to the outermost regions**

MS/Outermost region	NUTS code	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
<b>ES</b>		<b>57 844 307</b>	<b>52 305 408</b>	<b>578</b>
Gran Canaria	ES705	35 073 881	31 097 699	327
Tenerife	ES709	22 770 426	21 207 709	251
<b>FR</b>		<b>120 561 620</b>	<b>99 986 537</b>	<b>1 524</b>
Guadeloupe	FRA10	13 043 397	6 325 497	371
Martinique	FRA20	8 995 441	5 559 958	260
French Guiana	FRA30	32 840 479	27 591 220	257
La Réunion	FRA40	57 989 615	54 397 341	243
Saint-Martin	FRA50	7 692 688	6 112 521	393
<b>PT</b>		<b>105 399 078</b>	<b>94 455 410</b>	<b>4 985</b>
Azores	PT200	78 059 062	68 718 307	4 383
Madeira	PT300	27 340 017	25 737 103	602
<b>Total</b>		<b>283 805 005</b>	<b>246 747 355</b>	<b>7 087</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

#### 2.2.15.7 Mitigation of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and compensation related to the Ukraine crisis

The European Parliament and the Council have proposed a set of ambitious measures under the EMFF to support EU fisheries and aquaculture in tackling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The package includes support for the temporary cessation of fishing activities due to the pandemic, support to aquaculture farmers for the suspension of production and additional costs, and support to producer organisations for the storage of fishery and aquaculture products. To enable tracking of the uptake of these measures, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1027 introduced a new field into Infosys: Field 25 “Mitigation of the COVID-19 outbreak”.

In 2023 only a few new COVID-19 related operations were reported. At the end of 2023 in total 22 179 operations were marked as COVID-19 related. At the end of 2022 the number of such operations was 21 843. Overall commitments also grew only slightly, from EUR 209.8 million in 2022 to EUR 211.9 million in 2023 (corresponding to 3.7% of total EMFF allocation).

Most of the COVID-19 related support was provided via temporary cessations (Article 33) – 19 327 operations (corresponding to 87.1% of the total COVID-19 related operations) implemented under this article accounted for EUR 125.2 million or 59.1% of the total COVID-19 related commitments. Under Article 55 (Public health measures), 2 357 operations totalling EUR 40.3 million of the total COVID-19 related operations were reported as COVID-19 related. These two articles accounted for 98% of the total reported number of operations and 78% of total EMFF commitments related to COVID-19. It is worth noting that 40.0% of all operations and 52.1% of all commitments under Article 33 relate to COVID-19. Eight out of every ten operations implemented under Article 55 relate to COVID-19. The

average amount of EMFF funding committed for each COVID-19 related operation was EUR 9 554. The average amount of EMFF funding committed for each COVID-19 related operation under Article 33 was EUR 6 478, but for Article 55 it was EUR 17 116.

**Table 22: EMFF contributions to COVID-19 pandemic support measures per EMFF Article**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations	Number of operations (COVID)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (COVID) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (COVID) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)
Article 28	56 673 756	239	5	56 261 431	401 294	44 463 649	294 713
Article 29(1)(2)	19 591 098	1 445	1	20 111 274	5 601	15 724 022	5 601
Article 32	46 423 985	3 811	57	51 260 711	386 600	42 153 963	387 307
Article 33	233 773 619	48 286	19 327	240 378 944	125 194 725	224 805 659	116 111 263
Article 40(1)(b-g,i)	222 838 966	2 978	1	254 491 708	58 428	195 453 917	53 720
Article 41(1)(a-c)	14 904 640	1 270	1	17 008 749	1 444	12 995 600	1 444
Article 43(1,3)	376 755 503	1 736	38	489 365 226	919 030	307 328 890	872 235
Article 47	144 747 209	646	3	151 309 539	196 314	108 462 281	178 260
Article 48(1)(a-d,f-h)	511 157 320	7 191	3	573 785 035	6 982 532	449 514 849	6 980 220
Article 55	66 235 076	2 831	2 357	65 533 379	40 342 550	62 374 392	38 763 216
Article 63 CLLD	565 689 178	14 367	4	624 200 544	105 638	417 067 691	100 437
Article 66	128 925 673	676	8	127 809 456	1 718 121	113 467 974	1 536 465
Article 67	25 677 779	78	12	16 060 022	5 015 476	15 895 814	5 007 637
Article 68	427 809 617	28 871	66	382 182 808	830 688	341 317 101	829 034
Article 69	556 706 650	3 655	295	590 239 519	29 271 368	485 794 856	28 527 172
Article 78	251 024 173	2 273	1	253 774 031	468 613	209 647 594	398 304
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 648 934 243</b>	<b>120 353</b>	<b>22 179</b>	<b>3 913 772 375</b>	<b>211 898 421</b>	<b>3 046 468 251</b>	<b>200 047 027</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

In total, 21 MSs provided support for their fisheries and aquaculture sectors to mitigate the COVID-19 outbreak.

Table 23 demonstrates that EL has the highest number of operations related to COVID-19 – in total 6 842 operations or nearly one-third of all “coronavirus-related” operations. It is also worth mentioning that slightly more than one-third of all operations implemented in EL are “coronavirus-related”. However, in terms of amount this corresponds to EUR 30.0 million, or about 5% of Greece’s total commitments.

EL is followed by IT (4 408 operations and EUR 15.3 million in commitments), ES (3 369 operations and EUR 34.2 million) and PL (2 056 operations and EUR 59.5 million). PL has a 28.0% share of all COVID-19 related commitments.

The average amount committed to a single COVID-19 related operation is slightly less than EUR 10 000. The highest average amount committed per COVID-19 related operation is in EE (EUR 65 383) and the lowest in IE (EUR 1 640).



**Table 23: EMFF contributions to COVID-19 pandemic support measures per MS**

MS	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations	Number of operations (COVID)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (COVID) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (COVID) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)
BE	41 746 051	393	42	49 875 977	368 438	37 786 577	363 375
BG	80 823 727	931	296	80 239 945	4 337 284	55 815 936	4 152 497
CY	39 715 209	1 589	499	47 103 415	1 996 107	34 819 768	1 843 548
CZ	31 108 015	1 247	32	33 001 718	2 092 249	28 346 720	2 050 066
DE	219 596 276	4 178	335	199 973 398	2 051 556	193 385 864	2 036 556
EE	100 970 418	2 293	32	95 996 766	2 099 033	93 643 876	2 099 033
EL	379 745 523	19 785	6 842	572 400 074	29 978 240	292 585 891	29 849 997
ES	1 057 143 957	31 624	3 369	1 049 472 053	34 190 300	958 475 240	33 490 830
FR	587 980 173	7 194	1 795	610 889 284	23 379 197	500 788 641	20 731 679
HR	252 643 138	6 350	668	311 726 643	14 577 141	194 798 994	14 380 646
IE	147 601 979	3 717	93	145 537 847	152 475	144 151 868	152 475
IT	537 262 559	24 595	4 408	610 106 818	15 305 150	430 494 190	14 285 314
LT	63 432 222	1 066	60	62 325 595	986 033	53 840 346	986 033
LV	139 833 742	1 357	101	137 006 569	1 827 504	118 866 393	1 827 504
NL	101 523 244	535	290	110 125 276	4 710 901	73 420 996	4 146 601
PL	531 219 456	15 678	2 056	604 275 995	59 531 406	436 755 999	53 390 603
PT	392 485 464	11 056	910	447 243 000	9 321 548	373 128 875	9 243 310
RO	168 421 371	903	39	162 761 937	1 740 216	129 604 264	1 742 773
SE	120 156 004	1 061	54	100 583 023	317 333	107 463 509	378 618
SI	21 777 441	258	50	22 228 362	547 543	21 064 912	547 030
UK	243 139 437	3 042	208	244 748 927	2 388 767	209 624 916	2 348 540
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 258 325 406</b>	<b>138 852</b>	<b>22 179</b>	<b>5 697 622 622</b>	<b>211 898 421</b>	<b>4 488 863 775</b>	<b>200 047 027</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

EMFF implementation in 2022 was also impacted by another adverse event: market disruptions related to the military aggression of Russia against Ukraine.

Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014 was amended as regards specific measures to alleviate the consequences of the military aggression of Russia against Ukraine on fishing activities and to mitigate the effects of the market disruption caused by that military aggression on the supply chains of fishery and aquaculture products. To enable tracking of the uptake of these measures, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1027 introduced a new code in Infosys field 25.

**Table 24: EMFF contributions to Ukraine crisis mitigation measures**

MS	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations	Number of operations (UA-crisis)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (UA-crisis) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (UA-crisis) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)
BG	80 823 727	931	135	80 239 945	3 225 115	55 815 936	2 082 300
DE	219 596 276	4 178	208	199 973 398	1 279 016	193 385 864	1 279 016
EE	100 970 418	2 293	53	95 996 766	2 130 136	93 643 876	2 130 136
ES	1 057 143 957	31 624	4 379	1 049 472 053	21 645 517	958 475 240	20 371 276
HR	252 643 138	6 350	1 729	311 726 643	21 089 672	194 798 994	21 086 269
IT	537 262 559	24 595	3 113	610 106 818	25 204 358	430 494 190	15 702 656
LT	63 432 222	1 066	160	62 325 595	2 985 146	53 840 346	2 985 146
LV	139 833 742	1 357	30	137 006 569	2 092 177	118 866 393	2 092 177
PL	531 219 456	15 678	2 913	604 275 995	49 026 131	436 755 999	47 440 955
PT	392 485 464	11 056	3 684	447 243 000	34 148 452	373 128 875	34 035 323
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 375 410 959</b>	<b>99 128</b>	<b>16 404</b>	<b>3 598 366 782</b>	<b>162 825 720</b>	<b>2 909 205 714</b>	<b>149 205 253</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

**Two MSs had used this opportunity as of the end of 2022: PT implemented 1 988 operations and committed EUR 8.3 million, while PL recorded 607 operations and EUR 3.3 million in commitments. Uptake of this support increased significantly during 2023. In total 16 404 operations were reported as related to mitigation of the Ukraine crisis (**

Table 24). Total commitments reached EUR 162.8 million (or 2.9% of total EMFF allocation) and EUR 149.2 million had already been paid to beneficiaries. By MS, the highest number of operations (4 379) were implemented in ES and the highest total commitments (EUR 49 million) were in PL. The EU average support per operation related to the Ukraine crisis was EUR 9 926, with the lowest average of EUR 4 943 in ES and the highest average of EUR 69 739 in PL.

#### 2.2.15.8 EMFF support related to diversification

The EMFF can support the maintenance and creation of direct or indirect jobs outside the fishing and aquaculture sectors by helping to diversify the sources of income of fishers and aquaculture operators through the development of complementary activities. This action is part of the EMFF measure dedicated to local development strategies led by local actors.

The EMFF also can support dedicated diversification activities in fisheries and aquaculture.

To evaluate the EMFF contribution to diversification FAMENET applied the following methodology. Under UP1, EMFF Article 30 (Diversification and new forms of income) is considered as entirely

contributing to diversification. The Infosys data structure (fields 20 and 21 in Annex 3) allows screening for operations with type of investment “diversification” for Article 48 (1)(a-d,f-h), and for type of operation “diversification” for Article 63 CLLD (Table 25).

**Table 25: EMFF support related to diversification**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2022)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2022)	Number of operations	Type of investment/type of operation
Article 63	146 880 026	92 728 528	3 679	Diversification
Article 48(1)(a-d,f-h)	10 034 623	7 778 753	140	Diversification
Article 30	6 476 061	4 099 598	178	Angling tourism
Article 30	1 914 683	1 211 481	76	Restaurants
Article 30	1 718 610	1 162 954	85	Investments on board
Article 30	879 042	569 710	32	Educational activities
Article 30	219 425	135 181	11	Environmental services
<b>Total</b>	<b>168 122 470</b>	<b>107 686 205</b>	<b>4 201</b>	

Source: Infosys 2022

Most diversification-related operations were implemented under Article 63 CLLD, with EUR 146.9 million committed. Most of these operations were implemented by four MSs (EL, ES, PL and PT), which together totalled EUR 115.4 million committed towards 2 528 operations.

Under productive investments in aquaculture, 140 operations with EUR 10.0 million in commitments were reported as related to diversification. According to the operations’ names as provided in Infosys reports, examples of these operations include reconstruction of a cottage for accommodation and sport fishing; establishment of a retail store for fish and fish delicacies; installation of a microalgae culture system and greenhouses to produce *Spirulina*; investment in sea cucumber aquaculture; construction of an oyster nursery; and acquisition of a shellfish vending machine.

Operations implemented under EMFF Article 30 (Diversification and new forms of income under UP1) contribute directly to diversification. Through Infosys reporting it is possible to distinguish five types of diversification: angling tourism, restaurants, investment on board, environmental services and educational activities. Table 25 above gives an overview of support provided under EMFF Article 30. In total, EUR 11.2 million was committed towards 382 of these types of diversification operations. Around half of all commitments were directed at developing angling tourism (96% of these were in PL). 76 operations supported the development of restaurants.

In total 4 201 operations and EUR 168.1 million of EMFF commitments contributed to diversification as of the end of 2023.

#### 2.2.16 EMFF common result indicators

Like all the other ESI Funds, the EMFF takes a reinforced result-oriented approach. To achieve this, a Common Monitoring and Evaluation System (CMES) for the EMFF has been introduced, comprising context, result and output indicators, as well as a reinforced intervention logic, milestones and target values.

Data on EMFF result indicators are available from both Infosys reports and AIRs. Both reporting streams have their benefits and constraints. However, Infosys has one significant advantage: reporting is done at the level of individual operations. That provides the opportunity to implement several measures for data quality control. As a consequence, FAMENET is able to provide analysis of EMFF result indicators based on Infosys reports (Annex 5). Result indicators reported in the AIRs are presented in Annex 6.

EMFF result indicators are unusual among the ESI Funds in measuring the gross direct effects of EMFF interventions at the beneficiary level. Such granularity demands diligence and precision in collecting and inserting data into Infosys at the level of individual operations. On the positive side, it offers programme managers, evaluators and policymakers wide-ranging potential to identify promptly what works and at what cost.

The period 2014-2020 was the first time that common result indicators were used on this scale (the EFF 2007-2013 did not use common result indicators). Experience showed that this was a challenging task, especially when aggregating the values of result indicators at MS or EU level, due to a number of formal errors and plausibility issues.<sup>22</sup>

To improve RI data quality, the current version of the FAMENET Infosys validation tool has a total of 20 specific queries – one for each RI – plus one general query applying to all RIs (assessing the gap between ex-ante and ex-post values). Specific queries for single RIs compare costs and achievements. The logic implies that it takes a certain amount of investment to create one unit of result. Queries are designed to flag outliers using benchmarks established at the EU level. Plausibility issues flagged by the validation tool are reported to the MS in question. However, it is often challenging for the MA and/or intermediate body (IB) to rectify the situation, as this may require the reported values to be verified with each beneficiary.

Overall, the number of plausibility issues is decreasing. However, the errors and plausibility issues that remain can reduce the accuracy of the interpretation of RI data when making detailed analyses. One proof of reporting mistakes is the observation that there were significant fluctuations in reported ex-post RI values: in each reporting year, several ex-post RI values decreased despite progress in implementing the OPs.

Several MSs in their AIRs mention other factors impacting reported RI values. In the case of projects that are not yet finalised, for instance, RI values are not yet available. Several types of projects may even take a few years after completion to start delivering results.

In this report FAMENET provides the following analysis related to RIs:

- comparison of reported ex-ante and ex-post values of RIs;
- description of RI use per UP and SO.

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<sup>22</sup> Some examples of formal errors are: use of the national currency where EUR is required; values reported in EUR where “thousand EUR” is required; values reported in kg where tonnes are required; duplication of RI values; missing values; wrong or missing codes (implementation data or result indicator codes); multiple use of codes where only one entry is required, etc.

The first step in the analysis is to compare the ex-ante and ex-post RI values. We looked at the relation between the RI values forecast by beneficiaries before the implementation of the operation (ex-ante) and the results actually achieved (ex-post). FAMENET selected all Infosys entries with values in both ex-ante and ex-post fields and compared the absolute deviation between them (Table 26).

It can be observed that RI data reported in Infosys include a number of entries with a large difference between ex-ante and ex-post values. It can be assumed that at least some of the reported RI values are implausible, in cases where the ex-post value exceeds the ex-ante value by more than 200%. Most of these errors are considered to be of the formal type, such as using the national currency where EUR is required, reporting in EUR where “thousand EUR” is required, or reporting in kg where tonnes are required. A part of these differences may also relate to imprudent planning, unforeseen events during the implementation, or small numbers (for example, ex-ante: one FTE maintained; ex-post: three FTE maintained).

In 1 788 occurrences, over-performance of up to twice the ex-ante value is reported. 2 075 cases report over-performance of less than 200%, most of which could be considered plausible.

**Table 26: RI values: Ex-post values as a percentage of ex-ante values**

Ex-post values as percentage of ex-ante values	Number of occurrences
More than 200% (possibly a reporting error)	1 788
From 100% to 200% (overperformance)	2 075
100% (ex-post and ex-ante values are the same)	30 706
Less than 100% (underperformance)	7 159
Ex-ante and ex-post values are zero (maintained status quo; compulsory common RI not applicable to the operation)	277 501
Reported ex-ante value is non-zero, ex-post value is zero (possibly results are not yet reported)	11 217
Ex-ante value is zero, reported ex-post value is non-zero (possibly the project achieved unexpected results)	5 761
<b>Total</b>	<b>336 207</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

The relatively high number (30 706) of occurrences where ex-post and ex-ante RI values are exactly the same should be viewed with caution. It means that ex-ante forecasts of results to be delivered were extremely precise. In cases where a supported project falls into a wider entrepreneurship activity there may be some degree of subjectivity on which part of the achievement relates directly to the EMFF support.

Underperformance is observed in 7 159 cases.

The biggest group of observations – 277 501 in total – relates to cases where both ex-ante and ex-post RI values are zero. This group more than tripled compared to the 86 320 cases observed in 2020. In the case of an indicator measuring, for example, work-related injuries and accidents, this may simply mean preserving the status quo. In other cases it may indicate that preserving the current employment or volume of production was the best that could be achieved in a negative economic environment. It may also indicate that the applicability of an RI to a particular measure is limited; most operations related to measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak fall into this category.

In 11 217 occurrences, an ex-ante value other than zero is reported and the ex-post value is zero. This can be explained at least partially by assuming that not all operations have yet collected RI data after implementation.

In 5 761 cases the ex-ante value is zero and a non-zero ex-post value is reported. Such a case can be either a mistake, or an admission by the beneficiaries that they achieved unexpected results following the implementation.

The second step of RI analysis concentrates on selected RIs for which the data reported have the least issues related to their plausibility. The analysis is based on the table of EMFF common result indicators reported in Infosys as provided in Annex 5.

- **Union Priority 1 – Promoting environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fisheries<sup>23</sup>**

**SO 1** (Reduction of the impact of fisheries on the marine environment) has two RIs related to change in unwanted catches (RI 1.4.a and RI 1.4.b). Both have issues with reporting positive values instead of negative. “Change” in the sense of a reduction was expected to be expressed as a negative value. However, in Infosys, reduction is sometimes reported as a positive value. As a result, the target of RI 1.4.a is a negative value of 26 628 tonnes, but the ex-ante and ex-post values are positive – 20 825 tonnes and 7 841 tonnes respectively. The total EU result for this RI is mostly impacted by high positive values reported by ES (23 171 tonnes and 12 263 tonnes respectively).

**SO 2** (Protection and restoration of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems) also has two RIs. RI 1.10.a “Change in the coverage of Natura 2000 areas designated under the Birds and Habitats Directives” demonstrates an increase of 39 512 km<sup>2</sup>, which corresponds to 125% of the target value set in the OPs. The biggest contributor is PL with the increase of 37 561 km<sup>2</sup>.

Achievements of **SO 3** (Ensuring a balance between fishing capacity and available fishing opportunities) are measured by RI 1.3 “Change in net profits” and RI 1.6 “Change in the % of unbalanced fleets”. RI 1.3 reports EUR 2.5 million increase in net profits (27% of the target value planned in the OPs).

**SO 4** (Enhancement of the competitiveness and viability of fisheries enterprises, including SSCF, and the improvement of safety and working conditions) has six RIs. Two of these (Change in the value of production; Change in net profits) seem to suffer from frequent errors; common error types are wrong reporting units. As a result, the total value reported under this SO at the EU level of EUR 623 million (or 669% of the target value planned in the OPs) does not seem plausible. For example, ES reported a change in the value of production of EUR 533 million. It may seem that RI “Change in the volume of production” provides a better estimate of the result of EMFF support – in total 12 722 tonnes of additional volume of production were reported at the EU level under this SO. However, this result is heavily impacted by negative values (meaning a decrease of production) reported by several MSs. PT reported a decrease of 61 581 tonnes and HR a decrease of 10 743 tonnes. Under SO 4, the RIs

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<sup>23</sup> Article 6 of the Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council. OJ L 149, 20.5.2014, p. 1–66.

Employment created and Employment maintained report fulfilment of targets at 116% (2 026 FTE) and 159% (30 676 FTE) respectively. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that in some cases the values reported go beyond the direct impact of EMFF support.

Under **SO 5** (Provision of support to strengthen technological development and innovation, including energy efficiency, and knowledge transfer), the values reported for the RI Change in the value of production are most likely erroneous (wrong reporting units) – an increase of EUR 103 million or 869% of the target value planned in the OPs. For example, ES alone reported a change in the value of production of EUR 100 million. Change in net profit under this SO reached EUR 9.2 million, or 52% of the target value planned in the OPs.

Under **SO 6** (Development of professional training, new professional skills and lifelong learning) another 823 jobs were created (98% of the target value) and 6 378 jobs were maintained (176% of the target value).

- **Union Priority 2 – Fostering environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based aquaculture**

Under **SO 1** (Provision of support to strengthen technological development, innovation and knowledge transfer), an increase in volume of aquaculture production of 14 581 tonnes (or 72% of the target value) and an increase of value of aquaculture production of EUR 102 million (or 140% of the target value) were reported. Change in net profit correspond to 41% of its target and reached EUR 4.6 million.

Under **SO 2** (measures: Productive investments in aquaculture and Support to new aquaculture farmers) the reported change in the volume and value of aquaculture production, and the change in net profit, include erroneous data and should not be used for further analysis. For example, ES alone reported an increase in the volume of aquaculture production of 265 688 tonnes; EL and ES reported an increase in the value of aquaculture production of EUR 3 219 million and EUR 1 714 million respectively. Employment created and employment maintained stand at 165% (1 274 FTE) and 117% (9 822 FTE) of their respective target values.

RIs under **SO 3** (covering measures related to energy and resource efficiency; increasing potential of aquaculture sites; and eco-management and organic aquaculture) show a decrease in organic aquaculture of 163 697 tonnes. This result is dominated by a decrease of 173 950 tonnes in SE. The RI for recirculation systems reports a moderate increase of 4.8 million tonnes (or 39% of the target). Targets for employment indicators are partially fulfilled: 677 FTE were created (847% of the target level) and 346 FTE were maintained (12% of the target value).

Under **SO 4** (Aquaculture farms providing environmental services, Public and animal health measures and Aquaculture stock insurance) 500 aquaculture farms provided environmental services (43% of the target value).

Under **SO 5** (the only article under this SO that relates to promoting human capital and networking) there are two RIs: Employment created and Employment maintained. It seems that operations implemented under this SO had limited impact on employment indicators, with 39 new jobs created (11% of the target value) and 821 jobs maintained (35% of the target value).

- **Union Priority 3 – Fostering the implementation of the CFP**

UP3 has two SOs and related RIs: 3(b)(1) Increase in the percentage of fulfilment of data calls and 3(a)(1) Number of serious infringements detected. Note that reporting on these indicators involves additional complexity, as they require supplementary data to be calculated and cannot always be provided by individual beneficiaries. MSs reported 1 899 serious infringements detected, which corresponds to 25% of the target value. Several factors may impact this number – for example, a general decrease in infringements or less intense controls.

- **Union Priority 4 – Increasing employment and territorial cohesion**

UP4 has only one SO, with measures related to local development strategies. According to the reported values, 4 887 jobs were created (146% of the target value). The most jobs were created in PL and ES – 1 131 and 1 116 respectively. A similar trend is also seen for the 11 124 jobs maintained (117% of the target). The most jobs (2 546) were maintained in ES. Successful implementation of CLLD is also confirmed by 1 024 businesses created (136% of the target). The most businesses were created in ES and EL – 371 and 331 respectively.

- **Union Priority 5 – Fostering marketing and processing**

UP5 has two SOs: one relates to improving market organisation and the other to investments in processing and marketing. Both SOs have the same RIs, which are designed to demonstrate the change in volume and value of first sales, both within and outside producer organisations. Compared to other RIs, the values of the UP5 RIs have more exposure to external factors such as price volatility. Reporting on these RIs is therefore challenging, and the values are often erroneous. Most of the errors are due to the wrong measurement units, but it can be assumed that there are further distortions because the RIs include results that go beyond the direct impact of EMFF-supported operations. As a result, the reported values of these RIs should be approached with vigilance.

- **Union Priority 6 – Fostering the implementation of the IMP**

UP6 is the smallest UP in terms of EMFF allocation and it has only one SO: “Development and implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy”. As with UP3, reporting on UP6 indicators involves additional complexity, as it requires supplementary data to be calculated and cannot always be answered by individual beneficiaries. The data quality is also influenced by an additional layer of complexity related to the calculation of percentages. As a result, caution is advised when looking at the reported values of RI 6(1) “Increase in the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) for the surveillance of the EU maritime domain”, RI 6(2)(a) “Change in the coverage of Natura 2000 areas designated under the Birds and Habitats directives” and RI 6(2)(b) “Change in the coverage of other spatial protection measures under Article 13(4) of the Directive 2008/56/EC”.

### **2.2.17 EMFF programme-specific result indicators**

EMFF intervention logic defines rigid links between measures, specific objectives and result indicators. Most MSs have therefore found it necessary to introduce programme-specific RIs into their OPs to fill gaps perceived to exist when measuring results with common result indicators alone, even though the names of the programme-specific RIs are often similar to those of common RIs.



In several cases, programme-specific RIs provide an insight into what a specific MS considers to be the relevant result of an OP implementation. For example, LT provides a value for a relatively complex indicator “Return on investment (ROI) of fishing in the Baltic Sea”. RO introduced indicators which count aquaculture farms and processing entities affected by loss of sales revenue in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic. Some MSs use an indicator tracing the change in consumption of fish and fish products per capita (HU, SK). ES reports the number of subsidised projects, and LV the number of innovations developed.

Data related to programme-specific indicators cannot be aggregated at the EU level. These data are therefore reported in the AIRs, whereas Infosys reporting captures only common RIs. In total, 17 MSs provided at least a target value for 106 different programme-specific RIs in their AIRs. ES listed the highest number of programme-specific indicators (20), followed by PL (15) and HU (12).

The achieved results for programme-specific RIs are distributed as follows: 23 programme-specific RIs achieved less than 10% of the target value; 14 RIs achieved 10-50% of the target; 21 RIs reported 50-100% of the target, and for 48 RIs the target values were over-achieved.

The complete table of all EMFF programme-specific RIs can be found in Annex 7.

### **3 Issues affecting the performance of the programme and corrective measures taken (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013)**

#### **3.1 Issues affecting performance**

This section summarises the main issues highlighted by Member States in their 2023 AIRs, section 4.2.

In general, the fact that 2023 was the year for finalising all EMFF projects has put pressure on all stakeholders – from administrations to beneficiaries – to allocate, implement, and finalise projects and payments.

As in the previous year, in 2023 the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as the most common issue identified by MSs to be affecting EMFF implementation. In particular, the increase in costs of raw materials and energy have led to many projects being abandoned as beneficiaries were not able to meet their commitments. Infrastructure and processing projects were the types of projects most affected. For many beneficiaries it was also not possible to maintain the foreseen time frame for project implementation due to the unstable economic situation and lack of materials. High losses occurred in the aquaculture sector as export to foreign markets is yet not re-established; low selling prices and higher costs for transport and storage also contributed. Problems with licenses were mentioned several times.

Although many MSs have taken action to reduce bureaucracy, lengthy administrative procedures for the beneficiaries are still mentioned as causes for delays and low uptake. In particular, family businesses and SMEs say they suffer from the bureaucratic burden and in some cases have renounced EMFF funding as a result.

High workloads in administrative bodies have negatively impacted implementation; this applies both to staff dealing with programme amendments and those handling certification and payments. Efforts to deal with the number of payments that were behind schedule resulted in extraordinary workloads.

Various MSs mentioned having received several audits (national and European), having to divert human resources to respond to the audit requests, and in some cases blocking expenditure for a certain period.

Other issues mentioned by the MSs include:

- Spain mentions the volcano in La Palma in 2021-2022, an Asiatic seaweed invasion on the south-west coast, pollution and legal issues in the Mar Menor, intense rainfall during fall of 2023 in the north-west, and the reduction of fishing effort in the Mediterranean.
- Malta mentioned that a lack of uptake by fishers for the Ukraine compensation scheme would hinder the full absorption of remaining funds within the OP. The country had previously budgeted EUR 0.5 million.
- The Netherlands mentions that the SCO related to operation of research vessels is being investigated by auditors.
- Hungary mentioned a drought that forced lake-based fish farms to sell their stocks earlier than planned and to carry out unanticipated harvesting.

### 3.2 Corrective measures taken

Below is a summary of the key measures taken to address the issues impacting performance, highlighted by MSs in their AIRs, section 4.2.

Special attention has been paid in 2023 to finalising all projects; in some MSs the MA took a coordinating role to push finalisation of the projects, and intensified communication with the beneficiaries.

Overall, funding has been re-allocated, both within and between UPs, to increase uptake of the EMFF budget. Most MSs launched calls for compensation to mitigate the negative effects of the Ukraine war and the COVID-19 pandemic. Calls for projects were also still being organised in 2023 to increase uptake.

Many MSs said they had intensified their monitoring of the measures where most expenditure is expected, updated their action plans and responded in a timely manner when implementation slowed down. Some MSs undertook evaluations to identify the reasons for the lower absorption of some measures, in order to take action.

SCOs were used to ease the processing of payments (mostly for compensation measures). Additional human resources were also made available for processing applications, and training was delivered to build capacity for EMFF delivery.

To support beneficiaries when projects could not be completed within the original deadlines, some MAs extended the deadlines. On the other hand, to speed up implementation, deadlines for the completion of applications were tightened.

Various MSs mentioned procedural simplifications such as electronic processing of applications and an updated payment request form.

Other solutions mentioned by MSs include:

- France (South region) developed a schedule for advance payments;
- Bulgaria reallocated budgets within the UPs and amended its programme accordingly;
- Croatia's MA contracted external experts to support certain procedures such as checks on public procurement procedures and works at fishing ports;
- Poland simplified its national rules;
- Estonia mentioned the use of financial instruments within UP5;
- Sweden introduced a scrapping aid for cod fishers in the south-eastern Baltic Sea, though there was little interest.

#### **4 Information on serious infringements and remedy actions (Article 114(2) of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014)**

2023 was the last year of OP implementation, and around 85% of available EMFF funding has already been declared by the beneficiaries. However, the number of MSs reporting that they have detected serious infringements remains low, as does the number of individual infringements. It can be concluded that MSs have established well-functioning detection and reporting systems to protect the system from ineligible beneficiaries.

Information presented in this AIR section varies significantly between MSs in terms of the level of detail provided. Examples of measures taken to detect infringements as described in section 5 of the AIR are presented below.

AT, BE, BG, CZ, EL, HR, HU, LT, LV, MT, NL, RO, SK and UK stated that no serious infringements were detected – either for the entire period from 2014 to 2023 or during the last reporting year of 2023.

**BG** noted that its MA appointed two staff members to be responsible for verifying fraud alerts and administering irregularities. If an infringement is established, an irregularity is recorded in the Information System for the Management and Monitoring of European Structural and Investment Funds. The MA then notifies the competent authorities if there is suspicion of a criminal offence, and takes action to recover any funds that have been wrongly paid, overpaid, received or misused. It also reports irregularities to the Ministry of the Interior and provides updates as the cases develop.

The MA has included eligibility requirements related to infringements in the calls for proposals. These include the requirements of sections 1, 2 and 3 of Article 10 of the EMFF Regulation; a mandatory declaration completed by beneficiaries when they submit their applications; a declaration from beneficiaries that they are not named in any ongoing irregularities; and an acknowledgement that they are familiar with the definition of fraud.

**CY** has set up specific procedures to monitor and audit beneficiaries for serious infringements in line with Articles 10(1) of EU regulation 508/2014. In particular, the likelihood of an infringement is checked before funding is paid to the beneficiaries. In this AIR section CY also provides information related to infringement cases for each year of EMFF implementation.

In **CZ** the rules for applicants include a summary of measures designed to ensure compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy, including corrective measures. Applicants must also provide affidavits related to compliance with the rules. CZ also adopted a fraud prevention directive covering multiple areas. The fraud report was produced twice a year and covered the topics of fraud risk identification and fraud risk assessment.

**DE** has established comprehensive fraud prevention measures within its management and control systems. The preventive measures include checks on applicants before authorisation and during the implementation of the measure, as well as a computerised administrative and control procedure. Applicants must declare in writing that they have not infringed environmental legislation, and this declaration forms an integral part of the funding application.

As part of the durability test under Article 71(1) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, operations are selected randomly. DE considers that the procedure for checking compliance with requirements under

Article 10 is time-consuming and still extends far (up to five years) into the ex-post support period. In this context, DE administrative authorities are concerned that potential applicants may have the impression that they are being put under general suspicion when they submit their applications. Information procedures under German law (data protection) are also complicated, bringing additional costs to both administrators and beneficiaries. For certain aspects (environmental crimes, animal welfare offences) there is no mechanism for obtaining information from the relevant authorities.

**DK** provided detailed information on its assessment of infringements for the years 2021 to 2023. Systematic admissibility assessment includes the following investigations: whether an operator has committed serious infringements; whether an operator has operated, managed or owned fishing vessels included in the Union IUU vessel list; and, working with the relevant municipalities, whether an applicant has infringed environmental laws.

When submitting applications for grants under the EMFF programme, applicants must include a signed declaration of admissibility and the non-fraudulent nature of the operator. The MA has published specific guidance on the admissibility of applications for support under the EMFF, focusing on serious infringements covered by the points system.

**EL** reports several national-level circulars and decisions to facilitate compliance with the requirements of Article 10 of the EMFF Regulation. Beneficiaries are required to sign a statement confirming their compliance with these requirements.

The **ES** MA has implemented an action protocol and requires each beneficiary to present a signed statement that the requirements of Article 10 of the EMFF regulation are fulfilled. The IBs must verify these statements before approving an operation. A module allowing IBs to connect to the relevant infractions database is under development and will be functional within the 2021-2027 period. To explain the system of infringements in Spanish legislation and its relationship with European regulations, the MA and the SG for Legal Affairs and International Fisheries Governance, which is responsible for the Register, prepared a report available on the EMFF website. Of 54 878 grant applications received during the programme implementation, only 823 or 2.5% related to serious infringement.

ES claims that verification procedures cause delays in the management of EMFF support since the processes are difficult to automate, take up staff time and involve the participation of several institutional bodies.

**FI** provided a list of bodies responsible for implementing Article 10 requirements. FI also provided information on possible infringement cases currently under investigation and infringement decisions taken earlier during the programme implementation.

In **FR** accordance with Article 10(5) of the EMFF Regulation – verification of the situation of the beneficiary – is checked at two levels. A declaration of conformity by the beneficiary is first required, and then the instructing department systematically verifies these declarations. This procedure is included in the procedure manual and requires the investigating service to check for three types of malpractice: fishing offences (Article 10 of the EMFF Regulation); offences relating to environmental protection; and fraud committed within the framework of the EFF and/or the EMFF. In addition, tools were reinforced in 2021 to verify the absence of offences after the completion of the operation – systematic monitoring is planned for a period of five years.

In **HU** no serious infringements have been identified so far. However, the Hungarian MA provided detailed information related to several cases of irregularities. HU also reports the most common reasons for irregularities, including non-eligible costs, operations not implemented according to the rules, violations of public procurement procedure and non-fulfilment of the commitment undertaken.

The **IE** Sea Fisheries Protection Authority maintains a National Register of Infringements which contains the information required under Article 10(1)(a) of the EMFF Regulation. The register allows each application to be checked by an intermediate body for admissibility under Article 10. Separately, as required by Article 10(5) of the EMFF, applicants for grant aid under all schemes are required to declare that none of the criteria specified in Article 10(1) apply to them, or if they do, to specify details of their infringements, convictions etc.

In **IT**, national decrees set modalities, terms and procedures for the application of the points system for serious infringements. Italy has implemented a fully digitised national register of infringements which produces individual inspection reports that can be provided to other Member States on request. During the reporting period 191 case of serious infringements were reported under Article 42 of Regulation (EC) No. 1005/2008 and Article 90(1) of Regulation (EC) No. 1224/2009 for a total number of 627 points awarded.

In **LT** the Fisheries Service under the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for reporting to the IB serious violations of the rules of the CFP provided for in Article 10(1)(a-c) of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014. The infringement register is integrated into the fisheries data information system. Measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing are published on the Fisheries Service website. Like several other MSs, also LT asks grant applicants to sign a declaration confirming compliance with the criteria referred to in Article 10(1) of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014 and confirming that no fraud is committed in relation to the EFF or the EMFF.

**LV** has established an integrated fisheries control and information system which includes information on fisheries inspections carried out, infringements detected and penalties imposed. Information on conditions for receiving support, and on cases where MSs or beneficiaries have failed to ensure compliance and corrective action has been taken, is available on the IB's website.

**PL** applies a system of financial fines for violations of sea fishing regulations. In addition, the Sea Fisheries Act of 19 December 2014 regulates penalties for serious violations of the CFP. Pursuant to Article 93 of Council Regulation No. 1224/2009, an electronic register of breaches of CFP regulations, including serious infringements, was created. In 2023 PL detected seven serious infringements of the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), all concerning overfishing. Administrative proceedings are ongoing.

**PT** has implemented individual registration of infringements. In 2017 a decree established a points system for serious infringements. This was refined in 2019 with a sanctions regime applicable to commercial maritime fishing at any stage of production, including processing, marketing, industry, transport, import, export, re-export and re-import of fishery products, and to the marketing of aquaculture products.

The National Fisheries Authority makes every effort to comply with the requirements set out in the Control Action Plan, which includes coordinating the monitoring of fishing activity based on an electronic platform known as the Integrated System for Monitoring and Control of Fishing Activities.

This supports surveillance, supervision and control of fishing activities at national level, and defines the competent entities and participants in the system.

To ensure compliance with the conditions for the admissibility of applications as laid down in Article 10 of the EMFF Regulation, the Directorate-General for Natural Resources, Security and Maritime Services sends the MA information on potential beneficiaries during the application process, and updates this during the certification of expenditure.

SI's national implementing regulations ensure compliance with the CFP rules. Data on serious infringements referred to in Article 10(1) of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014 are obtained when the MA verifies applicants' data in the national register of infringements kept by the national Inspectorate for Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fisheries. Business entities applying for support for aquaculture must submit a signed statement that they have not committed fraud under the rules of the EFF or the EMFF. The national implementing regulations also stipulate that during the implementation of an operation, and five years after the last payment of funds, the beneficiary must not be convicted of a criminal offence. To certify that, the beneficiaries submit a statement that they have not committed the relevant criminal offence when they submit each progress report, and the IB can verify this in court.

During the verification of grant applications submitted in 2023, two applicants were excluded from the right to financial compensation under the measure for the conflict in Ukraine due to infringements attracting an excessive number of points.

## 5 Information on actions taken to ensure the publication of beneficiaries (Article 114(2) of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014)

All MSs reported having made their lists of supported beneficiaries available on a dedicated website.

Other information describing wider publicity measures provided in this AIR section includes:

- In **BE** a variety of channels are used to disseminate different types of information about the EMFF, including broad media and press, project symposia, stakeholder meetings, publications, events and multimedia platforms. The development of the E-counter was continued. The new PESCA IT system was also put into operation; its functionality will be expanded both on the customer side and in terms of the internal processing of files and the reporting and publication of data.
- **BG** provides real-time information on beneficiaries through the UMIS 2020 e-system (Unified Information Portal of the European Structural and Investment Funds, [www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg)). Information on application conditions, open procedures, ranked and abandoned projects, and the activities of the MC are published on UMIS, and BG also shares statistical data on the usage of this website. Communication activities focus on promoting good practices among the general public and publishing information on successful projects supported by the EMFF.
- In **CY**, **FR** and **EL** the published list of selected operations is updated every six months.
- **DE** publishes the list of project data in accordance with Article 119 and Appendix V of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014 every six months. The requirement for a 'single website or web portal' (Article 119(1)(a) of the EMFF Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014) is met by the EMFF sub-page of the Fisheries Portal (<https://www.portal-fischerei.de/bund/fischereipolitische-schwerpunkte/europaeischer-meeres-und-fischereifonds-2014-2020>).
- **EE** updates information required by Article 119 and Annex V at the beginning of each month, and this is available on the website of the Agricultural Registers and Information Board. The Fisheries Information Centre plays a crucial role in coordinating the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, facilitating cooperation between fishers and researchers, and managing studies and experimental projects. EE also provided a list of communication activities implemented during the reporting period.
- In addition to the list of selected operations, **IT** also provides implementation data on the Open Coesione website ([www.opencoesione.it](http://www.opencoesione.it)) in the form of a dashboard with interactive graphics and maps.
- **LV** provides all the necessary information and publicity measures in accordance with Article 114(2)(e) of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014 and Paragraph 1 of Annex V. Information on approved projects and summaries is available on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture (MA) and the Rural Support Service (IB). The information is also published in compliance with the requirements of Article 119(2) of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014, Articles 58-61 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 908/2014, and Articles 111-117 of Regulation (EU) No. 1306/2013. This information is also accessible on the websites of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Rural Support Service.
- **PL**'s MA and designated IBs carried out promotional activities to tell potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the OP and to inform citizens about the role and achievements of the EMFF. This included publishing a list of operations funded under the 2014-2020 FISH OP. PL also provided lists of communication activities implemented by the MA and IBs.



- The SI MA publishes and regularly updates information on the implementation of the OP on its EMFF website ([www.ribiski-sklad.si](http://www.ribiski-sklad.si)). The MA updates the list of beneficiaries after each selection of operations or any change in the published operations. An electronic mailbox has been established for communication with applicants, beneficiaries and other interested parties.

Several MSs (AT, CZ, FR, PL, SI) noted restrictions in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) or national legislation regarding publishing the names of individuals.

## **6 Activities in relation to the evaluation plan and synthesis of the evaluations (Article 114(2)) of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014, Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013)**

CFP Article 50(2) stipulates that the AIR should provide a synthesis of the findings of all evaluations of the OP that have become available during the previous financial year.

Similar to the preceding AIRs, information presented in this AIR section varies significantly amongst the MSs in terms of the level of detail provided. Several MSs provided information on evaluations completed before 2022 and referred to the final evaluation of the programme implementation. Several activities described in this AIR section can be attributed more to monitoring than to evaluation. In some cases, audit activities and implementation of action plans are also reported.

There follows a non-exhaustive compilation of evaluation findings and recommendations for selected MSs:

### **AT**

The mid-term evaluation for the 2014-2018 period was completed. Subsequently, the information provided by AT mainly pertains to programme monitoring. The progress of the programme is continuously monitored, focusing on developing essential output and result indicators. In 2023 both the MA and the IB concluded that the values of the result indicators demonstrate the desired favourable development and make a significant contribution to the main objective of the Austrian strategy, which is to increase production.

### **BE**

BE reported that apart from the regular functioning of the audit authority, no additional or specific evaluations were carried out in 2023. The ex-post evaluation of the EMFF is planned for 2024.

### **BG**

In this AIR section BG provides detailed information regarding the mid-term evaluations. The aim of the first mid-term evaluation was to examine the degree of implementation of the Maritime and Fisheries Programme by assessing the degree of resource use, the efficiency and effectiveness of EMFF programming, the socio-economic impact and its impact on community priorities. The BG MA lists several recommendations and actions undertaken to address these recommendations.

A second mid-term evaluation assessed results achieved from 2019 to 2020 by analysing the following issues: the extent to which resources are used; performance; the effectiveness of EMFF programming; socio-economic impact and its impact on community priorities. The following recommendations regarding the management of the Programme, information and publicity and programming of the next programming period are given: to minimise the administrative burden when applying for and managing funded projects; to focus on the specific communication needs of the target groups; to strengthen the presence of the MFP 2014-2020 in social networks; and to maintain the model for conducting online information campaigns and discussions.

Regarding the new programming period of 2021-2027, BG noted that the evaluation plan has already been approved.

## **CY**

CY commissioned external experts to implement the evaluation plan in September 2018 and the first evaluation of procedures took place in the same year. The main findings of the evaluation relate to the fact that involving partners from representative sectors is considered very important for the programme, since this achieves effective coverage of various issues during the design and implementation. Projects were evaluated during the second cycle of evaluation actions.

The evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the SO of UPs 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 was carried out in 2019.

In 2021, the second evaluation of procedures and the impact assessment at UP level were implemented. It was concluded that the progress of OP implementation is impacted by those measures where interest from the beneficiaries is not sufficient. It was also noted that compared to the previous evaluation, the OP has matured and there is more experience on the part of both executives and beneficiaries. As a result, issues that affected implementation (e.g. delays) were resolved. However, the workload increased significantly at this stage of the OP and the situation is aggravated by the lack of staff. It was also concluded that the mix of communication actions at this stage is appropriate and serves the needs of the OP.

## **CZ**

CZ described the basic framework of the Evaluation Plan (EP) in the OP. The MA submitted an updated version of the EP every year for approval by the members of the Monitoring Committee. Once a year the MA's Evaluation Unit also drew up a report on the implementation of the EP with a detailed list of recommendations arising from the evaluation carried out, including an indication of the state of implementation of corrective measures by the Fisheries OP MA.

During the programming period the MA carried out two programme evaluations. Based on the process and result evaluation (completed in April 2017), the setup of the implementation structure, the efficiency and effectiveness of the system, the setup of the indicator system, and the development needs and setup of the programme objectives were assessed. The second evaluation, completed in May 2019, focused on evaluation in terms of processes and successes in achieving the specific objectives of the EMFF. Based on the findings of the evaluation, a proposal for a third and subsequently a fourth revision of the programme was prepared to specify the allocation to measures, to adjust the target values of indicators, and to modify the list of measures and the list of eligible beneficiaries.

In preparation for the new programming period, the MA implemented a public contract in the second half of 2019, which included an ex-ante assessment of the use of financial instruments in aquaculture. The evaluation was completed in January 2020. In view of the recommendations, financial instruments were not introduced in the first phase of the implementation of the new OP. A new evaluation will be carried out in 2024.

The Evaluation Plan for the Fisheries OP 2021-2027 was approved in autumn 2022 and is expected to be updated on a regular basis.

## DE

In 2018, an interim evaluation of the OP was conducted by external consultants. The findings of this evaluation were summarised briefly in the 2019 AIR. Subsequently, the administrative authorities of the federal states took responsibility for implementing the recommendations and conclusions of the evaluation, where relevant and within their jurisdiction, and taking into consideration the planning and preparation of the new funding period.

## DK

From December 2018 to April 2019 DK carried out the evaluation of the results and effects of subsidy schemes under the EMFF OP. The evaluation resulted in 10 concrete recommendations. Several actions have been taken to implement these recommendations.

In line with the OP evaluation plan, DK launched thematic evaluations in 2023 to evaluate the results of the OP actions, targeting these cross-cutting objectives with limited relevance to common performance indicators.

The thematic evaluations addressed results and effects across the schemes that related to innovation; promotion of coastal fishing; implementation of the landing obligation; and promotion of marketing and market conditions and programme management.

The projects on **innovation** in fisheries have delivered the expected benefits. The evaluation shows that the support has, among other things, contributed to the development of new tools, processes and techniques. The projects have thus made a positive contribution to the fisheries sector through improvements in fishing methods, the reduction of by-catch and the general strengthening of sustainable fishing practices. Likewise, the support has contributed to strengthened collaboration between fishers and researchers. While the support greatly contributes to the development of new tools, techniques and processes, the implementation of the tools is in several cases challenged by a long approval process by the European Commission. The application of innovations in the fisheries may be challenged by the fact that it takes several years for a gear to be approved at EU level.

Support for innovation projects in aquaculture has also achieved objectives. The aid has contributed to sustainable growth and development in the aquaculture industry, notably through support for recirculation facilities that have enabled greater production of fish at the same level of discharge. However, several beneficiaries expressed the view that it would be easier to measure the projects' contribution to environmental sustainability if a set of indicators had been developed specifically to measure this.

The EMFF programme has provided an opportunity to support the implementation of the **landing obligation**. This has been done through many different project types, such as research projects and development of fishing gear targeted at the handling of the landing obligation, dissemination of knowledge, investments in fishing vessels, fishing ports and landing sites, as well as development of market opportunities for discards.

Fishers, ports, producer organisations and the Danish Fisheries Agency find that the aid has helped to facilitate the phasing-in of the landing obligation through both concrete investments and the sharing of knowledge about management. Stakeholders from the industry say that support for tackling

external barriers is important, especially in an industry such as fisheries, where there are many fluctuations in catches and great economic uncertainty.

The programme has also helped to support the implementation of the landing obligation through funding for the development of fishing gear and has enabled faster development with Fast Track. In the development of tools it has been important to work closely with the industry, which has the greatest insight into what works in practice. However, it has been frustrating for the grant recipients that the approval of the tools by the European Commission is very lengthy.

With funding from the programme, new knowledge has also been gained that can support market opportunities for discards. However, as the landing obligation has not led to the expected number of discards, the potential for these projects is limited.

Support for the promotion of **coastal fishing** has been provided through the Investments in Fishing Vessels, Fishing Ports and Landing Sites scheme and the FLAG scheme. Support has thus been given to coastal fishing, among other things, through support for investments on vessels that increase the added value or quality of the fish caught and through support for infrastructure projects in smaller ports associated with coastal fishing.

Support for investment in fishing vessels has helped to maintain jobs in coastal fisheries and stabilise the industry at a time when coastal fishing has also been challenged by a number of external structural factors. The aim of the projects has most often been to deploy a new gear, convert a vessel or invest in technologies that make it possible to start processing the catch before it is landed. The vast majority of the projects have succeeded: grant recipients have obtained the expected results and the support has helped to increase the added value or quality of their catches, which in turn has supported coastal fishing.

In some cases aid has been granted for investments in vessels which, according to the beneficiaries themselves, would also have been carried out without the aid because they consider the investment to be necessary. For example, fishing gear may need to be replaced on an ongoing basis. In those cases, a deadweight loss arises because the investment was made regardless of the grant.

The Fisheries Ports and Landing Sites scheme has contributed aid to infrastructure projects such as the purchase of equipment and machinery and provision of storage. The evaluator considers that the scheme has contributed to maintaining employment and activity in smaller fishing ports. At the same time, the MA considers that in several cases the investments would not have been carried out to the same extent without the aid from the scheme.

Another area of thematic evaluations is **promotion of sales and market conditions**. Under the EMFF programme there are two schemes: one to promote sales, and one for production and marketing plans. Among other things, support has been given to create better markets and marketing conditions for fisheries and aquaculture, take better account of the environment and nature, and increase value added and competitiveness.

Under the sales promotion scheme funds have been allocated to projects from 2016-2019. Funding has mainly been provided for certifications, the acquisition of new knowledge on market opportunities and the dissemination of information. For example, the scheme has supported projects to obtain MSC

certification in fisheries and ASC certification in aquaculture. One lesson, however, is that there must be a certain critical mass for a labelling scheme to create value.

In addition, projects have also been supported with a focus on identifying new market opportunities. For example, projects have explored new markets for organic aquaculture products, classic canned fish products and trout liver from Danish aquaculture. Furthermore, funds have been provided to increase awareness and sales of aquaculture products, wild-caught fish in season, and herring; the evaluator considers that these projects would not have achieved the same volume and distribution without EMFF funding.

For example, support for investment in machinery and packaging units used to process fishery and aquaculture products has led to several innovative solutions, including enabling the production of plant-based caviar. At the same time, however, there have been some cancellations of projects under the scheme after the commitment was made, and the scheme did not receive EMFF funding after 2017.

From 2019, promotion has been supported through grants for the preparation and implementation of the POs' annual Production and Marketing Plans. However, it is important to remember that there may be marketing issues that are not dealt with by producer organisations.

As an overarching theme it is relevant to look at the **administration of the programme**, as this can have a major impact on the results. Programme administration affects, among other things, who applies for grants, how the selection process is experienced and who cancels projects along the way – and thus what results the programme ultimately achieves.

Fisheries consultants, inter-branch organisations and producer organisations say that the Danish Fisheries Agency provides a good level of information about funding opportunities and has improved its ability to organise information meetings over the past few years. From these meetings, the organisations attending then pass on information to their members.

As regards the visibility of the results of the projects, the Danish Fisheries Agency is currently publishing success stories based on final reports via its website, LinkedIn feed and industry news websites. The Agency also issues press releases, but the evaluators are uncertain whether these stories reach the primary target groups, especially small-scale fishers. There is thus potential to increase the visibility of the results of EMFF-funded projects.

Overall, many grant recipients perceive the selection criteria as complex and the selection processes as lengthy. Many small businesses are therefore helped with the application by fisheries consultants. In addition, the short application deadline has restricted smaller companies from applying. It may therefore be useful to examine whether the application process can be simplified to make it more accessible. Even though the administrative requirements for grant recipients are generally perceived to be heavy, a large proportion of applicants nevertheless believe that the benefits can be worth the administrative costs.

## EE

EE commissioned an independent evaluation to analyse the extent to which the objectives set out for the UPs (all except UP4) have been achieved, the main progress and obstacles in the implementation

of support measures, and the impact of the implementation of the fund, taking account of developments in the external environment.

Through interviews and surveys the evaluation involved fisheries and aquaculture experts, operators, researchers, representatives of associations and other target groups from public and private bodies. The evaluation results were presented in the 2022 monitoring report and fed into the design and implementation of measures under the EMFAF 2021-2027 operational programme.

According to the evaluation plan, the MA has regularly monitored progress towards compliance with the target values of the financial and output indicators set out in the performance framework, analysed problems with indicators whose achievement of target values is questionable and looked for possible solutions to improve the situation.

## **ES**

ES carried out the following evaluations: ex-ante OP evaluation; ex-ante evaluation of EMFF Financial Instruments 2014-2020; evaluation by the Structural Reform Support Service of the implementation process of the EMFF 2014-2020 OP Spain; and a report assessing problems in the implementation of the OP.

The Spanish MA committed to carry out a thematic evaluation in relation to UP4 and a qualitative final evaluation. It made clear that the evaluations should analyse the effectiveness and impact of the OP by quantitatively and qualitatively assessing the impact of the actions of the programme on the fulfilment of the specific objectives of the OP and on the national fisheries policy. Likewise, the evaluations will analyse to what extent CLLD-based management of the EMFF brings added value over the usual management of the other UPs. This will be the first time that an impact assessment has been carried out and the MA is aware of the difficulties, considering the variety of actions and differences among the regions. External factors during this period have been decisive in the implementation of the Fund, the MA says, both through their direct impact on the results obtained and by distorting the objectives initially set. The results of these evaluations are expected before the end of 2024.

## **FI**

The effectiveness of the Finnish OP in the fisheries sector is evaluated by a team of experts specialising in fisheries and fish stock assessment at the Natural Resources Institute. This evaluation is an ongoing exercise that involves collaboration with fishery managers, entrepreneurs and stakeholders. Its aim is to provide valuable information on the development of industries and the operating environment within the fisheries sector.

The final evaluation of the FI EMFF OP was completed in 2023. During the funding period a significant amount of new private capital was invested in the fisheries sector. The EMFF grants had a leverage effect, although private capital has accounted for the largest share of investments. Most of the investments have been made in recirculation aquaculture systems. Maintaining such operations and complementary investments have required a significant amount of additional private money, a large part of which has come from outside the sector. New entrepreneurs have joined the aquaculture industry, and expertise in recirculation aquaculture has strengthened significantly during the funding period.

The fishing industry has also invested its own resources in aquaculture and processing. Fishers and small processors, for example, have invested to increase their use of underutilised fish. However, the number of fishers has been declining for a long time. New entrepreneurs have emerged in inland waters, but the number of coastal fishers continues to decline at a worrying rate. The aim of the action plan was to enable the renewal, environmental sustainability and long-term competitiveness of fisheries through bold experiments. Innovation programmes have supported development by piloting new technologies, and the fisheries sector has invested not only in recirculation plants but also in other technologies that reduce the environmental load (e.g. microfluidic (chip) reactors), the separation of fish proteins and oil, and new fishing trials and seal repellents.

According to the final evaluation, the strategic goal was to create the conditions for the continuous renewal of fisheries. To this end, the sector must have sufficient know-how to identify and exploit new business opportunities and a high level of business expertise. Innovation programmes have significantly improved cooperation and information exchange between researchers and entrepreneurs. Knowledge development led to the application of new aquaculture technologies and production methods. Fish farmers have problems with the availability of skilled labour, however, while at the same time the need for training is increasing with the use of new technologies. Aquaculture and processing companies are growing and becoming more professional, and as a result their business expertise is also diversifying and increasing. The need for more qualified personnel with knowledge of the fisheries sector is increasing, which is why training should be provided in the future. There are many small companies whose expertise is mainly based on management of the fishing profession and good local knowledge. Fisheries groups have played an important role in advising and raising awareness at local level. The demands of society are becoming increasingly complex, which is why fishers' business and cooperation skills should be further strengthened. Digital connections and social media have improved cooperation and sharing of experiences between fishers. They can be used to promote training opportunities for practitioners who are scattered throughout the country.

The final evaluation also commented on the innovation programmes. According to the report, a network of research institutes and companies was built into the innovation programmes to develop the sector. Innovation programmes and research institutes have established cooperation with key companies, but their needs are not yet sufficiently clear-cut. The Fisheries Partnership Programme clearly focused on solving the main problems in coastal and inland fisheries, but no efforts were made to develop trawl fisheries during this period. In the innovation programme for aquaculture, research and development activities in the marine region clearly focused on measures that promote the growth of marine aquaculture, while the development of recirculation aquaculture was more research-oriented. The Blue Products programme has created a diverse national research network. Researchers who have previously worked in other fields have been able to familiarise themselves with the fisheries sector and apply their expertise to the needs of the sector. The programme has brought a lot of new information to companies, but the actual research cooperation is only just beginning. The research network has many prerequisites for providing companies with information and services that support their existing business operations and their transition to new business areas. The environmental programme took measures to improve the vitality of fishery resources and the production of naturally thriving stocks. The programme has, among other things, shared information related to waterway restoration through the waterway restoration portal and webinars, studied methods for the restoration of coastal spawning and juvenile areas, prepared and piloted a model for use and management plans, analysed the functionality of obligatory monitoring programmes and developed a results-based funding model for restorations. The implementation of the Environment Programme



is challenged by the fact that remediation of fish stocks on one hand, and the general environment on the other, are carried out in different administrative sectors and the official registers for remediation are very incomplete. The environmental programme has served as a good tool for building cooperation between administrative branches, and concrete environmental projects have mitigated, for example, the confrontation between commercial and recreational fishing and nature conservation. Cooperation has been built on Finnish Environmental Institute, universities and regional actors (e.g. Valonia, the Water Management Association of Western Uusimaa). Except for juvenile producers, there are no natural prerequisites for business cooperation in fisheries that are like those in other fisheries programmes. The Environment Programme wishes to deepen cooperation with the Fisheries Partnership Programme to better consider the needs of commercial fisheries.

In addition to the environmental programme, the EMFF also focuses on the sustainability of fisheries. According to the final evaluation, some smaller projects related to migratory fish or spawning grounds have been implemented outside the scope of the Environmental Programme. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has carried out projects to remove migration barriers and rehabilitate spawning grounds, and the Finnish Environment Institute has carried out a project on lost fishing gear along the coast. Improving the status of the Baltic Sea and achieving good water status is an important societal goal implemented by many funds and actors. Efforts have been made to fund the most effective measures with limited EMFF resources. The focus of fishing has been to develop selective and seal-proof fishing gear. The partnership developed seal repellents to enable fishers and seals to coexist. Repellents keep seals away from fishing gear and can also be used, at least in part, to protect entire bays or straits that are important for fishing. Repellents are also used in aquaculture farms, where seal and cormorant payments have also been paid. The focus of aquaculture has been on large-scale investments in technologies that reduce nutrient loads or their impacts. The innovation programme for aquaculture has developed recirculation and offshore aquaculture, as well as modelling and monitoring the environmental impacts of fish farming. Efforts have been made to develop permits and environmental guidance for aquaculture through several projects. The location management plan for aquaculture was introduced in 2014. Fishing areas and suitable areas for aquaculture have also been identified in maritime and regional planning. Studies have been carried out on possibilities for compensation in aquaculture. Finland produces Baltic Sea feed that recycles nutrients from the Baltic, and many aquaculture companies are already using this. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has intensified its cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment so that development measures in the fisheries sector can be planned and implemented in a way that is sustainable for the industry and the environment. The development of aquaculture production generally also improves fish welfare: healthy fish are less stressed, grow better and have higher commercial quality. However, water warming and new technologies pose new challenges. Warming of waters increases the risk of fish diseases, and a new fish disease (infectious haematopoietic necrosis – IHN) was also diagnosed in Finland during the funding period. During the funding period, projects related to fish disease research and prevention were carried out. New equipment was applied for the slaughter of fish. Improving fish welfare has not been systematically developed in Finland, so it was identified as a new development target for the next funding period, in addition to improving quality.

## **FR**

In France, an evaluation was conducted at the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019, and its recommendations were closely monitored and incorporated during the revision of the programme. These recommendations were also taken into account for the development of the EMFAF programme.

In addition, an evaluation of the impact of several measures was carried out in 2023. This study focused on aid for productive investment in the fisheries, aquaculture, processing and marketing sectors, and on crisis aid for COVID-19 and shellfish mortality. The study is being conducted in the context of the end of the EMFF programming period. During this period, in addition to the cross-cutting measures implemented by the government during COVID-19, specific crisis measures were implemented for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, which were heavily impacted by the sudden loss of outlets. The study also addresses the consequences of Brexit to be able to meet the needs of French fishers as well as those of the entire sector. It also considers a broader reflection on risk management and the resilience of sectors in the post-COVID context.

The EMFF evaluation, completed in 2023, presents the general context of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, the action logic of the aid studied as reconstituted after the interviews, the evaluation questions and the associated judgement criteria and indicators. The report provides initial answers to the evaluation questions and makes recommendations for programming 2021-2027:

- Foster the settlement of young fishers through support and investment
- Accelerate the energy transition and modernise the fishing fleet
- Provide a more adapted and responsive support scheme for fishing enterprises in times of crisis
- Design scenarios for responses to sustained crises to ensure that activities are maintained
- Simplify the implementation of measures
- Assign resources to develop the aquaculture of the future
- Train and animate the network of partner structures
- Lift the brakes on the attractiveness of associated professions
- Make aid conditional on the environmental impact of investments
- Study the advisability of making aid conditional on performance

## **HR**

As part of the evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the HU OP, carried out in 2019, and further to the comprehensive analysis and conclusions of the evaluation carried out, several recommendations were made to improve the further implementation of the OP. A final report was also issued in relation to the evaluation of UP4. The purpose of the evaluation was to analyse achievements and make recommendations for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of this UP.

## **HU**

HU repeated a satisfaction survey of its OP in 2023. It was confirmed that the Russia's aggression in Ukraine affected almost all beneficiaries. The main problem is the increase in prices, with the most intense impact being caused by increases in the costs of fish feed, fuel and electricity.

Another issue is shortage of labour. As a result, almost all respondents faced some difficulties in meeting the employment commitments required by their projects. In view of the drought in Hungary, lake farms needed to take drastic measures and were forced to sell their fish stocks earlier than planned. All these factors contributed to a decrease in fish production.

A common problem is the time-consuming nature of purchases, and losses related to exchange rate fluctuations, when acquiring foreign machinery and assets.

Respondents rated calls for proposals and guides as moderately or largely transparent. The replies show that, although most beneficiaries have difficulties in understanding administrative requirements, calls for proposals and guides contribute to a better understanding. In relation to the management of grant and payment applications, the main problems reported by the interviewees were the acquisition of the documents to be submitted, the lengthy administrative time and the short deadline for remedying deficiencies.

A summary of the evaluations for the years 2018-2022 included in the OP evaluation plan was provided in May 2023. Some key findings are:

- Even though the Commission set the reduction of administrative burdens as one of the main objectives of implementation at the beginning of the programming period, EMFF implementation remains complex, unfamiliar to the fisheries sector and difficult to apply.
- The selection time for grant applications is too long.
- The current institutional system is not prepared for the burden of the large number of final accounts received at the same time. Human resources are finite, and any bottlenecks entail a risk to funding at programme level. In the future, it is proposed to place particular emphasis on financial planning. In this context, it is also necessary to better plan the dates for the publication of calls for proposals.
- The interpretation of indicators is problematic for beneficiaries (and thus also for the MA), so it is important for the EMFAF to define indicators that are understandable and have targets that are achievable and measurable. The recommendations of the evaluators on the non-fulfilment of performance and result indicators mainly concerned modifying the operational programme, reallocating financial resources, and proportionally reducing the relevant indicator values.
- Since the future of the sector depends on investment, publicising the investment opportunities and the good practices seen in successful projects can act as a catalyst to increase competitiveness and achieve the strategic goals of the sector.

## IE

The following evaluations have been undertaken to date in IE: review of the FLAG programme 2012-15 (February 2016); cost-benefit analysis of the proposed decommissioning scheme (July 2016); ex-ante assessment of the use of financial instruments (June 2017); evaluation of the lobster v-notching scheme (2018); evaluation of sustainable fisheries scheme (2019); evaluation of the EMFF OP 2014-2020.

In 2020 Ireland carried out an evaluation addressing effectiveness and process respectively. The effectiveness evaluation focused on how well the EMFF programme was being implemented, with the key question being how effective EMFF measures have been in achieving the SOs and the targets set in the OP. This was carried out by evaluating each scheme against key evaluation questions. The process evaluation focused on the delivery mechanism of the EMFF OP 2014-2020. This evaluation assessed management structures and implementation methods, and evaluated the effectiveness and efficiency of the management and delivery system.

For the current programme, the main recommendations proposed in the final report were to continue to keep commitments under review and to reallocate funds from schemes that are unlikely to spend

their full allocation to those where demand exists; clearly designated responsibilities should be put in place to capture data to determine RIs.

For the future programme, the main recommendations were to: streamline the number of interventions in the interests of efficiency and clarity; ensure clear targeting (to increase uptake) to areas of need, minimising any potential for overlap; improve programme management efficiency regarding the IT system; and process more grants online. The MA should clearly detail and communicate the purpose for which technical assistance should be used; the MA should provide training at the outset of the programme; and a new centralised communication strategy to promote awareness of the EMFAF in a coherent and consistent manner should be agreed and rolled out. Support should also be put in place to build capacity in some sectors where there is an ongoing need (economic drivers to support growth and competitiveness), or where uptake to date has been low. Such support should be within the scope of the regulations, for example covering networking, knowledge transfer and dissemination, to raise awareness and provide pathways to other beneficial interventions.

An impact evaluation of the EMFF 2014-20 OP is scheduled for completion and presentation to Monitoring committee in Q4 2024.

## **IT**

Evaluation activities in IT during 2023 concentrated on the latest thematic study dedicated to the CLLD approach of the 2014-2020 EMFF OP. The focus was on understanding the role played by FLAGs in the relevant territories, as well as the factors influencing their capacity to assume the role of local development agencies. The main objective was to provide FLAGs with recommendations, suggestions and tools to move them in the direction of becoming local development agencies. The general aim was to improve how FLAGs work, especially in view of the 2021-2027 programming period during which the CLLD approach will also be implemented in coastal areas.

Three groups of FLAGs were distinguished:

- FLAGs as centres of expenditure; these FLAGs have a passive interaction with the territory and tend not to contextualise the measures adopted in their territories to specific local needs, instead relying on the measures defined in the OP. Such FLAGs can ensure the allocation of funds, but without taking active roles in defining and implementing the strategy.
- FLAGs as centres of technical competence; these FLAGs are able to facilitate the implementation of the strategy as it relates to their territories. However, they still rely on the measures defined in the OP, without contextualising them to the specific needs of the territory, and thus struggle to deliver a bottom-up approach.
- FLAGs as centres of strategic competence, or which can develop strategies according to the specific needs of their territories. These FLAGs thus move beyond the measures defined by the OP, although in practice they face difficulties in ensuring the implementation of their customised local strategies.

## **LT**

LT evaluation plan includes the monitoring of OP indicators, which is an ongoing process covering all UPs.

Quarterly programme implementation assessments provide a comprehensive overview of the OP's progress, in terms of both quantitative and financial aspects, and the achievement of indicators. This assessment also identifies emerging problems and suggests solutions.

The final external evaluation of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the implementation of the OP was delivered in April 2024. Conclusions and recommendations:

- Partnership – the main socio-economic partners have been identified and involved, and all relevant stakeholders are involved in preparing and monitoring the implementation of the OP.
- Administration of the programme – the MA and IB have adequate structures and processes in place to manage the implementation of the operational programme, but despite this, processes that were too slow were encountered for verifying applications and managing payment claims. This problem is related to the challenges of human resources.
- The audits carried out by the audit authority reveal that horizontal principles were respected in the implementation of the programme.
- Monitoring and control system – the progress of the programme was analysed in detail. Although data from the monitoring system made it possible to ensure overall supervision of the implementation of the operational programme, project-level data are not sufficient to assess the impact and effectiveness of the programme.
- Communication and publicity – the identified target groups, industry stakeholders and public groups were reached and informed.
- Effectiveness and achievement of objectives – even though some result indicators were not achieved due to the objective circumstances, the management of the OP ensured that the indicators not achieved were compensated by higher values for other indicators, so that the impact of the OP on the sector was more visible.

## LV

The evaluation of the OP investments is an ongoing process, conducted continuously by independent experts from Latvia's Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics.

In 2023, as foreseen in the OP Evaluation Plan, the support provided during the period for all programme objectives with the selected actions was analysed. The impact of the OP on changes in socio-economic indicators (company size, net turnover, average gross remuneration) between 2015 and 2021 was assessed by comparing groups of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in fisheries, aquaculture and the processing of fisheries products. Economic data on 200 merchants have been used as a basis for calculations. The results of the evaluation will contribute to the launch of the Fisheries Development Programme 2021-2027. The evaluation concluded that:

- The development of the sector during the assessment period has been significantly influenced by external factors, in particular by COVID-19.
- The average size of fisheries enterprises has decreased. A significant fraction of small enterprises in the sector have become micro-enterprises due to a decrease in the number of employees, as opportunities to sell products were limited during the COVID-19 period.
- A decrease in fisheries net turnover was linked to both the implementation of Fleet Adaptation measures and the introduction of temporary cessations.
- Net turnover has increased in aquaculture and the processing of fishery products in line with the objectives of the OP and selected activities. In aquaculture and the processing of fishery

products, support has been provided for productive investments, strengthening the competitiveness of enterprises. In the fishery products processing sector, support has a particularly positive impact on positive labour productivity growth. Supported enterprises show significantly higher net turnover and labour productivity growth.

- Average gross wages and salaries increased in fisheries, aquaculture and fish processing. The implementation of FAP measures has contributed to the increase in wages in all sectors of the fisheries sector. Despite the decrease in turnover and labour productivity, by compensating for the revenue foregone during the COVID-19 period the EMFF aid nevertheless managed to maintain a competitive wage. In turn, in aquaculture and fish processing, the positive effect of the support is observed in terms of the economic stability, competitiveness and income generation of enterprises, which also maintained wages for employees in the sector.

The aid has helped to maintain a competitive wage in fisheries, despite the sector's dependence on available fishery resources, by investing in added value. The evaluation recognises that aid plays a crucial role in ensuring the economic stability and competitiveness of fisheries enterprises.

## **MT**

In line with the evaluation plan adopted in March 2016, the interim evaluation for MT OP was conducted and the final report was concluded by May 2019.

A detailed summary of the outcomes and recommendations was presented in the AIR 2019. The report's findings were given their due importance by the MA in its endeavour to transform best practices into *de facto* standard procedures. Lessons learned will also be part of an administrative legacy to be applied in the upcoming programming period 2021-2027.

## **NL**

During 2023-2024, an external consultancy carried out a final evaluation for the EMFF for the period 2014-2023. The objectives of the final evaluation of the EMFF are as follows:

- To provide insight into the contributions of the open schemes and grants to the objectives and UPs set out in the OP.
- Making concrete suggestions for a next (future) fund with the insights obtained, looking at what needs to be preserved, what can be improved, and how the budget will be distributed across the UPs.

The final evaluation assessed the impact of the EMFF as plausibly effective, based on three criteria: (i) the amount of budget allocated, (ii) the number of projects and procurement contracts selected, and (iii) the percentage of grant applications approved. The results have been compared with the targets set in the OP, both for individual grant schemes and for each UP. It concluded that the target group knows how to find the EMFF, since more than enough grant applications were submitted and accepted. This indicates that the open grant schemes are well aligned with the needs and priorities of the target group. These findings are also confirmed by interviews with representatives of the government and the target group. The need for beneficiaries to make their own contributions leads to greater responsibility and involvement in projects and thus to more careful management of allocated resources. As four out of five grant applications are accepted, the EMFF's grant award rate has been assessed as high. The consultants concluded that the quality of grant applications ranges from "sufficient" to "good" (and has become increasingly better during the fund period), and that

there is a functioning grant process in place. Project proposals that pass the selection procedure, regardless of the type of call for proposals, lead to the implementation of high-quality projects that help the sector and strengthen its competitiveness. Aiding its effectiveness, the EMFF is an adaptive fund that responds flexibly to changing circumstances.

A number of recommendations were provided to improve effectiveness and optimise the practical implementation of the new Fund (EMFAF):

- Develop a policy theory for each subsidy scheme within a UP; this provides the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality with a framework to set, review and evaluate specific goals. Regular evaluations over the lifetime of the Fund can identify best practices, correct shortcomings and promote transparency and accountability for stakeholders.
- Ensure flexibility of calls for proposals by making room for 'different' but relevant project proposals that do not meet the criteria. This contributes to a more varied and impactful portfolio of funded projects.
- Reconsider the co-financing rate for small enterprises by introducing an own contribution for subsidised projects. A personal contribution increases the involvement and responsibility of participating parties. However, lowering this contribution can promote the participation of smaller companies, which increases their financing opportunities and contributes to the growth of SMEs. It is not recommended to completely abolish the own contribution, as this may have a negative impact on the involvement and quality of project implementation.
- Reduce administrative burdens by standardising reporting formats, simplifying or reducing submission requirements and supporting applicants. Understandable definitions and unambiguous concepts minimise misunderstandings and legal disputes, while aligned control intensity on risk profiles can reduce the burden on beneficiaries and increase the effectiveness of control bodies. Reducing administrative burdens makes the grant programme accessible, promotes the involvement of beneficiaries and improves the implementation of projects, leading to more effective use of EMFF funding and greater impact.
- Develop and use relevant and measurable result and output indicators. A distinction between output and outcome indicators is important. Output measures performance, while outcome measures the impact of projects. By evaluating both indicators during the fund period, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality can monitor and, if necessary, adjust the effectiveness and efficiency of the EMFF.

Interviews with representatives of both the sector and the government show that potential applicants are reluctant to apply for EMFF funding for projects that promote innovation and cooperation between different parties in the Dutch fisheries and aquaculture sector. This is due to the complexity and administrative burden that applicants experience when applying for grants, the fact that they get no compensation for loss of income when participating in innovative projects, and the risk that grants will be reclaimed if projects are implemented differently in practice compared to how they are described in the grant application. These factors can reduce motivation to start or continue innovative projects, which in turn limits the potential for growth and sustainability in the sector through the EMFF. Consultants made the following recommendations:

- Partially compensate loss of income due to risks taken when participating in subsidised projects, so that entrepreneurs are stimulated to start potential innovation projects faster. This accelerates innovation and sustainability in the sector.

- Improve communication and transparency about procedures, requirements and expectations to improve the efficiency of the grant fund. Clear information reduces errors and delays in applications, which can reduce implementation costs.
- Active support to beneficiaries before, during and after their projects, together with clear communication, reduces implementation costs and improves long-term efficiency. Organising start and end interviews with all project partners promotes a shared understanding of project risks and results, leading to more successful implementation and continuous improvement.

The effectiveness of the EMFF has been assessed based on three criteria: (i) implementation costs for the implementing organisation, (ii) administrative burden on applicants and (iii) perceived burden on applicants. The implementation costs were evaluated quantitatively, while the administrative burden as assessed from the interviews was evaluated qualitatively. After consolidation and analysis, the conclusion is that the EMFF is not efficient in achieving its intended objectives. High implementation costs on top of the perceived administrative burden on applicants and beneficiaries contribute to this assessment. The administrative burden means that most applicants use external grant advisors. This means that part of the EMFF grant awarded goes to advisors instead of to projects. Consultants provided the following recommendations aimed at improving efficiency:

- Establish specific agreements on the standard for implementation costs in relation to the available budget. Setting a standard (with other EU funds the efficiency rate is between 10-13%) can help to improve the efficiency of funding under the EMFAF. An efficiency standard acts as an incentive for continuous improvement. It challenges those involved to work more efficiently and to optimise processes to meet the standard.
- Reduce or combine the number of cost-efficiency subsidy schemes.
- Provide regular and systematic monitoring and evaluation of implementation costs and administrative burdens to identify and address bottlenecks and inefficiencies more quickly. Ideally, monitoring and evaluation will take place for each subsidy scheme during the fund period, applying the principle of proportionality.
- Ensure timely submission of payment requests by beneficiaries, in order to reduce implementation costs. Close monitoring, active encouragement and regular contact with beneficiaries are crucial for effective management.

In addition, the EMFF operates within a complex dynamic of environmental factors that influence the performance and effects of the projects subsidised. The following recommendations were provided for the 2021-2027 period:

- Develop flexible adaptation strategies; this is crucial because of the impact of external factors such as COVID-19 and Brexit on subsidised projects.
- Establish guidelines for transparency and integrity in grant advice; this is crucial to manage expectations and provide clarity. This includes open communication on financial incentives and conflicts of interest, as well as implementing control mechanisms and providing advice.
- Align with fund goals and target group needs.
- Establish a knowledge transfer programme for the EMFF/EMFAF; this is essential to maintain valuable knowledge and ensure continuity of service. This programme documents and shares key insights, procedures and best practices between experienced and new hires, reducing reliance on individual knowledge. This strengthens consistency in the management and



implementation of the fund, which improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation and shortens the learning curve for new employees.

## **PL**

PL MA implemented its evaluation plan primarily within the scope of its own monitoring and evaluation of programme data. The MA monitors the implementation of the OP on an ongoing basis, considering the state of implementation of the performance framework.

## **PT**

The EMFF OP assessment plan is included in the Global Assessment Plan for Portugal. The following ongoing assessments were listed: evaluation of the implementation of the Pacts for Development and Territorial Cohesion and of CLLD; the Portugal 2020 Macroeconomic Impact Assessment.

The PT MA complemented the above evaluations with the assessment of the implementation of the OP. This evaluation had the following objectives:

- Assess the implementation process of the OP, the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance model adopted, and the instruments put in place to achieve the intended objectives, considering demand at local and national level.
- For all Ops, to identify dimensions of the OP implementation process that need adjustment and improvement.
- Evaluate the extent to which the first results allow prediction of the achievement of the objectives and targets.

Another evaluation related to the implementation of measures for adaptation to climate change. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the main progress made as a result of the supported interventions towards the strategic public policy priorities at a stage when the OP is already at a sufficiently advanced stage of implementation.

The aim of the evaluation of the contribution of Portugal 2020 to the National Strategy for the Sea 2013-2020 was to analyse the implementation of ESIF in the Sea. In particular, the aim was to understand, in relation to the observed results, the causal relationships that link the interventions to the observed and desired changes, estimating the impact of the intervention against the objectives pursued by the public policy that frames this intervention. The main conclusions and recommendations addressed to the MA were, first, that the support instruments proved to be adequate to the needs of the sector and aligned with the objectives of the strategy; and second, that the ESI Funds have a very significant additionality effect, enabling investment that would not otherwise be implemented, and also contributing to increasing, accelerating and anticipating the investment that would be made. The deadweight effect was low.

## **RO**

RO MA has established an evaluation methodology aimed at supporting the effective management of the OP and assessing its implementation progress. As part of this methodology, an interim evaluation is conducted annually to analyse various aspects of the OP's performance.

## SE

The Swedish Board of Agriculture runs an Evaluation Secretariat which plans the evaluations of the Maritime and Fisheries Programme. The Secretariat engages evaluators and disseminates the results. Both external evaluators, such as consultants and researchers, and employees at the Board of Agriculture carry out the evaluations. The evaluators are functionally independent, and the conclusions are the responsibility of the authors of each report. An advisory research group is attached to the evaluation secretariat. In addition to advising the general activities of the Secretariat, such as preparing evaluation plans and commenting on evaluation projects, the Research Advisory Group acts as an independent reviewer of evaluation reports. The advisory research group has consisted of people from Lund University, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Chalmers University of Technology and Blekinge Institute of Technology. The main tasks of the Evaluation Secretariat relating to the Maritime and Fisheries Programme have been to publish evaluation and follow-up reports; to conclude the evaluation activities of the Maritime and Fisheries Programme; and to disseminate the evaluation results through seminars, workshops, a website and a blog.

A summary of evaluations published during the programming period is provided below.

**Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014-2020. A synthesis of previous analysis and assessment of the contribution of aid to the objectives of the programme.** This report presents a summary (synthesis) of previous evaluations and follow-ups of the programme, as well as an assessment of how support via the programme has contributed to UPs.

**An evaluation of support for control and enforcement and for protected areas under the Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014-2020.** This evaluation had two overarching issues. The first is to examine the role of support from the Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014-2020 in the implementation of fisheries controls by the Swedish Coast Guard. The second question was about how projects under the action Promoting the protection of the marine environment contributed to the creation of new protected areas.

**Enhancing competitiveness and growth through support. Impact of investment aid and start-up aid for aquaculture and the processing industry in the Maritime and Fisheries Programme.** The evaluation shows that aquaculture enterprises that have received start-up aid have started production and increased their numbers of employees. After 2016 the trend seems to have stalled and remained at a constant level until 2019. However, it is important to point out that aid started to be granted late in the period. Economic data from a longer period is therefore needed to determine the extent to which supported companies create sustainable growth in the long term.

**Investment aid for aquaculture under the Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014-2020: Follow-up of aid and its contribution to reducing nutrient load.** This follow-up examines what the investment aid for aquaculture has done and whether the aid has contributed to a reduction in nutrient load. The nutrient load is determined by several aspects: which species are farmed in aquaculture and by what methods, how much is farmed, and where the farm is located.

**Test of model for evaluation of leader effects: interim report 4.** The main result of this evaluation is that the developed model does not work in practice for the impact evaluation of Leader. However, the evaluators propose several revisions that can improve the usability of the model. The model assesses whether the evaluators can also support the LAG board in considering impacts.

**Adaptation to climate change in EU programmes 2014-2020.** The purpose of the evaluation is to identify and create an understanding of the opportunities and conditions for financing climate adaptation measures under the Rural Development Programme, the Maritime and Fisheries Programme and the Community-Led Local Development Programme.

**Community-led local development indicators; The Leader areas' experiences of the indicators 2014-2020 and a description of the indicator bank for 2023-2027.** In 2020-2021 the Board of Agriculture compiled an indicator bank with a total of 55 local indicators. The indicator bank was developed in parallel with the national indicators and with the presentation of draft EU indicators by the European Commission.

**Leader or not Leader – that is the question. The organisation and implementation of project support for rural development.** This report is part of the follow-up of the Rural Development Programme, the Maritime and Fisheries Programme and the Regional and Social Fund Programme for Community-Led Local Development in the 2014-2020 programming period.

**The selection criteria governing which projects are supported under community-led local development. What needs to be simplified?** Prior to the launch of the Rural Development Programme and the Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014-2020, the evaluation of the Rural Development Programme and the Maritime and Fisheries Programme highlighted the efforts made to simplify applications by companies seeking support. The evaluation was carried out to identify how beneficiaries perceived the need for simplification in the 2007-2013 programming period and to assess the extent to which implemented changes corresponded to the perceived need. The mapping makes it possible to evaluate later whether the simplifications made will make the programmes less complicated for those who apply for support.

**The evaluation of the Permanent cessation of fishing activities** showed mainly that a number of the vessel owners who participated in the measure reinvested in new vessels. These often focused on fishing for fish other than cod. This shows that the measure also has effects on other types of fisheries. The evaluation also showed that of the individuals of working age, few were unemployed and the majority still had income from fishing or fishing-related activities. After the scrapping rounds, the incomes of the individuals who were active in the labour market have increased satisfactorily.

The Evaluation of ESI Funds Implementation Organisations in Sweden carried out **an evaluation of the organisation and working methods of the managing authorities for the four European Structural and Investment Funds**. The report shows that there are very extensive regulations, formal steering documents and detailed operational plans, procedures, structures and working methods. However, there is no intermediate step in which the MAs should interpret and prioritise the formal steering documents and develop clear impact logics and implementation strategies for each programme.

**How can we evaluate the effects of investment aid on the impact of agriculture and fisheries on the nutrient balance in water?** This evaluation comes up with recommendations for the chosen calculation method but also notes that it is appropriate to do a shadow check: would the investment have taken place even without the aid?

**Evaluation Investment aid for aquaculture and processing and marketing – do the aids lead to more investment?** Deadweight losses are estimated at around 35% for aquaculture and around 75% for the processing industry. The report shows that despite this, the aid has the potential to promote the

economically and environmentally sustainable development of aquaculture and the processing industry. For example, the report finds positive effects of the aid on production value and value added per employee in the processing industry.

**The impact of aid for selective and predator-proof gear** analyses information on aid granted under the 2007-2013 fisheries programme and the 2014-2020 marine and fisheries programmes. The analysis finds that the aid has probably had a certain positive effect in the crayfish fishery, which has reduced unwanted catches. The report shows that it is important that administrators have a good knowledge of the investments made and the extent to which they can be expected to contribute to achieving the objectives of the fund.

Several smaller and more limited follow-ups have also been published. **Leader projects under the Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014-2020** showed that the projects are generally in line with the objectives of the Maritime and Fisheries Programme concerning the fishing industry, the environment and sustainability. **Alignment with the landing obligation** examines whether and to what extent the Maritime and Fisheries Programme has contributed to regulatory change. The follow-up **Processing of fishery and aquaculture products** monitors the allocation of business aid to promote the processing and marketing sectors. **Productive investments in aquaculture** follows up on how support has been allocated to productive investments in aquaculture.

The Evaluation Secretariat has also initiated and conducted a **study on the feasibility of further strengthening gender equality and non-discrimination in programme implementation**.

**Environmental projects in community-led local development** are mapping the environmental projects that have been granted in CLLD up to and including 19 December 2019.

## SI

During the OP implementation period SI carried out the following evaluations: the mid-term evaluation, launched in 2018 and completed in March 2019, and two ongoing evaluations, covering the periods 2019-2020 and 2021-2022.

The ongoing evaluation of the OP for 2021 and 2022 concluded that in both years the OP made significant progress. Improved communication at programme level within management structures, as well as on the relation between management structures and beneficiaries, has contributed to this. The amounts committed and paid increased significantly compared to previous evaluation periods (2019, 2021). The share of reserved and paid funds for technical assistance in relation to reserved and paid funds for operations decreased significantly, which is an indicator of the improved performance of the programme.

Several recommendations relate to the new 2021-2027 period. Given that the implementation of the new programming period has already started, it is necessary to transfer good practices and approaches that have led to more effective implementation into the future period. Obstacles that would lead to a slow start in the implementation of the new programming period should be avoided. Progress in communication (both within management structures and with beneficiaries or representatives of beneficiaries) should be continued; and administrative simplifications (optimisations) should be implemented, especially for reporting of eligible expenditure.

## **SK**

SK MA conducted an internal assessment in February 2018 to evaluate the achievement of the OP performance framework indicators. The findings from this assessment played a crucial role in proposing revisions to the OP by adjusting mid-term indicators of the performance framework.

The mid-term evaluation related to process evaluation was carried out in March 2019.

## **UK**

The UK performed three external evaluations of the EMFF. Two of these evaluations, addressing socio-economic and environmental aspects respectively, were summarised in the 2020 AIR.

In 2023, an external impact evaluation was undertaken, in accordance with Article 56(3) of the Common Provisions Regulation 1303/2013, to look at how support from the EMFF has contributed to the objectives for each UP. An external impact evaluation was commissioned by the UK MA on behalf of the UK Devolved Administrations to evaluate the impact of the EMFF programme, assessing the extent to which its initial aims and objectives were met through targeted, funded interventions. The approach undertaken by external consultants followed the impact evaluation guidance set out in the EMFF Evaluation Toolbox 2 and the Commission's FAME Support Unit.

The aim of the report was to set out the projects and measures financed by the EMFF and assess the impact these interventions have had for the UK fishing, aquaculture, marketing and processing industries, as well as to understand the economic, social and political external factors that may have impacted the scheme. This builds on the previous evaluation of the implementation and early impacts of the EMFF conducted in 2019, and extends the scope of the evaluation to include all the Union Priorities (1-6; the 2019 evaluation focused only on UPs 1, 2, 4 and 5).

The evaluation was presented to the Programme Monitoring Committee in October 2023 and was formally published in December 2023. The report highlighted that:

- Based on the evidence presented within the report it was clear that the EMFF provided much-needed support to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the UK during a dynamic period of change.
- Funding was spread across a diverse range of recipients and projects, from implementation of large-scale policies and data collection/monitoring exercises implemented by public-sector bodies to smaller, locally focused projects supporting aquaculture and fisheries businesses (including SMEs).
- Many grant recipients attested that EMFF grants enabled them to enhance operational efficiency and proceed with various projects which would not have been possible otherwise.
- Both grant recipients and stakeholders emphasised the crucial role of future access to grant schemes like the EMFF in ensuring the long-term stability of UK fishing and aquaculture industries.
- In summary, funding from the EMFF in the UK appears to have preserved jobs and sustained industries, and also contributed to the broader well-being of communities, the environment, and the cultural heritage of fishing regions in the UK at a time where several external factors such as policy changes, general economic development, the coronavirus pandemic, Brexit and the war in Ukraine posed challenges.

## **7 Citizens' summary (Article 50(9) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013)**

Along with their AIRs, all MSs also submitted a citizens' summary – a short overview of the state of play of their OP implementation.

The annual implementation reports, and citizens' summaries of their contents, shall be made available to the public.

## **8 Report on the implementation of financial instruments (Article 46(1) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013)**

In cases where an MA has decided to use financial instruments, it must send the Commission a specific report covering their operations as an annex to the AIR, using the template included in the implementing act adopted pursuant to Article 46(3) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013.

According to the information provided in the AIRs, only Estonia and Bulgaria currently implement financial instruments within the framework of the EMFF. Both MSs reported in their AIRs that the type of financial instrument was a “fund of funds”.

**Estonia** implements financial instruments under UP2 and UP5.

The total volume of the investment loan for enterprises starting or engaged in the production of aquaculture products under UP2, including management fees, is EUR 886 503. Due to low interest from the sector, no new loan agreements were signed during the accounting year. As of 31.12.2023, the amount of the contribution to the financial instrument is 820 836 euros. Seven loan agreements have been signed and disbursements have been made to six loan agreements in the amount of EUR 820 836.

Under UP5 EE has two types of financial instruments: a growth loan fund and a long-term investment loan fund for micro- and small enterprises in fish processing. The total volume of the two loan products, including management fees, amounts to EUR 8 183 794, which was increased in 2023 in view of the needs in the processing sector at the end of the period. At the end of 2023, the total contributions to the instrument amounted to EUR 7 886 796. As of the end of 2023, disbursements were made under the growth loan for micro- and small enterprises starting or engaged in fish processing in the amount of EUR 732 855. Within the framework of the long-term investment loan for enterprises starting or engaged in fish processing, disbursements have been made via eight loan agreements in the amount of 7 153 941 euros. A total of 20 contracts were signed under Priority V, with 19 contracts disbursed by the MES at the request of the applicant.

**Bulgaria** implements financial instruments under UP2, UP4 and UP5.

The total amount of programme contributions committed in the funding agreement under UP2 is EUR 1 636 940, of which the EMFF part is EUR 1 227 705. The total amount of programme contributions paid to the financial instrument is EUR 409 235, of which EUR 306 926 is EMFF funding.

The total amount of programme contributions committed in the funding agreement under UP4 is EUR 306 780, of which the EMFF part is EUR 260 763. The total amount of programme contributions paid to the financial instrument is EUR 76 695, of which EUR 65 191 is EMFF funding.

The total amount of programme contributions committed in the funding agreement under UP5 is EUR 818 470, of which the EMFF part is EUR 613 853. The total amount of programme contributions paid to the financial instrument is EUR 204 618, of which EUR 153 463 is EMFF funding.

## 9 Assessment of the implementation of the operational programme

Overall, assessment of the implementation of EMFF operational programmes was generally positive but mixed, with many MSs reporting quite satisfactory achievement while some reported achievements below expectations, as described in specific cases below. Often the successful achievement of programme objectives varied by UP or by SO within a single MS.

Some common obstacles to the achievement of EMFF programme objectives across MSs included low demand for work in the fishing sector due to rising quotas and low profitability; fluctuations in prices and global seafood markets; the requirement for reallocation of budgetary resources in response to market disruptions from the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic; high administrative burdens in the funding process; complexity of the EMFF reporting system; alignment of national systems to EMFF reporting systems; and difficulties with the applicability and calculation of some result indicators.

A summary of Chapter 11 of the AIRs, in which MSs assess their achievements and progress made towards the implementation of their EMFF operational programmes, is provided for selected MSs below.

### AT

The evaluation revealed that the EMFF's target values for the OP were overly broad, encompassing the entire sector rather than OP objectives. Under UP1 projects focused on modernisation, quality improvement and direct marketing, not directly on increasing production volume. Target values for result indicators, set in 2014, were largely sector-wide, leading to relatively low achieved values.

UP2, the most funded measure, focused on productive aquaculture investments. Demand remained high despite the increased funding due to programme modifications. The programme has made an important contribution to increasing aquaculture production, in line with the strategic objectives.

Austria saw a slight overall increase in pond area between 2012 and 2022. In the same period there was an overall decrease in basins and flow-through systems, but the most recent trend demonstrates a consistent increase. Recirculating systems experienced significant growth from 2018 onward.

Fish production, particularly salmon-like species, has increased significantly since 2012, contributing to a 28% increase in aquaculture employment from 2012 to 2021.

UP5's supported projects increased per-capita fish consumption in Austria by 0.1 kg, but this was less than the projected target. While the self-sufficiency rate increased, overall fish consumption declined from 2020 due to factors like population growth and reduced food consumption. The impact of the small-scale EMFF programme on fish consumption is questionable, as fish consumption is influenced by numerous external factors. The supported marketing measures likely had only a limited effect on consumer behaviour.

The "Processing of fishery and aquaculture products" measure led to increased first sales in non-producer organisations, indicating growth in direct marketing.



## **BE**

The Belgian programme's implementation was generally successful, though some result indicators and objectives were deemed misaligned with project goals. Calculation methods were often complex and inadequate, despite efforts to address them. To maintain uniformity, indicators were not changed, despite the monitoring system's limitations and administrative burden, especially during crises.

Under UP1, required result indicators for SO 1 (change in unwanted catches/change in fuel efficiency) were not suitable for reflecting operations. Calculation methods were inadequate and indicators were not modified. This led to mixed results, with some targets achieved and others not. Similar issues arose with other result indicators.

UP2 faced pressure for large-scale production but opted for smaller projects. Financial constraints and the monitoring system's complexity created challenges. In some cases project activities and required result indicators were misaligned, leading to underachievement even if projects were seen as successful. For example, innovative aquaculture projects were not expected to significantly impact aquaculture value or volume. Calculation methods for some indicators (employment created/maintained) were also complex.

Despite BE commitment to digitalisation and fisheries control, fisheries control proved problematic. Data collection indicators were significantly exceeded, but the accumulation method was deemed illogical. It is concluded that BE has implemented national data collection programmes well in line with the specific Regulation.

UP5's indicators (Change in value of first sales in PO) and objectives under SO 2 (Stimulate investment in processing) were arbitrary, with no direct link between promotion efforts and market turnover. Turnover is primarily influenced by quotas and fish prices, with external factors affecting the overall economic situation. Major changes in turnover (from the 2000s onwards) are characterised by a strong and dominant response to crisis situations.

UP7's technical assistance implementation was successful, but the administrative burden was high relative to the programme's size. Simplification is crucial.

## **BG**

UP1 – The assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of UP1 was satisfactory. In early 2020 budgets were redirected to provide resources to cope with the economic consequences of COVID-19. Budgets for measures 1.2, 1.4 and 1.5 were reduced because of low interest from the industry due to the unprofitability of fishing, inability to provide the necessary private funds, and a low level of administration readiness. Measures 1.4 and 1.5 were not opened for proposals due to a lack of interest from beneficiaries.

Under SO 1.1 and SO 1.2 the targets for RIs 1.4.a, 1.4.b, and 1.5 could only be achieved with investment projects. The achievement of target values was challenging, with grants provided to only five fishing vessels and a lack of engine replacement projects. Municipalities therefore submitted proposals related to investments in ports and shelters instead. Allocations of all SOs were considerably revised with the OP amendment.

As of 2023, SO 1.4 data shows that the number of enterprises in the small-scale fisheries sub-sector remains stable, and the number of people employed is increasing. In this sense, FTE values related to the fisheries sector or complementary activities should be considered as the key indicator.

UP2 – The assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of UP2 was satisfactory. With the measure related to productive investments in aquaculture UP2 is one of the engines of the OP. The results of projects under SOs 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 are monitored for five years after final payments have been made, so results will be final only in 2028. The achievement of net profit targets will be problematic due to the COVID-19 and Ukraine crises, since companies' profit and loss accounts show losses for the last three years.

A reallocation of financial resources for measures under UP2 was undertaken in 2020 with the third amendment of the OP. Despite the pre-declared interest in measure 2.1, the applications submitted were rejected on the grounds of lack of innovation. Analysis of the procedures carried out shows that beneficiaries are interested in restoring and upgrading existing production capacities rather than in innovation. Measure 2.1 was therefore closed. Low interest was also registered in measure 2.4, explained by the potential long-term unsustainability of investments in the national market.

UP3 – The effectiveness of the implementation of UP3 was satisfactory. The objectives of UP3 will most likely be fulfilled, since the beneficiary is a public body: the National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture. As projects are still under implementation the results will be final in 2030.

The MA identified residual budget allocations for data collection and transferred them to measures related to control. Indicator 3.B.1 'Increase in the percentage of fulfilment of data calls' was adjusted accordingly.

UP4 – The effectiveness of the implementation of UP4 was evaluated as 'moderate/limited'. The delayed start of the programme, the delay in reporting of results, and the changed interest from potential beneficiaries towards certain measures impacted the implementation of UP4. The economic consequences of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine also had an impact on the implementation of FLAG strategies.

UP5 – As of 2023, funds were redirected to UP5 to support processing of fishery and aquaculture products in overcoming the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The number of operations related to the compensatory measures for the COVID-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine increased as of the end of 2023. All SO targets were met because the initial targets set in 2018 were very low.

UP6 – Despite the programme's delays, the negative impact of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, the implementation of integrated maritime surveillance activities has led to the development of an efficient joint real-time information exchange system with the appropriate levels of access. This will benefit the authorities involved in maritime surveillance and contribute to boosting the protection of the marine environment by increasing knowledge of the sea. This activity will also be used as a basis to build on maritime surveillance in the period 2021-2027. The effectiveness regarding RI 6.1 for UP6 cannot be assessed now, given that no monitoring has been carried out, but the successful implementation of the priority activities leads a positive assessment.

## CY

UP1 – Cyprus’s programme focused on sustainably managing fisheries resources, improving working conditions and training, and protecting and restoring marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

UP2 – Productive investments led to an increase in aquaculture production quantity and value, and the increase in production reached the upper limits of production. Jobs were maintained and created in the sector. Productive investments led to higher production volume and lower production costs. Compensation was provided to aquaculture farmers for the COVID-19 outbreak to mitigate market disruptions, reduced consumer demand, and closure of retail and distribution channels.

UP3 – Quality of data and response to data requests improved. Support for monitoring, control and enforcement has been added, and institutional capacities strengthened, without increasing the administrative burden. Projects significantly improved the fisheries control system by using technology to automate procedures and to cross-check and validate data. The programme improved the collection of fisheries data and knowledge on the state of stocks.

UP4 – FLAGS contributed to economic growth and the creation and maintenance of jobs, the plan to support marketing and processing of fishery products, and the plan to establish, expand and modernise restaurants and recreation areas (fish taverns). Training for fishers made a significant contribution to supporting employment and labour mobility.

Investments in infrastructure, regeneration, cultural centres and cultural events under UP4 helped to enrich public spaces by maintaining and increasing footfall from both local and foreign visitors; enhanced economic activities in these areas; promoted entrepreneurship and the recovery of people’s relationships with the sea; reduced the seasonality of tourism and upgraded the tourism offering; and improved livelihoods by offering outdoor recreational opportunities.

Transnational cooperation led to a Diving Routes Network with uniform standards and an effort to highlight the common characteristics of the island regions of Greece and Cyprus. The aim was to dynamically develop activities and specialised tourism such as diving tourism that shapes the identity of alternative tourism.

UP5 – Interest in the Fishery Processing Plan fell, and the programme is not believed to have contributed to encouraging investments in the processing of fishery and aquaculture products. For the Marketing Plan, on the other hand, interest was greater, and the implementation is considered satisfactory.

UP6 – Actions were implemented that contributed to achieving the goal of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) to maintain good environmental status of European seas and oceans. Projects and studies contributed significantly to improving knowledge of MPAs. The studies enhanced scientific knowledge and contributed more generally to the implementation of the IMP by filling knowledge gaps and integrating knowledge of the sea. A project on Infrastructure Development for the National Common Marine Surveillance Information Sharing Environment (Sea-CISE) was implemented; its main objectives were to upgrade existing systems and infrastructures to increase surveillance and interconnection capabilities, develop a National Common Information Sharing Environment through which information will be exchanged at national level, and prepare a National CISE Hub to enable future connection to other European CISE Hubs.

## **CZ**

The Czech Republic implemented EMFF operations under UP2, UP3 and UP5.

UP2 – Implementation of UP2 exceeded initial projections and was deemed successful.

SO 2.1 targets were achieved, and the associated projects were essential for introducing innovative processes and practices in aquaculture. Several indicator values were changed due to funding reallocations; however, all target values were achieved.

Implementation of SO 2.2 was also successful, mainly through productive investments in modernisation of fishing enterprises, purchase of equipment, reconstruction of ponds and removal of silt. There was low interest in diversification of aquaculture (due to low profitability) and new breeders (for various reasons). Based on an evaluation, a communication campaign was developed to increase the absorption capacity of these measures, but there was no increase in interest. Non-performance of these measures was due to the form of project financing (the need to pre-finance 100% of costs), the co-financing rate, the limited cashflow available to new entrepreneurs, banks' assessment of these projects as high-risk, and the requirement for education and professional competence. However, low progress in measures 2.2.b and 2.3 did not affect the achievement of indicators.

Empirical investigation found that SO 2.3 targets were achieved, had a positive impact on the environment and contributed to a reduction in the discharge of polluted water. There was a high demand for funding of recirculation equipment. Allocation for this measure and the target value of the result indicator were increased via OP modification. However, applicants abandoned many projects because of excessive audit enquiries. There was a higher occurrence of irregularities here compared to other measures. As a result, the measure's performance decreased and some resources were re-allocated elsewhere.

For SO 2.4, CZ introduced eel into inland waterways; the target quantity of eel was exceeded.

UP3 – The objectives of UP3 were achieved. For SO 3.1 a new web portal for data collection in aquaculture was established, the European eel management plan was revised, and eel migration was monitored.

For SO 3.2 new software to improve traceability of aquaculture products was planned, but during preparation it was found that a new software tool would be inefficient. The OP amendment introduced a new indicator 'Percentage of trained inspectors in the area of traceability'. However, this indicator also remained unfulfilled as the project aimed at training inspectors was not implemented.

UP5 – Operations implemented under SO 5.1 improved consumer information on fish consumption via publications and campaigns. Due to legislative and administrative obstacles, the original plans – including creation of a producer organisation – were not implemented due to a shortcoming in the national legislation concerning the recognition of aquaculture producer organisations. Due to the length of the legislative process, it was not possible to amend the relevant legislation in the 2014-2020 programming period.

SO 5.2 targets were achieved through specialised processing equipment and modernisation of existing processing. In addition, some unused funds from measure 5.2(b) were reallocated to measure 5.3.

Activity under SO 5.3 was extended in 2021 to strengthen the competitiveness of aquaculture enterprises by covering losses from COVID-19.

UP7 (TA) – provided support on the preparation, management, monitoring and evaluation of the OP, and on information, communication, and promotion measures. It contributed significantly to the successful implementation of the OP and to stable administrative capacity.

## **DK**

UP1 – The objectives of UP1 were accomplished via the schemes ‘Fisheries, nature and the environment’, ‘Investments on fishing vessels’ and ‘Fisheries ports and landing sites’, ‘Watercourse restoration’ and ‘Joint fishing efforts’.

As of 2023 output indicator targets had been successfully achieved for three out of four output indicators under SO 1.1. For Article 43(2) (measures to comply with the landing obligation), only three projects were completed out of a target of 17. Targets for SOs 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 were achieved. The 2023 targets have been overperformed for four out of 10 RIs (1.4.a, 1.1, 1.2 and 1.8). For two additional indicators (1.11 and 1.3) targets were achieved by 98%. The rest of the targets were not met entirely but are at the level of over 50% achievement. Schemes under UP1 contributed to reducing marine pollution due to fishing, improving aquatic biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems, ensuring a balance between fishing capacity and available fishing opportunities, and improving competitiveness and viability of fishing enterprises, including improving safety and working conditions. The 2022 programme amendment has made it more complicated to create new jobs in the fisheries sector than expected.

UP2 – Targets of output indicators for SO 2.2 were achieved; targets for SO 2.1 and 2.3 were partially fulfilled. Result indicator targets were achieved for all but two indicators. Volume produced in recirculation plants (RI 2.11) was slightly more than half of what was expected, due to major cancellations among these projects.

UP3 – Output indicator targets were partially met; all performance indicator targets for UP3 were reached and some were overperformed.

UP4 – Output indicators were achieved for two out of three measures, with the third one being partially fulfilled. Targets for result indicators are expected to be met.

UP5 – Objectives of UP5 will be met through the schemes ‘Promotion of sales’, ‘Production and marketing plans’ and ‘Processing of fishery and aquaculture products’. Achievement of indicators is mixed under UP5.

## **EE**

UP1 – targets of three output indicators included in the performance framework have been met or exceeded (number of projects on energy efficiency and climate change mitigation; number of projects on marine biodiversity and ecosystem protection and restoration; number of projects on added value, product quality and use of unwanted catches, and on fishing ports, landing sites, auction halls and shelters. Targets of the other two output indicators - number of projects on innovation, advisory services and partnerships with researchers and number of projects on conservation measures,

reduction of environmental impact of fishing activities and adaptation of fishing activities to species protection were achieved partially - 93% and 98% respectively.

The performance framework target set for the financial indicator was reached by 96% as of the end of 2023.

As of 31.12.2023, the target values of all result indicators have been achieved or exceeded as follows: number of selective fishing gears (achievement - 929, target - 830); restored spawning areas (achievement - 15, target - 15), change in the number of work-related injuries and accidents (achievement -3, target value -1), change in the % of work-related injuries and accidents compared to the total number of fishermen (achievement - 75%, target value - 25%), change in the fuel efficiency of fish capture (l/t) (achievement - 7.75, target -2.95), entrepreneurs participating in the activities of the partnership network (achievement - 521, target - 350), number of innovative products/processes (achievement - 13, target - 6).

UP2 – target values of all output indicators have been reached or exceeded. The performance framework target set for the financial indicator was reached by 94% by the end of the period. Target values of most (four out of seven) result indicators were achieved. Seven of the 10 ‘Production-related investments in aquaculture’ were completed during 2023, but achievement values of result indicators for these projects are not yet known. Volume of aquaculture production is forecast to increase by an additional 86 tonnes at the end of all projects, so it can be expected that the target value of the result indicator will be exceeded by the end of the programming period.

UP3 – The target output indicator value was by far exceeded. The financial targets of UP3 are 96% achieved; after an increase in budget allocated to UP3 during implementation, achievement of financial targets is expected to be 102.5% by the end of implementation. The targets of result indicators were all achieved.

UP4 – The output indicator target was exceeded. Financial targets are at 94% achievement and expected to be at 99% at the end of the programme period. Absorption was impacted by abandoned projects and depreciation of completed projects. The targets of all result indicators were achieved.

UP5 – There are currently five fishery and aquaculture producer organisations operating in EE. Four are in the fishing sector, and the other in aquaculture. The largest and oldest of these represent the trawling sector; two of them own about 95% of the fishing rights for sprat and herring in EE, and with EMFF support they have been able to better coordinate production activities among their members. An inland fisheries PO catch is bream; 30% of the production of this inland PO is sold directly to consumers, and the PO, with the help of its members, has opened fish shops to market its products. Products are also exported. EMFF support has helped to better organise activities that increase economic returns. Support for production and marketing plans has allowed the aquaculture sector to regroup and establish a recognised aquaculture PO in 2020. The increased need for support for storage aid became apparent during the coronavirus outbreak.

The target values of output indicators were exceeded. Financial achievement was at 91% and is expected to reach 98% by the end of the programme. Result indicator targets were achieved for two of the three indicators (‘Change in the value of first sales in producer organisations (EUR thousand)’ and ‘Additional value per employee (%)’). The target value of RI ‘Change in first sales volume in producer organisations (tonnes)’ was not achieved.

UP6 – The target for the number of operations was met for integrated maritime surveillance projects, and nearly (89%) met for ‘Number of projects for the protection and enhancement of knowledge of the marine environment’. The target level of the financial indicator is expected to be 99% due to the depreciation of completed projects. The target value of ‘Increase in the use of the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) for surveillance in the EU maritime domain (%)’ was met.

## ES

UP1 – In terms of result indicators, for SO 1, SO 2, SO 3, SO 4 and SO 6 the results achieved surpassed expectations. For SO 5 the expected objectives were achieved. All the 2023 targets for output indicators have been achieved.

UP2 – In terms of result indicators, SO 1 values were lower than expected. SO 2 and SO 3 achieved what was expected. SO 4 is expected to achieve its target value before the EMFF closes. SO 5 exceeded objectives in training activities. All OI 2023 targets have been achieved.

UP3 – The number of severe infringements detected was lower than expected. The value of RI 3.A.2 was higher than expected. All OI 2023 targets have been achieved.

UP4 – Achievements were higher than expected. All OI 2023 targets have been achieved.

UP5 – For Articles 66 and 70, seven RIs achieved their objectives in 2023. Achievements for operations implemented under Article 68 were much lower than the objectives. All OI 2023 targets have been achieved.

UP6 – Achievements were higher than expected. All OI 2023 targets have been achieved.

The implementation of priorities was affected by the late adoption of the Regulation with the subsequent OP approval on 13.11.2015 and the approval of the project selection criteria, the elaboration of the description of the management and control systems, and the system and procedure manuals. In addition, implementation was slowed by doubts on the eligibility of actions for some measures. Other additional circumstances also had an impact: COVID-19, the Ukraine war and the modification of the regulation.

Modification of the basic regulation, adaptation to the national rules and budgetary availability to face new measures affected the achievement of RI target values. Financial reprogramming also directly affected achievement of RIs. In 2019 the relevance of indicators was reviewed and new RIs in line with reality were assigned. During each financial reprogramming, the quantification of RI target values for each measure have been aligned with its financial allocation.

## FI

In most UPs progress has been as expected. However, some unexpected external factors, such as changes in global fish markets, rising costs and fluctuations of fishing quotas have may have temporarily affected the financial results of the industry and complicated progress. Implementation has progressed well in relation to output indicator targets. In 2023 the focus was primarily on closing the programme and completing the projects.

UP1 – The main objectives were to increase quantity and value of fish caught, improve profitability and maintain and increase employment. According to declarations made by beneficiaries, the objectives have been achieved. Targets have been clearly exceeded in terms of production value, profitability and employment. Result indicators data have been revised several times, but their demonstration of programme implementation cannot be fully relied on, as it has been difficult for beneficiaries to understand the indicators. In addition, there may be double counting of indicator values, for example when the same company receives support for several projects. The overall picture is clear: aid has made a significant contribution to the development and continuity of commercial fisheries. However, the sector faces major challenges and the EMFF has not adequately addressed challenges such as the entry of new fishers, the need to modernise the fleet or the problem of seals in coastal fisheries.

UP2 – The objective of UP2 was to increase the volume and value of aquaculture production sustainably and to improve profitability. EMFF support was directed towards investments that promote growth and the renewal of the sector, as well as diversification of production and reduction of environmental impacts. According to declarations by the companies supported, the target values of production volume, change in production value and net profit were realised. Aquaculture production has been growing slightly, and new large production permits were granted during the funding period but have only partially been realised.

Between 2015 and 2021, new authorisations have been granted for 2.3 million kg of fish from the sea, 6.7 million kg from recirculation plants and 0.255 million kg from inland waters, i.e. a total of just over 9 million kg. The value of output developed promisingly at the beginning of the financing period, but in 2020 it was back at the same level as at the start. The value of aquaculture in Finland is mainly determined by the volume of production and the prices of salmonids on the world market. The world market price of salmon rose to an exceptionally high level in the middle of the financing period but fell again in 2019. Employment in aquaculture has remained broadly at the same level during the funding period. No change targets were set for employment.

More investments were made in recirculation aquaculture facilities with the help of the Fund. New plants mainly focused on rainbow trout production. Growing rainbow trout into a food fish turned out to be more challenging than expected in recirculation plants. The companies have not yet reached the planned production levels and have so far incurred large losses. Many of the previously established plants ceased operations because production was not profitable.

Efforts were also made to increase offshore farming. New production licences were granted in the open sea areas off Luvia, Haukipudas and Pietarsaari. The volume of offshore production is increasing but remains low.

The eutrophication of the Baltic Sea continues. The ecological status of the sea areas in the Gulf of Bothnia had changed mainly from good to satisfactory. This will have affect permitting for offshore farms.

UP3 – EMFF support has financed, among other things, the development of control information systems, the acquisition of control equipment necessary for CFP control, the hiring of project staff and the training of staff. With the support of the Fund, the Natural Resources Institute Finland has implemented EU data collection in accordance with legal obligations.



UP4 – Employment performance targets were well overachieved, although the indicators for them tend to be ‘double counting’, as several projects help to maintain the same jobs.

An external evaluation of CLLD under UP4 determined that Finland’s 10 action groups cover the most economically significant areas from Åland to Lapland. They have opened a new opportunity for local people to participate in the development of fisheries in their own regions. The recently completed evaluation by the Natural Resources Institute Finland states that the local approach has brought added value to Finnish fisheries by activating new cross-sectoral cooperation and diversifying funding for fisheries projects.

Fisheries groups funded a total of 204 projects and spent a good EUR 8 million on them – about 5% of Finland’s EMFF funding. Most of the funding is provided by the EU and the state. As a result of fisheries group activities, municipalities and private operators have also become aware of the significance and potential of fisheries.

UP5 – The priorities of fish processing and trade are increasing the value of production, e.g. by developing marketing, increasing the processing rate and increasing local food and organic production and certification of production. The establishment of the Finnish fishmeal factory in 2016 was a strategic investment in Finnish fisheries, which was significantly supported by EMFF funding. The fishmeal plant significantly increased the use of herring and sprat in Finland.

Growth in salmon production in Norway slowed due to production problems, and demand for salmon on the world market continued to grow, which pushed up the price of salmon.

Large extensions were made in the processing plants. The biggest technological investment in the natural fish sector was made at the beginning of the funding period at the Kasnäs fishmeal plant. This has had a significant impact on the fishers’ market and has also enabled the production of Baltic Sea feed for Finnish fish farmers.

The objective of the measures in the processing sector was to increase the volume and value of first-hand sales of fish. In the long term, the turnover of fish processing has been growing and in 2019 it was approximately EUR 150 million higher than the reference year used in the Action Plan 2011. However, towards the end of the programme period the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine caused market disturbances, which explain the decline of the indicator on the volume of first sales to a negative level.

UP6 – The main objectives of UP6 were improving the state of the sea; developing maritime surveillance; promoting maritime spatial planning; developing marine knowledge; and developing a national maritime policy. The maritime policy package funded, among other things, the creation of a multisectoral maritime accident management system, coordination of maritime spatial planning, and studies on beach littering and the areas affected by underwater noise. In addition, the Itämeri.fi website, which provides information about the Baltic Sea and brings together key Finnish marine materials and services, was funded. According to an evaluation, the maritime policy package improved cross-administrative cooperation between authorities related to maritime policy. Cross-administrative cooperation made it possible to broaden the scope of maritime policy measures and to finance measures that fall between different administrative branches.

A wide range of actions were carried out in maritime surveillance, and the objectives were achieved fairly well. However, impacts on cost-effectiveness and management development are difficult to assess.

The objectives set for improving the state of the sea were very ambitious. The activities carried out in the projects have been good, but their impact on the state of the sea is rather limited. However, according to the evaluation, the projects have been successful in producing information on the marine environment and, to a certain extent, in preventing and mitigating environmental damage.

## FR

UP1 – Investments under SO 1.1 were made to improve selectivity, to test and develop technical solutions to understand and reduce incidental catches of protected species, and to improve port infrastructure for the management of discards. SO 1.2 implemented actions to strengthen the Natura 2000 network by strengthening the network of marine protected areas, contributing to the animation of sites, and finding solutions to achieve the conservation objectives of marine protected areas, with fisheries risk analysis and associated management measures. SO 1.3 contributed to a significant reduction in fishing effort in several segments considered to be out of balance. Five permanent cessation schemes were implemented instead of the seven planned. Two schemes were unsuccessful due to eligibility issues among the applicants. SO 1.4 had a positive impact on companies' ability to obtain bank loans necessary for the purchase of vessels; facilitating young fishers and improving the employment attractiveness of the sector. SO 1.5 included projects to improve safety and work conditions on board. Projects were undertaken to improve the value of catches and boost fishers' incomes. Many beneficiaries (2 130 beneficiaries, for more than 1700 vessels) benefited from temporary cessations related to the COVID pandemic in 2020. Following the adoption of the WestMed management plan several measures to reduce fishing effort were adopted, including two temporary cessation mechanisms. For SO 1.6 one measure was not opened, as authorities could not set up a simple access system for training fishers.

UP2 – Under SO 2.1, 71 operations were undertaken instead of 80 foreseen. These included feeding, genetics, changes in production practices and effluent management (e.g. an aquaculture herbal medicine project). Some fish farming projects were carried out by research centres or universities, including INRA. Other projects were carried out by professional structures or private companies. Under SO 2.2 productive investments in aquaculture exceeded objectives – these included shellfish farms, fish farms, algae farms, and others. Fish farming projects sought to increase the environmental and energy performance of farms, and shellfish farms increased the production potential of renovated public maritime parks and similar areas. EMFF support allowed for technical support structures and sector animation for networking and sharing of knowledge and experience. France is already the largest European producer of algae, and in recent years there has been a sharp increase in *Spirulina* production supported by the EMFF. Attractiveness of the profession is a key issue in shellfish farming due to the seasonality of the activity and the working conditions; the EMFF supported investments to improve working conditions and safety. The EMFF supported a large number of projects dedicated to the production of trout. France is a notable caviar producer; this sector was supported in the French outermost regions. EMFF support had an impact on the volume of aquaculture production (+7 000 tonnes or +5% of national production), the value of production (+EUR 32 million, +5% of national production) and, ultimately, net profits. A survey conducted as part of the final evaluation indicated a positive impact for projects in terms of the economic effect on companies' turnover, added value, net income, and jobs created/maintained. Projects under SO 2.3 were dedicated to resource efficiency,

reduction of water and chemical use (including recirculation systems), energy efficiency and renewable energy. Animal health and welfare projects under SO 2.4 led to a decrease in production volume.

UP3 – The major support functions of UP3 were to ensure the collection of data as part of a collection plan governed by the DCF-EUMAP Regulation and to strengthen CFP fisheries control, including the landing obligation for unwanted species. The measure related to data collection was administratively complex due to the high volume of data and the number of institutes involved, but simplification was achieved through SCOs. The measure related to control was administratively difficult due to complex procurement procedures for IT, equipment and purchase of vessels. Support was commissioned for a new patrol vessel in the Mediterranean and works onboard the patrol vessel Osiris II based in the Indian Ocean. Achievements under UP3 include better response to data calls from the European Commission and better use of fisheries control resources, in particular by increasing the target for detecting serious infringements of the CFP. Financial achievements and results of UP3 were affected in the first part of the programming by delays in the implementation of the EMFF and administrative complexity at all levels of projects' life cycles. The EMFF has contributed to improving and disseminating scientific knowledge, and to collecting and managing data. The EMFF enabled the VISIOCaptures application to be launched. France is a leader in the use of CCTV for reducing illegal discards; the EMFF supported an experiment in remote electronic monitoring with cameras on board certain fishing vessels over 18 metres long.

UP4 – During the programming of the EMFF, France chose to cover the territory broadly rather than concentrating resources on a small number of FLAGS; the aim was to promote the dissemination of this approach on all the coastlines concerned while considering local specificities. In total, 23 French FLAGS spread across eight regions were able to benefit from the CLLD. In total, 19.6 million euros were allocated to the EMFF CLLD and multiple projects were financed on various themes: the attractiveness of professions, water quality, management of maritime resources, education at sea, etc. CLLD had impacts on employment (work on the attractiveness of the sector), environment (understanding of pollution, protected areas), climate change (joint utilisation of vessels) and innovation (artificial reefs, recycling of plastic).

UP5 – Under SO 5.1, despite delays in programming, implementation of Production and Marketing Plans in almost all producers' organisations has contributed to the achievement of structural results in terms of organisation and processes. Financing was provided to various projects related to quality and origin identification signs (SIQOs). Introducing methodological frameworks and building a secure regional administrative chain have also made the task of certain training departments more complex. Under SO 5.2 the creation, extension and modernisation of processing plants addressed the needs of enterprises in terms of modernising, diversifying and improving working conditions, safety and hygiene, and enabled companies to save energy and reduce their emissions.

UP6 – Integrated Maritime Policy approaches were an innovation of the French EMFF programme. The initial overall budget allocation seemed modest, and at the beginning of the programming period there were only few commitments under this UP. A communication plan was launched in May 2018. It was a success, resulting in the submission of around 20 files in less than eight months.

## HR

UP1 – Commitments exceeded initial allocation (121.79% of allocated funds). 89% of total allocations for UP1 were paid out by the end of 2023. Significant progress in achieving the objectives was achieved. Goals for fleet reduction in unbalanced sectors were achieved, with a reduction of 17%. For SO 1.4, by the end of 2023, 126% of allocations had been contracted and 91% had been disbursed; several measures are expected to receive additional payments in 2024, including the measure related to fishing ports. Out of seven indicators, four exceeded or achieved their values. By the end of 2023, 104% had been contracted for SO 1.5, but only 36% of the allocation had been paid out, and this SO demonstrates the least progress. However, additional activities are expected under SO 1.5 in 2024.

UP2 – The funding committed reached 130% of the initial allocation, and 87% of the total allocation for this priority has been paid. Significant progress has been observed, taking into account the fact that payments have continued in 2024. 147% of the allocation was contracted for SO 2.1 and 20% of the allocation was paid out, and both measures under this SO are expected to be paid in 2024. For SO 2.1, most result indicator target values were exceeded, but for two indicators only 90% of the target was reached. For SO 2.2, by the end of 2023, 131% had been contracted and 86% of the allocation had been paid, and this SO is expected to be paid out in 2024. Out of five indicators, the target values of four were exceeded, while for one indicator the value was not reached by the end of 2023. 139% had been contracted for SO 2.3 and 94% of the allocation had been paid out. No funds were allocated for measure II.9, given that the only application received was found ineligible. Target values of all four result indicators were not achieved. For SO 2.4 122% had been contracted and 92% of the allocation had been paid out, and values for both indicators were exceeded.

UP3 – Commitments exceeded initial allocation (163%), and 80% of the total allocation for this priority had been paid to beneficiaries. For data collection, 140% of the allocation had been committed and 79% of the allocation had been paid; while 170% had been committed for control and implementation, and 80% paid.

UP4 – Total public support for UP4 is 99% of allocated funds. A total of EUR 13.34 million was paid, representing 44% of the total allocation. Most payments are expected in 2024, with significant progress towards achieving the targets by the end of implementation. Target value was exceeded for one indicator, while two indicators achieved 85% and 45% of their targets respectively.

UP5 – 80% of allocated funds have been committed and 67% of total allocations paid to beneficiaries. The 'storage aid' measure was not implemented. Additional progress is expected in 2024, as a large share of the committed funding relates to the Ukraine crisis compensation measure. Of the two result indicators, one exceeded its target values while the other did not reach the target.

UP6 – 99% of the allocated funds were committed. Funds have been allocated under all measures under this priority, and 90% of the total allocation has been paid.

## HU

UP1 – Based on the Indicator Definition List and Audit Guide prepared in 2020, the indicator is defined as: Changes in the extent of areas affected by habitat development investments under the MAHOP. The calculation method is hectares of land rehabilitated under the MAHOP project; 189 ha of land was rehabilitated.

UP2 – When the call for proposals was launched, it was planned that businesses would apply alongside research institutes and universities. Unfortunately, this did not happen due to the unfavourable funding intensity. The lesson learned is that the funding intensity has a significant impact on the potential pool of applicants, so the MA should take aid intensity more into account when selecting indicators. It should also choose a more appropriate indicator to measure the added value of resources allocated to innovation and knowledge transfer; this should be measured not by result indicator targets, but rather by widely publishing the results of the project within the framework of the dissemination obligation.

UP3 – Most targets for UP3 were met, or nearly met.

UP5 – For SO 5.1 ‘Improved market organisation for fishery and aquaculture products’ a performance indicator target value for market measures and storage aid was exceeded. Given that no PO has been established, result indicators 5.1.a and 5.1.b cannot be used. Target values of 5.1.c ‘Change in value of first sales for non-producer organisations’ and 5.1.d ‘Change in first sales volume for non-producer organisations’ were both exceeded. Targets for increases in aquaculture production were exceeded, with a five-fold increase in sales. The target for increased yearly fish consumption per person was achieved. The target for EU-marketed production turnover was not achieved (74%). Under SO 5.2, to measure investment in the processing and marketing sectors, the targeted number of 33 processing projects was not achieved. The target quantity of processed fish products of domestic origin was not met (47%). The first data provision of the three newly launched fish processing plants is expected in the second half of 2024. The MA reviewed the relevant data reported in previous years. Unfortunately, in some cases, the previously reported processed quantities included not only products of domestic origin, but also imports. After these values were corrected, a negative value (–961 tonnes) was recorded for 2023.

## IE

UP1 - BIM has made notable progress in promoting sustainability and innovation in Ireland's fisheries sector. In particular regarding the following OP objectives: sustainability and environmental stewardship (BIM expanded responsible fishing practices, improved marine protection, and reduced discards through better fishing technology); innovation and research (focused on developing selective fishing gear and minimizing bycatch with new technologies); training and skills development (offered training programs to enhance fishers' skills in sustainability, safety, and efficiency); economic support and infrastructure (provided financial assistance for fleet modernization, improving efficiency and safety); quality and sustainability initiatives (strengthened quality assurance and supported sustainability projects to enhance the marketability of Irish seafood); health and safety (improved health and safety through training and well-being programs, including mental health support); stakeholder engagement (facilitated collaboration between various stakeholders to support the fisheries community).

UP2 - BIM has advanced Ireland's aquaculture industry through various initiatives: sustainability (promoted eco-friendly aquaculture practices, supported sustainability certifications, and conducted research on invasive species); research and innovation (invested in new technologies and launched pilot projects, including integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA)); training and skills (offered extensive training on sustainability, best practices, and new technologies to the workforce); infrastructure support (provided grants to help businesses adopt efficient, sustainable technologies and expand operations); health and welfare (focused on improving fish health management and

promoting ethical treatment of farmed species); stakeholder engagement (facilitated dialogue among aquaculture producers, environmental groups, and local communities to build support and awareness).

IE also mentioned several challenges. COVID-19 disrupted markets for shellfish, leading to significant income loss. BIM provided financial support to affected businesses. Brexit introduced trade barriers, regulatory changes, and increased costs for exporting aquaculture products to the UK, complicating the export process for Irish businesses. The sector faced revenue losses, logistical challenges, and increased costs, prompting businesses to explore alternative markets and diversify product offerings. Support schemes via the Brexit Adjustment Reserve were implemented to help the seafood sector adapt to these new challenges. Overall, while COVID-19 and Brexit have presented significant challenges to the Irish seafood sector, they have also accelerated innovation and adaptation, positioning the industry for future growth and resilience.

UP3 - Key achievements of the Marine Institute: provided scientific advice for EU Multiannual Management Plans (MAPs) and LO; improved data analysis for ICES benchmarks, enhanced inshore research, and conducted studies on invasive species linked to aquaculture; developed new data visualisation tools and pilot studies on recreational fisheries to estimate fishing mortality; increased international coordination on data management and quality assurance through ICES and EU scientific groups; launched "At Sea Self Sampling Programmes" to continue data collection during COVID-19 disruptions and enhance Nephrops sampling.

Key Achievements of SFPA: upgraded IT systems, including new VMS technology, electronic logbooks, and geofencing for improved fleet monitoring and compliance; developed robust systems for timely data exchange with control authorities and other EU member states for better monitoring and traceability; introduced a formal Quality Management System, enhanced inspection tools, and automated data cross-checking to improve enforcement and regulatory compliance; developed a case management system to track and enforce sea-fisheries law infringements and improve systematic enforcement actions; piloted Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) integration and improved the SFPA website for real-time updates and quota management.

UP4 - FLAGs programme in Ireland funded various projects to support the sustainable development of fisheries areas. The key types of funded projects include: economic development and job creation (support for business start-ups and expansions in seafood, tourism, and related sectors; initiatives to improve market access for local seafood products); community development (enhancement of community facilities and public amenities; preservation and promotion of local maritime heritage and culture through community events); training and skills development (vocational training on sustainable fishing, business management, and marketing; capacity building for local organizations to better serve the community); environmental sustainability (projects focused on habitat restoration and marine conservation to protect coastal and marine ecosystems); tourism development (development of tourism infrastructure like visitor centres and trails; support for tourism services and promotional campaigns to attract visitors); projects aimed at promoting inclusivity and providing opportunities for all community members.

UP5 - Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) has launched various projects to improve the efficiency, quality, and sustainability of Ireland's seafood processing industry. Key initiatives include: technology and innovation (implementation of automation to improve efficiency and reduce labour costs; adoption of advanced processing techniques like high-pressure processing (HPP) to extend shelf life and

improve product safety; integration of digital tools for better traceability, inventory management, and production planning); sustainability and environmental impact (waste reduction through better by-product utilization and circular economy principles; energy efficiency upgrades in processing facilities to reduce carbon emissions; water management systems for efficient water use and wastewater treatment); quality assurance and food safety (support for achieving international food safety certifications (ISO, HACCP, MSC); development of laboratories and testing facilities for quality control; staff training on hygiene, quality control, and food safety best practices); product innovation (research and development of new seafood products to meet changing consumer preferences; value addition initiatives, such as ready-to-eat meals and premium packaging); training and skills development (technical training on processing technologies and sustainable practices; business management and export strategy training for processing companies); infrastructure development (upgrades and construction of modern processing facilities; expansion of cold storage facilities to maintain product quality); collaboration and networking (partnerships between processing companies and academic institutions for research and development; knowledge-sharing networks and the formation of industry clusters for collective growth and competitiveness).

UP6 - The Marine Biodiversity Scheme (MBS) has supported several projects aimed at enhancing fisheries and aquaculture management while protecting marine biodiversity. Notable initiatives include fisheries natura Interactions, aquaculture natura interactions, support for biodiversity and MSFD, Marine Spatial Planning/Blue Growth.

Fisheries natura interactions - risk assessments (comprehensive risk assessments for fisheries in SACs (Special Areas of Conservation) and SPAs (Spatial Protection Areas)) were conducted between 2014-2020, leading to the development of mitigation measures in six sites. These measures included closing sensitive habitats to mobile fishing gears. Specific studies were initiated to assess the impact of fishing activities, such as by-catch assessment, spatial mapping of dredge fisheries, and research on the effects of hydraulic dredging and oyster dredging on marine habitats.

Aquaculture natura interactions - between 2014-2023, assessments for 22 SPAs and 39 SACs were prepared for aquaculture activities. Over 1,000 licence decisions were made based on these assessments, with monitoring initiated in five Natura sites for shorebird impact evaluations.

Support for biodiversity and MSFD (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) - informatics project integrated and visualized fisheries and biodiversity data to support ecosystem-based management. Monitoring projects enhanced biodiversity monitoring, including aerial surveys and adding marine mammals, seabirds, and benthic habitat data to fisheries surveys.

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Blue Growth - 24 MSP and 8 BG projects were completed, providing scientific and spatial evidence to support marine planning. Data management projects improved integration, governance, and availability, with over 2000 datasets generated. Projects developed climate models, assessed climate change impacts on marine resources, and supported invasive species detection using e-DNA methods.

In 2023, EUR 1 240 786 was invested in seven projects under the UP6, BG, and MSP schemes. Notable completed projects include: climate and environmental monitoring: EUR 279 972 for improving data availability in aquaculture production areas; remote sensing and molecular analysis: EUR 478 191 for climate change and biodiversity monitoring; biogeochemical ECVs: EUR 434 175 for improving carbon system measurement capabilities; socioeconomic study of seaweed harvesting along the west coast

of Ireland; national sediment and benthic data (improved seabed imagery and benthic biodiversity data, along with compatibility improvements between datasets).

IE mentioned the following key achievements: improved data availability for climate and environmental monitoring; enhanced protection of marine resources for sustainable exploitation; significant strides in data integration, climate change research, and the sustainable management of marine resources through innovative technologies and collaborative efforts.

TA - TA initiatives identified by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) aimed to support the effective delivery of Ireland's EMFF Operational Programme. These initiatives ensured proper project management, administrative efficiency, and public awareness for the successful implementation of EMFF projects.

## IT

Progress was achieved regarding objectives related to the permanent cessation of vessels, the protection of biodiversity and marine ecosystems, and engine replacement. Positive results were also noted in competitiveness through interventions in ports and landing places, as well as in relation to added value and diversification of fishing activities. However, several obstacles have hindered the full achievement of these objectives: missing or cumbersome regulatory framework; rigidity of constraints and some implementing rules that discouraged potential beneficiaries; expenditure on financing applications not justified by the investment value; local sector context not always allowing the opportunities offered to be fully leveraged.

Additionally, there is a need for more involvement of fishers in innovation activities to facilitate the practical transferability of projects.

The current performance of the EMFF OP is estimated as satisfactory, with most output indicators meeting or exceeding their targets. However, certain areas need improvement. The EMFF OP's performance aligns well with expectations, demonstrating significant progress across most priorities.

UP1 showed a positive contribution towards sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fisheries. Replacement of engines (Article 41(2)) achieved good results particularly among medium-sized boats (10-16m). Other interventions with environmental effects had a lower impact for different reasons: limited financial allocations, unclear sector regulations, etc. Investments on board made it possible to purchase selective capture systems.

The best results were seen in interventions in ports and landing sites providing services to improve the working conditions of fishers (Article 43); in added value (Article 42); and in diversification and new forms of income (Article 30), which involved many young fishers. Low incentives to invest in a sector with decreasing fishing quotas affected the UP1 performance. In some cases, full implementation would only be possible by changing the regulatory framework that is currently missing or cumbersome. The rigidity of the envisaged constraints and some implementing rules also discouraged the participation of potential beneficiaries. Targets for output indicators have been reached, but financial targets were not achieved.

UP2 – Measures to improve environmental performance have not had the expected impact, because Italian aquaculture is already characterised by a low environmental impact. Investments in



aquaculture (Article 48) were mainly aimed at modernising facilities to improve production performance, working conditions, animal welfare, the quality of production and the added value of the product. In the case of shellfish farming, many interventions have focused on the purchase of vessels to reduce energy consumption. Interventions to increase aquaculture activities (Articles 51 and 52) have achieved the least results, mainly due to the frequent absence of maritime spatial planning, and the difficulties linked to the application of the 'Bolkenstein' rule on concessions. There was a lack of market interest in introducing organic aquaculture (Article 53). Better results have been obtained with innovation interventions (Article 47) that have received interest from producers and research. Financial targets for UP2 were not reached. Only one of two output indicator targets has been reached: number of operations on productive investments in aquaculture. Low results for the number of projects reducing the impact of aquaculture were due to the structural characteristics of Italian aquaculture, which already has a reduced environmental impact.

UP3 – All targets have been reached. Planned actions have been carried out in accordance with the Programme and have made it possible to achieve the objectives set.

UP4 – 53 FLAGs were activated under the Programme, with an average allocation of around EUR 1.6 million each. Financial targets have not yet been reached, but output indicator targets have been. The Programme made it possible to increase territorial cohesion, while it has been less effective in increasing employment, due to the difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Strategies supported local communities through the diversification of fishing activities (tourism), the development of commercial opportunities for new or underexploited species, the development of the local supply chain (short supply chains) and the creation of small local infrastructures to support fishing. Administrative delays slowed the implementation and activation of FLAGs. FLAG selection lasted two years longer than anticipated due to cumbersome procedures for launching FLAGs and administrative appeals. Some partnerships were set up as mere associations rather than legal entities; these were too weak to be able to manage financial activities, and this slowed down implementation. Funding per FLAG ranges from under EUR 1 million to EUR 4-5 million in some cases, varying by region and the number of FLAGs. This 'fragmentation' allows local specificities to be accounted for, but economic consistency is necessary to ensure better functioning of FLAGs and to limit administrative costs. Despite issues, FLAGs produced positive results from funded interventions and from the creation of a dense network of relationships between institutions, private operators, associations, etc., strengthening territorial cohesion.

UP5 included compensation for the increased costs of energy due to the war in Ukraine. Projects were undertaken on the promotion, dissemination and information of fish products by setting up and attending fairs and events (Article 68). Article 69 saw projects carried out both by large companies, with state-of-the-art facilities, and in small craft workshops that more frequently aim to exploit local resources. Output indicators have exceeded targets. The failure to reach financial targets is due, at least in part, to the need to reallocate resources to finance compensation measures for the crisis in Ukraine.

UP6 – Both financial and output indicator targets have been reached. Collaboration agreements were signed with the Italian Space Agency (Article 80(a)) and the General Staff of the Italian Navy (Article 80(c)) to improve knowledge of the marine world, stimulate innovation, and facilitate the collection, free exchange, re-use and dissemination of data on the state of the oceans. This contributed to increasing knowledge of the sea through more efficient and secure exchanges of information between sectors.

## LT

For almost all the SOs, output indicators reached their targets and in most cases exceeded them. In a few cases where targets were not met, reasons are given below.

UP1 – Financial indicator targets have not yet been reached, but commitments now exceed initial allocations (106%). Most indicators were achieved or nearly achieved. Some targets were not achieved because beneficiaries terminated contracts on their own initiative. Output indicators for ‘Energy efficiency and climate change mitigation: Replacement or modernisation of main or ancillary engines’ were not achieved. The entire fisheries sector lost 43% of its workforce between 2013 and 2022, while companies that received funding lost 38% of their workforce, strongly affecting the achievement of project results.

UP2 – Financial indicator targets were not yet reached (97%). In 2020, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Lithuanian aquaculture sector experienced market disturbances: the closure of outlets and distribution channels led to lower prices and sales volumes and disrupted exports. To mitigate the negative consequences of COVID-19 on the Lithuanian aquaculture sector it was decided to implement a new measure under Article 55 of the EMFF. In total, 37 aquaculture enterprises received support and output indicator targets were achieved. Support under this instrument was no longer available in 2022-2023.

UP3 – Financial indicator targets were not yet reached (99%), but targets for output indicators were achieved. The RI “increase in percentage of fulfilment of data calls” was at 0% since mandatory data is always reported and the value cannot increase from 100%. The more than 5% of vessels subject to physical control were almost always inspected at a Lithuanian seaport, except during the pandemic. Accordingly, the OP investments correspond to an increase in the number of landings subject to physical control. A 45% percentage change was observed between 2015 and 2023.

UP4 – Financial indicator targets were not yet reached (93%). The impact of interventions under UP4 on jobs created and maintained and businesses created were below their targets but were found to be positive, as 46.5 jobs were created (67% of the target), 27.6 jobs were maintained (18% of the target) and 10 enterprises were created (50% of the target).

UP5 – Results were generally seen as positive. Members of associations belonging to POs showed an increase in both the value and volume of trade (exceptions being the Lithuanian Fishery Producers Association and the Lampetra Association). A new association, the Deep-sea Fisheries Association, was also set up, bringing together companies active in distant-water fisheries. Financial indicator targets were reached at a level of 86%; values were lower than previously because in 2023 two projects supporting the processing of fishery products were terminated at the initiative of the beneficiaries.

## LV

Targets were fully achieved (100%) for almost all measures under the Latvian programme. In some cases they were exceeded, indicating higher contributions than initially planned within the available funding, and thus higher cost-efficiency.

UP1 – The target value for RI 1.12 “Number of ports where infrastructure is developed” for 2023 reached 129%, since by the end of 2023 the necessary infrastructure for fishers had been developed in nine ports instead of the seven planned. RI 1.13 “Developed innovations” reached 10 projects

implemented by the end of 2023, representing 91% of the target value. Considering that the results of four more projects were not included, since their final payments are planned for 2024, the MA forecasts that this indicator will reach approximately 127%. Implementation of the measure on permanent cessation, with its RI 1.6 “Changes in the proportion of unbalanced fleets (%)”, reached 82%.

UP2 – RI 2.1 “Changes in aquaculture production volume” for 2023 achieved 195% of its target, meaning that instead of the planned 400 tonnes, productive investments in aquaculture production have reached 782 tonnes. RI 2.8 “Employment created” for 2023 reached 187%, with 15 jobs as instead of the planned eight created under “Productive investments in aquaculture.” RI 2.10 “Innovations developed” for 2023 stood at 67%, with four projects fully implemented out of the planned number of six. However, considering that the results of two more projects are not included, as their final payments are planned for 2024, the MA forecasts this indicator’s achievement at approximately 100%.

UP3 – The target value for RI 3.A.2 “Landings that have been physically controlled” for 2023 is set at 15%. In 2023, 12% of landings were physically controlled, which is 80% of the target value.

UP4 – The result achieved for RI 4.1 “Employment created” is 65 jobs, which is 93% of the target value set for 2023. Given that the jobs planned within a project must be created no later than the third year after the project’s implementation, the maximum number of jobs created by the measure will not be reached until after the planning period ends.

UP5 – RI 5.2 “Fishery and aquaculture processing companies that have made investments” for 2023 achieved 124% of its target: the number of companies involved in implementing projects reached 31%, compared to the planned 25%.

## **MT**

Overall objectives were met, with some exceptions where explanations were provided. The only low achievement relates to UP5, as described below.

UP1 – Overall objectives were met. Considering that all operations were fully implemented by the end of 2023, all output indicators under this UP were positively registered, with 11 operations achieved in comparison to 10 operations set in Section 7 of Malta’s EMFF OP version 8.0. However, there were some issues with Article 30 – Diversification and new forms of income under SO 1.4. Although the open call was issued three times, the few applications submitted were considered inadmissible. Calls were not re-issued by the MA due to a lack of interest from fishers. Financial indicator achievements were still 104% of the 2023 targets.

UP2 – By the end of 2023 all three operations under UP2 were fully implemented. The OP modification proposed by the MA included revisions made to RI 2.9 in order to give a realistic picture in terms of FTE in the aquaculture sector at the aggregate level of Union Priority, and to avoid double counting in the Open Data Platform. Instead of 153 FTE, the result indicator was amended to 51 FTE under each SO.

UP3 – To introduce the Ukraine compensation scheme into the OP and to absorb 100% of the EMFF funds allocated, funds were shifted from UP3 (Article 76) to UP5 (Article 68(3)). To accommodate this,

revisions were made to output and financial indicators. The output indicator was thus successfully achieved, since all nine operations were fully implemented by the end of 2023.

UP5 – Under SO 5.1 – Improvement of market organisation for fishery and aquaculture products, both RIs over-achieved. The OP was modified to include compensation for market disruption caused by the Ukraine war, and as a result the output indicator was increased to 2, though this will not be reached. To allow the Ukraine compensation measure to be added, the financial target for 2023 increased from EUR 250 000 to EUR 1 250 000. The MA issued a restricted call to the beneficiary, a competent authority which proposed to implement the measure. Although the grant was successfully awarded, however, the beneficiary notified the MA that the scheme did not yield the projected results and withdrew the application.

UP6 – The output indicator target for 2023 was achieved with one operation being fully completed.

## NL

Overall achievements are high, and performance meets expectations.

UP1 – The overall finding in 2017 was that interest in UP1 was lower than expected at the start of the programme period. This picture is somewhat more nuanced at the end of the fund's implementation. With regard to the innovation schemes, interest was certainly lagging. There was good interest in compensation related to the coronavirus crisis, however, as well as to the investment schemes and the SAWEVI scheme. Public procurement has also been successfully implemented. It is therefore expected that the entire budget under UP1 will be exhausted. However, the implementation of many projects has been delayed due to the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, the ban on electric pulse fishing has reduced the innovation readiness of the sector and the effectiveness of the fund under UP1, since part of the funds were dedicated to pulse research and certain actions planned under UP1 did not take place due to the ban. In 2020 a temporary cessation scheme was opened in response to the COVID-19 crisis, for which 293 applications were submitted and 271 were granted. This was in line with expectations.

On a separate note, although the fishing industry cites sufficient reasons for innovation (e.g. improving catches, reducing fuel consumption, meeting the requirements of a label, increasing catch quality and reducing seabed disturbance), innovation schemes are still falling short of expectations. Participants do not know in advance whether an experiment will yield good results, and losses (including smaller catches) are not compensated, so fishers may not wish to be partners in research projects. The quantitative analysis that is required prior to a project implementation is also a hindrance. Everything is pre-framed in a project plan; if the planning subsequently deviates, a modification request must be introduced and that entails additional administrative burden. Fishing trips to support innovative experiments can lead to lost gear and therefore decreased turnover. In view of the increasing prices of vessels and fishing gear, this entails additional financial risks. The obligation to indicate in advance which vessels will be used during a project is also difficult to match with practice. The reporting obligations (including scientific accountability) are also perceived by fishers as excessive and as an accountability burden.

UP2 – As a result of the COVID-19 crisis a compensation scheme has been opened for the aquaculture sector. From 2016 to 2019 the Innovation Aquaculture scheme was opened to promote innovations in aquaculture. Due to the complexity of the regulation, launching the scheme initially appeared to

take considerably more time than expected in 2016. 10 applications were submitted that year, of which only two were approved. Proposals were rejected for procedural reasons, either because the documents were submitted too late or because proposals were not entirely clear. Following 2016 this scheme was also opened in 2017, 2018 and 2019. During this period, 20 applications were submitted and 13 were approved. It was also concluded that the quality of the proposals has improved over time. The sector is characterised by many innovative developments and support schemes have not been able to meet demand. However, these developments sometimes have low Technology Readiness Levels, so the advisory committee scores them low in terms of their feasibility of implementation. Many innovative initiatives involve project partners who are not financially strong enough, often because they are young companies. As a result, co-financing with equity is not sufficient, grants cannot be awarded for a number of projects, and the scheme therefore does not meet the financial needs of young aquaculture entrepreneurs.

UP3 – Overall, objectives were achieved. 13 projects under Article 76 aimed at improving control and enforcement under the CFP were selected at the beginning of 2023. However, due to the interruption of payments for Article 76, the ongoing projects were withdrawn from the EMFF and financed entirely nationally (three projects funded fully and one partly). These are multi-annual ongoing IT projects aimed at strengthening support for fisheries monitoring, control and enforcement, improving basic/partial registrations and continuing to comply with control and CFP requirements in international fisheries data exchange. All projects have now been completed within the set deadline, and the objectives have been achieved.

Implementation of UPs 5, 6 and 7 was seen as successful.

## **PL**

With the eligibility period of expenditure in the Programme ending in 2023, the implementation stage of financial assistance has been completed. For all UPs, full assessment of the effects of the implementation will be possible only after all the beneficiaries have submitted their payment applications and all expenditure has been settled. Unexpected issues (COVID-19 and Russian aggression against Ukraine) led to adjustments of RIs and reallocations between priorities. The Polish MA mentioned that the simplification of indicator calculations for the EMFAF 2021-2027 was an improvement, allowing more effective monitoring of results and facilitating quicker corrective actions if outcomes are unsatisfactory.

UP1 – Differences in timing of deadlines for approval of indicators make it difficult to assess achievement. Calculation methods for some indicators were also seen as complicated.

UP2 – The reporting system was deemed complicated. Beneficiaries chose their own deadlines for reporting result indicators. These deadlines vary significantly, even for similar operations, causing delays and inconsistencies in assessing outcomes. Calculation methods for certain indicators are complex, making monitoring difficult. Some indicators were only assessed during amendments to the OP, complicating the process further.

## **RO**

Progress towards achieving the objectives of programme implementation met overall expectations. In addition to some expected hindrances to programme implementation (COVID-19, the conflict in

Ukraine and inflation) the audit mission 2020/RO/thematic audit/MARE/E1 and system audit report no. 02003/25.11.2022 made by the Audit Authority revealed several irregularities. Overall, most output indicator targets were met, or nearly met. Financial indicators were less than 50% of 2023 targets for UPs 1, 3, and 4.

UP1 – Targets achieved for jobs created were over 50% in 2023, and targets for jobs maintained were exceeded. Targets for number of operations were met or nearly met. Amounts declared to the EC represented less than half of the 2023 financial target. The most important investment that should have contributed to the fulfilment of the financial indicator of this priority, the modernisation of the port of Midia, was not carried out. The National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture started preparing the necessary documentation for the Midia project, but failed to obtain the necessary authorisations or to complete the work. Only in 2023 was the OP modified to allow compensation for the conflict in Ukraine. To support beneficiaries, the MA introduced a facility allowing up to 50% advance payments of invoices. However, even this mechanism could not prevent the abandonment of four out of nine contracts.

UP2 – Overall implementation performance of UP2 was lower than expected. Achievements of output indicators and result indicator targets for measures under UP2 were mixed, with some far exceeding expectations and some far under-achieving. Financial indicator achievement for amounts declared to the EC was 58% of the 2023 targets. The MA drew up selection criteria, which were approved in the Monitoring Committee, and an applicants' guide. However, problems reported by the Audit Authority regarding COVID-19 compensation made the authorities keen to avoid the risk of repeating some interpretation errors. As a result, the applicants' guide was not approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the call for funding applications was abandoned. During the annual assessment of the state of implementation of the OP, the MA found that the progress of measure II.2 was not as expected. Measures were therefore taken to boost the process of submitting and selecting funding applications, such as improving the guidelines for applicants, modifying the working procedures of the MA to eliminate redundant requirements, and reducing the administrative burden. The number and percentage of contracted funding applications and appeals has doubled, and progress is now as expected. To support beneficiaries, the MA introduced a facility allowing up to 50% of advance payments of invoices.

UP3 – Output and result indicator targets for 2023 were met or nearly met. Public funding declared to the EC was 43% of the 2023 financial target. For four contracts the final reimbursement requests have not yet been paid, so it is estimated that the financial indicator will reach at least 75% of the target.

UP4 – Public funding declared to the EC was 35% of the 2023 financial target. The estimated amount still to be declared in the payment applications means this figure could eventually reach 59% of the target. 28 projects were selected for preparatory support, plus 22 local development strategies. All output indicators were met.

UP5 – The amount declared to the EC was 62% of the financial target, and the estimated amount still to be declared could push this to 67%. Result indicator targets were achieved and nearly all output indicator targets were achieved.

UP6 – Amounts declared to the EC were 99.9% of the financial target. Result indicator targets were achieved.

## SE

Implementation of the Swedish EMFF programme has overall been very successful. Targets for output indicators have already been achieved for nearly all SOs, and the others are very close to full achievement. Financial targets are nearing completion for all UPs.

UP1 – Output indicator targets were reached for all SOs under UP1. For SO 1.1 ‘Reducing the impact of fishing on the marine environment’, targets for the percentage reduction in unwanted catches were met, but the reduction measured in tons was lower than expected. This can be explained by the fact that estimated ex-ante changes were calculated from the average fleet structure in Sweden. However, most applications concerned small-scale fisheries with lower levels of catches. The dominance of small-scale fishers in the sector had a positive effect on reducing fuel consumption. Many applications related to protecting biodiversity and marine ecosystems (SO 1.2); the corresponding output indicators achieved their targets and have increased coverage of protected areas. However, most projects related to protection of areas that are not Natura 2000, and thus only one out of the two RIs achieved its target. SO 1.3 aims to ensure balance between fishing capacity and available fisheries resources, and permanent cessation is a measure supporting this aim. No value was reported for the corresponding RI “Change (in percent) of unbalanced fleets”, since none of the 13 scrapped vessels belonged to the previously identified category (‘unbalanced fleet’). There was a high demand for projects improving the competitiveness and profitability of fisheries, in particular small-scale coastal fishing and improving safety and working conditions (SO 1.4), and result and output indicator targets were achieved. There were fewer applications for projects to strengthen technological development and innovation, including increased energy efficiency and knowledge transfer (SO 1.5) and vocational training, new professional skills and lifelong learning (SO 1.6); however, the target number of operations were exceeded for both measures.

Under UP2, output indicator targets were reached for some SOs but not for others, though the numbers of applications received were still strong for measures under these SOs. Compared to other SOs under UP2 there were higher numbers of applications for SO 2.2 ‘enhanced competitiveness and profitability of aquaculture, including improved safety and working conditions, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises’ and SO 2.3 ‘protection and restoration of aquatic biodiversity, improvement of ecosystems connected to aquaculture and promotion of resource-efficient aquaculture’.

All output indicator and result indicator targets were reached for UP3, and financial indicator targets are near full achievement.

The implementation of UP4 is based on three CLLD actions on preparatory support, implementation projects and cooperation projects respectively. Under UP4, all output and result indicator targets were met, and financial indicator targets were very near full achievement.

Under UP5, output indicator and result indicator targets were achieved for SO 5.1 and output indicator targets were very close to completion for SO 5.2. Financial indicator targets were near full achievement for UP5.

## **SI**

UP1 – Calls for tender under the measures related to fishing ports, landing sites, auction halls and shelters were successfully completed. Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity was also successfully implemented and completed. The financial indicator was 98% achieved.

UP2 – Four measures were successfully implemented and completed, with milestones and targets for 2023 reached.

UP3 – ‘Supervision and Enforcement’ and ‘Data Collection’ measures were implemented. Milestones for 2023 are almost entirely met, and output indicators were reached or exceeded for both measures.

UP4 – As part of the implementation of the CLLD measures, four FLAGs and local development strategies were selected and approved. In the 2014-2020 programming period 61 projects were approved and successfully completed by Istria LAG, Soča Valley LAG, Gorenjska LAG and Posavje LAG. In addition to the already mentioned operations, four operations related to preparatory support and 24 to running costs and animation. Financial indicators were 98% achieved, and RI target values have been fully achieved.

UP5 – Measures for the processing of fishery and aquaculture products, marketing measures and financial compensation in fisheries and aquaculture were implemented. All approved operations have been successfully completed. In 2023 a new call for proposals was launched for financial compensation due to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. Financial targets were 97% complete.

UP6 – Actions were implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Ministry of Infrastructure. The RI target values for the measure ‘protection of the marine environment and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources’ were met or exceeded. The financial indicator achievement was 99% of the milestone.

## **SK**

The Slovakian EMFF programme implemented UP2, UP3 and UP5. The achievement of output, financial and result indicators were well below their targets for UP3 and UP5. For UP2 financial indicator targets were not achieved, but output indicator objectives were reached. Following a mid-term evaluation in 2019 indicator values were adjusted, but this did not lead to improved achievement. A number of remedial measures, some ongoing, have been undertaken to improve implementation in the 2021-2027 period, including simplification and improvement of administrative systems in the application process and improvements in communication with applicants.



## 10 Horizontal principles of implementation

- Role of partners

Implementation of an OP under the EMFF involves diverse stakeholders across EU Member States. These include local, regional, and urban authorities, economic and social partners, civil society organisations, and institutions dedicated to promoting social inclusion and equality. Monitoring Committees are established in line with EU regulations to oversee OP implementation, holding regular meetings to facilitate stakeholder involvement and ensure transparency. While many MSs report strong stakeholder consultation and feedback mechanisms, specific details on the engagement and contribution of partners vary significantly and are often underreported.

- Equality and non-discrimination

Most MSs have embedded equality and non-discrimination principles within their OP processes. Actions promoting gender equality and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups are highlighted, with varying degrees of detail provided regarding specific measures taken under the EMFF. However, reporting on challenges faced in implementing these principles often lacks substantive information. Some MSs have successfully implemented measures that explicitly promote gender equality in fisheries and aquaculture sectors, while others demonstrate minimal engagement or lack specific initiatives to advance these goals.

- Sustainable development

The emphasis on sustainable development is a key aspect of the OP across MSs, with many incorporating environmental regulations and best practices within their operational frameworks. Common measures include adherence to national laws on water quality and conservation, promoting energy efficiency, and innovative aquaculture practices. However, detailed reporting on specific challenges encountered during the implementation of sustainable development actions is often omitted. While some countries delineate clear sustainable development goals and related funding, others provide limited information on how these objectives are being met, particularly concerning biodiversity and Natura 2000 compliance.

Below is a non-exhaustive summary of information provided by MSs in this AIR section.

### 10.1 Principles of partnership and multilevel governance

#### AT

Implementation of the OP involved a variety of partners including competent regional, local, and urban public authorities, economic and social partners, civil society organisations (such as environmental NGOs), and bodies promoting social inclusion, gender equality, and non-discrimination.

The MC was established in line with Article 47 of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 to oversee the OP implementation. The committee included representatives from federal and state government bodies, chambers of commerce and agriculture, NGOs focused on environment and equal opportunities, and the European Commission. Since its inception on April 22, 2015 the committee has held nine meetings before the submission of the current AIR.

Different partners were involved at various stages of the OP, including implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

## **BE**

The AIR mentions that a wide range of stakeholders were involved throughout the various stages of the OP implementation. Their involvement covered sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, processing and marketing. The report broadly describes the participation of stakeholders in the OP's implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

## **BG**

The MC in Bulgaria includes a wide range of stakeholders, including public institutions, environmental and social bodies, scientific organisations, and NGOs related to fisheries. This structure supports dialogue across multiple sectors, ensuring that partners from fisheries, aquaculture, processing and marketing are well-represented.

Partners in the MC have access to programme information and are encouraged to contribute through public consultations and decisions regarding the implementation and amendment of the programme. The process includes thorough public consultations, especially before calls for proposals, where guidelines are made available online, and feedback is actively sought and addressed.

Information is readily accessible through centralised online platforms where partners can ask questions, provide input and review responses. This system ensures transparency and responsiveness, as modifications to guidelines often occur based on partner feedback.

Various events and regular meetings within the Fishery Advisory Council help to increase the administrative capacity of partners, allowing them to participate effectively in the process.

## **CZ**

The Czech MC included 34 partners from various sectors such as national and local government, scientific institutions, industry and NGOs. The aquaculture, processing, and scientific sectors, particularly in data collection, were well represented. Partners participated in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes primarily through the MC. Communication and cooperation among partners were reported to be good.

## **EE**

Partners were involved at various stages of the EMFF implementation. The Estonian Fisheries Strategy 2014-2020, which served as the foundation for the EMFF implementation plan, was developed with input from partners through the Fisheries Council and the Expert Committee. The Fisheries Council included representatives from the fishing sector, government agencies, scientific institutions, and environmental organisations like the Estonian Green Movement. The Expert Committee comprised representatives from national institutions, research bodies, umbrella organisations and other relevant partners. The MC also involved representatives from relevant ministries, public institutions, sector experts and European Commission observers.

Representation covered various sectors, including small-scale fisheries, aquaculture, processing, marketing, and measures related to data collection, control, enforcement, and IMP.

Partners were actively involved in programme development, implementation, and monitoring through the Fisheries Council and Monitoring Committee. The process included regular consultations and discussions, particularly through working group discussions where information and proposals were exchanged.

Information was shared electronically and through working group discussions. Members of the Fisheries Expert Committee and the Fisheries Council were kept informed of discussion outcomes and interim summaries.

## **ES**

The AIR describes a wide range of partners involved in the EMFF implementation, including local authorities, social and economic partners, and bodies representing civil society, such as environmental organisations, NGOs, and bodies promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination.

Representation includes various stakeholders from the fisheries sector (including small-scale fisheries, aquaculture, processing, and marketing), the EMFF Monitoring Committee, the Women's Network in the fishing sector, the Women's Institute, research and training centres, and the Network of Fishing Groups.

Partners play crucial roles in the interaction between the fishing sector and society. Information regarding the OP is widely disseminated via the website of the Minister of Fisheries. Tools such as a Vademecum on EMFF interpretation, meeting notifications, workshop details and opportunities for public comments ensure active participation and information exchange.

Comprehensive information is made available online, including consultation outcomes, workshops, awards, and opportunities for public input on fund regulations. This ensures transparency and encourages citizen participation.

Actions to increase administrative capacity include administrative simplification, revision of roles, reduction of documentation, increased use of simplified cost options (SCOs), and enhanced advisory support before application submission and grant justification.

## **FI**

The OP was prepared by a diverse working group including representatives from the fishery sector, environmental organisations and regional actors. The OP was implemented in collaboration with other authorities, with the monitoring committee having representation from various ministries, authorities and organisations.

The OP includes representation from small-scale inland fisheries, coastal fisheries, aquaculture, the fish trade, fish processing, and the grocery sector, as well as fish promotion organisations.

Information on the OP's general development was collected from industry stakeholders and entrepreneurs as part of the programme's evaluation process.

The OP implementation involved a partnership with regional authorities, particularly the fishery ELYs, which acted as mediating bodies responsible for granting decisions and advising applicants.

Efforts were made to promote dialogue and networking between fisheries administrators and the industry. Development groups for coastal and inland fishing, aquaculture, and fish trade and processing meet twice a year, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry serving as chairman.

## **FR**

The AIR describes the involvement of various relevant partners, including competent regional, local, urban, and other public authorities, economic and social partners, as well as bodies representing civil society, such as environmental organisations, NGOs, and bodies promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination.

The document mentions the representation of the fisheries sector, particularly small-scale fisheries, aquaculture, processing, and marketing. However, there is no consideration of the representativeness of these partners beyond the sector they represent, such as the extent to which small-scale coastal fisheries (SSCF) are adequately represented.

The involvement of different partners through comitology (committee-based governance) at various levels is described.

The AIR provides a simplified description of how partners can access information and submit proposals. It primarily mentions that partners can submit proposals to the MA through a designated technical lead.

## **HU**

The management of development policy resources is handled by the FAIR system, which manages EU operational programmes and ensures the monitoring of grant management processes.

The MAHOP MC is responsible for decision-making and oversees the effective, efficient, and quality implementation of the OP. The MC includes 22 voting members from various government and non-government organisations, along with five consultative members, including representatives from the European Commission and other relevant authorities.

The e-cohesion portal supports the management of administrative tasks for applicants and beneficiaries, accessible via the website [www.palyazat.gov.hu](http://www.palyazat.gov.hu). Public comments on MAHOP calls for proposals are collected via the professional website or sent to the Széchenyi 2020 customer service email. Responses to these comments are published before the final call documentation is released.

The MC includes members from various sectors and NGOs, with equal voting rights. Additional consultative members include representatives from the European Commission and other relevant authorities, supporting the effective participation of partners in the OP processes.

## **IE**

The EMFF MC was established at the inception of the OP. This committee comprises of the MA, social partners, horizontal pillars, other ESIF Managing Authorities, Implementing bodies and agencies and

non-voting members. The MC met regularly over the lifetime of the OP and was responsible for governance on the implementation of the OP. Their functions were outlined by the agreed Rules of Procedure.

## **IT**

Regional authorities play a role in the implementation, adhering to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. Representatives from the fisheries and aquaculture sectors ensure that sector-specific interests are addressed. Environmental and non-governmental organisations contribute a broader perspective in programme development. Partners were engaged actively throughout the preparation and implementation stages via monitoring committees, institutional and technical meetings. Local Development Strategies under UP4 involved significant partnership input, supported by the National FLAG Network and numerous meetings.

Small-scale coastal fishing received special attention with expedited processing, preferential criteria and targeted measures, highlighting its significant impact through funding and payments.

Partners were deeply involved at all stages from implementation to evaluation, through committees and meetings, ensuring transparency and participatory governance.

The MA used multiple channels, including websites, social media and meetings, to ensure transparency and facilitate stakeholder engagement and decision-making.

## **LT**

Selection rules for relevant partners are approved by the Minister of Agriculture to ensure adherence to European Commission recommendations. Sector representation includes official partners and additional sector representatives to address sector-specific issues and expectations.

The partners involved are government authorities, fisheries and aquaculture representatives, environmental NGOs, scientific institutions and local activity groups. Their roles span the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the OP.

Partner selection and role definitions are regulated by national legal acts to ensure effective participation in OP processes.

## **LV**

The Fisheries Advisory Council oversees implementation and policy formation involving both state and non-governmental organisations in the fisheries sector. The OP MC comprises representatives from public and state institutions per Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 599.

An annual Fisheries Conference engages stakeholders and the public to discuss sector issues and EMFF support. Draft regulations and support information are published and discussed publicly through various platforms. Draft regulations are made available for public input online, and additional public information events are held.

The MC includes experts to oversee the integration of equality and non-discrimination principles. National regulations ensure equal opportunities in support measures, without discrimination. All

support measures and national legislation are designed to prevent discrimination and promote equal treatment in project execution.

## **MT**

The MC is composed of representatives from ministries, including the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), the Human Rights Directorate, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE), and Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD), as well as fishers' cooperatives, aquaculture producers and NGOs. Representation includes sectors like small-scale fisheries, aquaculture, and data management.

MC meetings are held annually and involve consultations via written procedures for OP amendments and document approvals. There are regular interactions with partners, notably the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Selection criteria emphasise collaborative projects with detailed partner roles and signed letters of intent. Information is shared through MC meetings, written procedures and bilateral exchanges.

## **NL**

The Dutch MC includes seven partners representing government bodies, NGOs and industry stakeholders. Representation covers sectors such as small-scale fisheries, aquaculture, processing, marketing, data collection and enforcement. All partners are fully and equally involved in the MC's activities.

## **PL**

The MC comprises the MA, the IB, the Certifying Authority, governmental, regional and local administrations, scientific units, fisheries administration, port authorities, FLAGs and NGOs.

Representation includes people from the fisheries sector, small-scale fisheries, aquaculture, processing, marketing, and measures related to shared management (data collection, control and enforcement). Consultations within working groups and cycles are key to preparing programme changes and ensuring effective partner participation.

## **RO**

Efforts were made to prevent discrimination in selection criteria, considering various factors such as race, nationality, gender, and disability.

A Working Group for Fisheries and Aquaculture was established, including representatives from multiple sectors: ministries, national agencies, fishers' organisations, aquaculture producers, processors, research institutes and a higher education institution. A rigorous consultation process with the Working Group informed the selection of measures. Sector actors provided economic, legal, and technical input to align policy objectives with sector needs. An email system was set up for communication, and MC decisions are published on a dedicated website to ensure transparency.

## **SE**

The programme ensures that selection criteria avoid any form of discrimination, covering various factors including race, gender, disability and other personal attributes. A Working Group for Fisheries and Aquaculture was formed, involving a range of stakeholders including government bodies, fisheries organisations, aquaculture producers and research institutions.

The MC has been actively involved, with meetings and study visits enhancing skills and collaboration among members.

Communication with partners is facilitated through a dedicated email system, and decisions are published online to ensure transparency.

## **10.2 Promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination**

### **AT**

The OP implemented several actions to promote equality between men and women and other forms of non-discrimination, including accessibility for disabled people. These actions were embedded in the criteria for awarding funding under the EMFF. The national implementation guidelines required adherence to gender equality principles as a condition for funding eligibility.

The OP recognised the increasing involvement of women in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in Austria, evidenced by the growing number of female owners or co-owners of aquaculture facilities and the rise in trained female specialists. The MC also supported the nomination of women.

Austria's Federal Constitution has included a special protection clause for people with disabilities since 1997, reinforcing non-discrimination principles.

### **BE**

The principle of gender equality is noted as a general principle of the Belgian government, and it was applied under the EMFF, but no specific measures were detailed in the AIR.

The AIR states that no complaints were received regarding gender equality and non-discrimination but does not provide any information on challenges or difficulties in implementing these principles.

### **BG**

The application process explicitly addresses equality between men and women and non-discrimination. There are no restrictions on gender, age, or disability in the eligibility criteria. Compliance with these principles is checked during the evaluation process, particularly during the final claims for payments. Beneficiaries' technical reports are required to demonstrate how projects comply with non-discrimination and equality principles. All measures include sections that emphasise the importance of equality and non-discrimination. Projects that do not meet these principles may be rejected. No difficulties were reported in implementing these actions.

## **CZ**

Gender equality and non-discrimination requirements were incorporated into the rules for applicants. Applicants were required to submit declarations affirming compliance with these principles. Operations failing to meet these criteria were deemed ineligible.

## **EE**

During the implementation of the programme, no distinctions were made based on gender in terms of participation or support. Specific methods to ensure gender equality were not implemented as the applicants were primarily legal entities. The programme's development adhered to the principles of the Estonian Constitution, including the prohibition of discrimination.

## **ES**

The Spanish Network of Women Engaged in the Fisheries Sector (REMSP) leads equality and non-discrimination initiatives. These include coordinating the EMFF Thematic Group on Equal Opportunities, conducting monitoring and visualisation tasks, and compiling gender-related project data. The General Sub-Directorate of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainability (SGSEAS) collaborates closely with REMSP in promoting gender equality within the sector.

A significant number of EMFF-funded operations (4 496) included a gender component, representing 13% of the total contributions to gender equality. This reflects substantial support for women in the fisheries sector through job creation, training participation and project leadership. Measures included job-creating and job-sustaining projects for women, along with the promotion of women's participation in training activities.

## **FI**

In Finnish society, equality and non-discrimination are well-implemented, with equal opportunities for different genders in employment, skills development and inclusion. Although the fisheries sector is male-dominated, women also work in various roles within the sector, including fisheries management. The composition of the monitoring committee adheres to national equality legislation, ensuring minimum representation of both sexes.

The OP's implementation did not necessitate special national measures for promoting equality or non-discrimination, as these principles were adequately addressed through existing national legislation.

## **FR**

The AIR does not comment on specific actions applied during the implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation process of the OP. The section is limited to a brief description of two CLLD projects involving women, without a broader analysis.

## **HU**

The OP consistently considers the contribution of supported actions to gender equality throughout the programming, management, monitoring, and evaluation phases. MAHOP does not support projects that negatively impact gender equality. The OP ensures equal opportunities regardless of



gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation, with particular attention to vulnerable groups such as women, people with disabilities, national minorities and others. Representatives of target groups related to gender equality and non-discrimination have voting rights in the MC.

## IE

Bord Iascaigh Mhara have proactively encouraged growth in this area during the lifetime of the OP by: reactive rather than proactive approach by IBs/BBs (evident in stakeholder assumption that adhering to own organisations' policies provides compliance); widespread recognition that beneficiaries were overwhelmingly enterprises, rather than individuals and that therefore the risk of gender discrimination is low. There may, however, be a risk of complacency and thus an opportunity to increase awareness of what enterprises could do to address this risk (linked to awareness-raising arising from two previous points and building on good practice of the Women in Fisheries Network); lack of meaningful data on the matter; designed into the delivery of the OP through embedded procedures, policies and practices (including within terms and conditions of awards); monitoring system set up to capture gender data; Women in Fisheries network in Ireland, a project funded by EMFF OP addressing lack of awareness of opportunities.

The risk of discrimination has been low, given that beneficiaries were overwhelmingly enterprises, rather than individuals. Projects that promote inclusivity and provide opportunities for all community members to participate in local development under the EMFF FLAGS programme aimed to create a balanced approach to the sustainable development of fisheries areas, addressing economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

The Marine Institute is committed to meeting all responsibilities as a public body in promoting equality, preventing discrimination and protecting the human rights of employees, customers, service users and stakeholders in the delivery of our work programmes and services. The organisation operates on a foundation of equality of opportunity and treatment in its employment procedures, practices and policies for all. In line with the Employment Equality Act, 1998 - 2015 (as amended by the Equal Status Act, 2000-2015 and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014) and all applicable legislation including consideration of the impact of the Gender Recognition Act 2015; the Marine Institute is committed to creating an environment that promotes equality, diversity and dignity at work. IE is committed to treating all employees, clients, job applicants, colleagues, partners and stakeholders equally, regardless of gender (including gender expression and gender identity), civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community. Individuals will be selected, promoted and treated only on the basis of their abilities and merits, according to the requirements of the job. In addition, IE extends the same respect and policy of equal treatment to its clients and stakeholders and expect employees to do likewise. To the extent that it is relevant, the principles contained in this policy shall apply similarly to the Marine Institute's engagement with clients and stakeholders.

The recruitment policy reflects belief that diversity in all areas, including gender, cultural, generational, language and national backgrounds, is necessary in helping to succeed in achieving Strategic Goals. The organisation does not discriminate against any prospective employee during the recruitment process.

## **IT**

The OP integrates gender equality and non-discrimination throughout its processes. Measures include ensuring equal opportunities in project support, and protecting vulnerable groups.

Equality is ensured by transversal selection criterion and by following EMFF measures: promoting female trainees; supporting new sustainable aquaculture operators; productive investments in aquaculture; energy efficiency and climate change mitigation; inland fishing and fauna/flora protection.

## **LT**

The Office of the Equal Opportunities Controller is involved in OP preparation and implementation. Gender balance is maintained in the Project Selection Committee and the MC. The OP includes measures to support young people, the elderly, and disabled individuals.

## **LV**

The promotion of equality and non-discrimination as a horizontal principle is set out both in the Partnership Agreement for the 2014-2020 programming period of the ESI Funds and in the OP.

The Ministry of Welfare has developed a methodology for the implementation and monitoring of this principle in all ESI Funds. Relevant responsible experts are included in the EMFF OP MC. National legislation lays down requirements, when receiving public support, not to discriminate against any group in society and to prevent any form of gender discrimination. In addition, national legislation provides for equal opportunities for both sexes to be eligible for support under any measure, provided that the aid applicant and its planned activities comply with the conditions and criteria for receiving support set out in that measure.

The OP and the resulting national legislation were prepared with support measures and eligibility conditions that do not exclude any group in society and prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability age or sexual orientation. Similarly, compliance with and promotion of these principles is ensured in the process of implementation of support measures, i.e. the beneficiary, service provider and implementers of local development strategies undertake commitments within the framework of the OP, confirm and assume responsibility for the fact that the project implementation will not allow discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability and other factors, as a result of which compliance with these horizontal principles is ensured also in the project evaluation process.

## **MT**

Application forms include sections on equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Points are awarded for operations addressing these principles. Application forms and guidance are translated into Maltese; services provided during MC meetings include translation. Procurement ensures equal access and minimises administrative burden through streamlined processes.

## **NL**

Beneficiaries must meet equality and non-discrimination obligations as part of the evaluation process.

## **PL**

Institutions must comply with non-discrimination principles, though the programme itself is neutral towards these policies. Specific operations might require considerations based on physical conditions. Monitoring is used to ensure non-discrimination principles are upheld.

## **RO**

The MA required beneficiaries to include a declaration of adherence to equal opportunities in their funding applications. This declaration covered various aspects of equality and non-discrimination.

Women's involvement in projects is noted, with several FLAGs managed by women. This demonstrates an effort to integrate gender equality in the projects funded. Measure II2 aimed to increase female employment in fishing and aquaculture by funding activity diversification.

## **SE**

The MA requires beneficiaries to comply with equal opportunities laws and practices. Efforts were made to gather gender-related data and ensure gender mainstreaming in programme materials. However, gender and non-discrimination aspects were not integrated into selection criteria.

Measures promoting gender equality are not specified, but it is noted that women are involved in several projects and FLAG management roles.

### **10.3 Sustainable development**

#### **AT**

The OP incorporated sustainable development principles by enforcing Austria's strict Water Act, including the Wastewater Emission Ordinance for Aquaculture, and adhering to nature conservation laws. These regulations ensure the cleanliness of water bodies and the sustainability of aquaculture practices.

In 2009, guidelines for aquaculture facility construction were established, emphasising the economical use of water, adequate water supply, and compliance with quality standards. Funding for projects under the EMFF was contingent on compliance with these legal requirements.

It was noted that extensive pond management with environmental benefits was supported with national public funds, separate from EMFF funding.

#### **BE**

Sustainability is highlighted as a core principle guiding all aspects of the OP implementation, serving as a benchmark for the actions taken.

The report provides some details, stating that 40 operations related to the landing obligation were implemented under different priority axes (UP1, UP5), along with operations aimed at the protection of the marine environment under UP1, UP3, and UP6.

## **BG**

Sustainable development is integrated into all aspects of the Operational Programme. Projects that incorporate best practices in sustainability, such as low-waste processes, water-saving technologies and energy-efficient practices, are prioritised during evaluation.

Compliance with sustainable development, along with other horizontal EU policies, is assured during the project evaluation process. Environmental assessments, particularly concerning Natura 2000, are rigorously conducted by the Regional Inspectorate of Environmental and Water Protection.

## **CZ**

The OP categorised operations into three levels based on their relation to sustainable development: those aiming at sustainability, those impacting sustainability, and those neutral to it. Applicants had to declare that their operations would not negatively impact sustainability, with non-compliant operations being excluded.

Two types of operations with positive effects on sustainability were noted: modernisation of equipment to increase energy efficiency, and restocking of eel populations.

## **EE**

Over half of the selected measures for the 2014-2020 EMFF OP directly or indirectly supported sustainable development principles. Key measures included improving the energy efficiency of fishing vessels and mitigating climate change; implementing community-led local development strategies; supporting innovation in fisheries; protecting and restoring marine biodiversity and ecosystems; improving fishing gear; enhancing the energy efficiency of coastal fishing vessels; reducing the environmental impact of aquaculture; and improving energy and resource efficiency in processing fisheries and aquaculture products.

## **ES**

The environmental evaluation of the OP highlighted its sustainability focus. NGOs were included in the OP implementation to reinforce sustainable practices. The highest concentration of sustainable measures was within UP1, while other relevant actions were in UP3 and UP6, particularly those under Article 80(1)c. However, measures within UP2 faced low demand.

UP2 (focused on environmental sustainability) encountered significant challenges, mainly due to stringent environmental requirements and delays in licensing approvals.

Specific measures aimed at sustainability included those under Articles 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40.1.b-gi, and 42 of UP1, accounting for 278.1 million euros (30% of total payments). UP3 measures received 140.5 million euros (13.3% of total payments), and Article 80(1)c measures under UP6 were 94% implemented, with 5.18 million euros spent. Specific sustainability measures targeted the landing obligation, biodiversity protection and Natura 2000, with substantial funding allocated to these areas.

## **FI**

Sustainability was a cross-cutting theme considered in various aspects of the OP, including investment selection criteria, grant decisions, data production and collaborative research efforts. The environmental programme of the OP implemented measures to enhance fish resource vitality, including waterway restoration, development of selective and seal-resistant fishing gear, and investments in aquaculture technologies to reduce environmental impact. Cooperation between administrative sectors was strengthened, and concrete environmental projects helped mitigate conflicts between commercial and recreational fishing and nature conservation.

Measures focused on developing sustainable commercial fishing gear and aquaculture technologies. However, due to the low relevance of issues like the landing obligation or marine litter in Finland, no significant actions were directed towards these, and there were no specific funding applications related to the Natura 2000 network.

## **FR**

The AIR lists several measures aimed at promoting sustainable development, including innovation (measures 26, 39, 47), and other measures (28, 38, 40, 43.2, 48, 80). It mentions that measures addressing the landing obligation are covered under measure 38, while measures 40 and 80 relate to Natura 2000. However, the report does not specify the results or impacts of these measures.

## **HU**

The OP implements several measures to promote sustainable development, particularly in aquaculture. These include encouraging innovation in aquaculture; supporting productive investments in aquaculture; encouraging new farmers to engage in sustainable aquaculture; environmental investments in aquaculture; and supporting investments in the processing of fisheries and aquaculture products. These measures support the development of environmentally friendly and energy-efficient technologies, with a focus on water-saving investments and modern infrastructure.

Investments under the OP include the installation of solar energy systems, recycling of water after purification, and the creation of wetlands for sustainable water use. Investments also supported the construction of new fish farms and the renovation of existing ones. No specific data is provided on measures related to Natura 2000.

## **IE**

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) implemented several projects addressing the LO, biodiversity, and Natura 2000 over the course of the EMFF programme.

LO key projects: gear technology innovations including development and trials of selective fishing gears to reduce unwanted catches and the introduction of more selective trawl designs and modifications such as separator panels and square mesh panels; training and outreach projects - workshops and training sessions for fishers on best practices and new gear technologies; production of educational materials to raise awareness about the LO and its requirements.

Biodiversity and Natura 2000 related projects: BIM has been involved in projects to protect and enhance marine biodiversity, ensuring sustainable fishing practices and the conservation of marine

ecosystems; clean oceans initiative (aimed at reducing marine litter and its impact on biodiversity, involving the collection and recycling of waste from fishing activities); smart gear technology program (focused on developing and promoting gear modifications to minimize bycatch and improve selectivity, supporting compliance with the LO); inshore fisheries conservation scheme (targeted the conservation of inshore habitats and species, supporting both biodiversity and the objectives of Natura 2000).

Through these projects, BIM has made significant contributions to promoting sustainable fisheries, protecting marine biodiversity, and supporting the conservation goals of Natura 2000, thereby ensuring the long-term health and productivity of Ireland's marine ecosystems.

#### **IT**

The OP promotes sustainable development through selection criteria by favouring low environmental impact projects; by environmental protection measures including biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation; by tracking environmental indicators and conducting EIAs for aquaculture projects; by issuing regional guidelines for sustainable aquaculture and innovative technologies; and by working with scientific bodies for data collection and sustainable management.

Permanent cessation, protection of biodiversity and Natura 2000 practices were implemented to support sustainable development goals.

#### **LT**

The OP focuses on environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation, energy efficiency and social inclusion through various measures. Specific actions include environmental sustainability (conservation measures, reducing fishing impact, aquaculture with environmental functions) and energy efficiency (investments in energy-efficient technologies and alternative propulsion systems).

#### **LV**

Selection criteria support projects with sustainability features, such as wastewater treatment and renewable energy, which receive additional points.

Implemented measures include projects promoting green production, conservation and environmental compliance. Examples include vessel cessation, eel releases and aquaculture environmental enhancements.

#### **MT**

Projects are evaluated based on their contribution to sustainable development, with additional points for meeting these criteria.

Implemented measures under UP1 include projects improving fishing practices and energy efficiency, and training on pollution reduction and business sustainability. Under UP2 the focus was on sustainable aquaculture with energy-efficient technologies.

EMFF measures for sustainable development address sustainable fishing, aquaculture and marine resource management, contributing to long-term environmental goals.

## **NL**

Actions are outlined by article, focusing on integrating sustainability into the OP. Measures related to sustainability are part of the evaluation process.

## **PL**

Activities focus on minimising environmental impact, protecting marine biodiversity and promoting sustainability. Points are awarded in project selection for efficient resource and energy use.

Measures include setting minimum requirements, awarding points for efficient resource use, and implementing an environmental management system. Scientific research and monitoring projects on sustainable environmental use are also part of the programme.

## **RO**

The OP is designed to support environmental sustainability and minimise negative impacts. Measures include maintaining a favourable environment for future generations and using an environmental monitoring system to address potential issues.

Challenges in environmental monitoring and the need for corrective measures were identified, though specific solutions were not detailed.

To support biodiversity protection and environmental services one measure provided financial compensation for income loss due to management requirements in Natura 2000 areas.

## **SE**

The MA has worked in line with Sweden's national environmental goals to promote long-term sustainability. This includes a focus on climate, biodiversity, water management, and resource efficiency. Selection criteria for EMFF measures prioritise environmental benefits.

The programme faced challenges in implementing environmental and climate objectives but has addressed them through clear selection criteria and progress monitoring. The MA implemented various measures for sustainable development, including those related to biodiversity protection and environmental compensations within the CAP.

## 11 Support used for climate change objectives

The figures representing support for climate change objectives are calculated automatically and included in AIR Table 4 of the financial data. In this AIR section MSs are expected to explain the reported values, especially if these are lower than planned. A detailed dataset giving an overview of EMFF contribution to climate change objectives is presented in section 2.2.14 of this report.

**AT** mentioned that the strategic focus of the OP was to increase production. As a result, only one project was carried out that explicitly contributes to climate change objectives. AT also pointed out that the climate/environment/biodiversity themes have also been or will be supported within the framework of the complementary funding guidelines for extensive pond farming, which are purely nationally financed.

**CZ** mentioned that the actual climate change contribution was slightly lower than the indicative contribution, mainly due to the COVID-19 crisis. Aquaculture and fish processing companies often do not have sufficient financial resources for new large-scale investments in the context of rising costs. There were also delays in the supply of goods and technology by suppliers, and in some cases applicants had to close projects.

**ES** noted that the actual contribution of the EMFF to climate change will be known at the closure of the programme. In view of the current data and the available margin, however, the Spanish MA considers that the target set will be met.

**FR** mentioned that contribution to climate change was impacted by the decrease in financial allocations to several measures for which the contribution coefficient is set at 100%.

For smaller EMMF programmes like **HU**, even a few operations that are abandoned or not yet finalised can significantly affect the total contribution to climate change objectives.

**IT** mentioned that a large part of the support for climate change objectives is linked to the implementation of relatively few measures, including temporary and permanent cessation; protection and restoration of marine biodiversity; ports, landing sites, auction halls and shelters; and implementation of CLLD.

**NL** expects its support for climate change objectives to increase when all the operations approved late in 2023 are implemented.



## 12 Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

In this AIR section MSs are expected to identify and assess the contribution of their OPs to achieving the objectives of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The FAME support unit prepared a working paper to support MAs and to ensure consistency and quality when completing the AIR Part C.<sup>24</sup>

The Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth /\* COM/2010/2020 final \*/) is based on three mutually reinforcing priorities:

- **Smart growth:** developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation. Among other things this requires improving the quality of education, strengthening research performance, promoting innovation and knowledge transfer throughout the Union, making full use of information and communication technologies, and ensuring that innovative ideas can be turned into new products and services that create growth and quality jobs, and help address European and global societal challenges.
- **Sustainable growth:** promoting a more resource-efficient, greener and more competitive economy. It means developing new processes and technologies, including green technologies, to reinforce the competitive advantages of businesses, particularly within SMEs, and help consumers value resource efficiency. Such an approach will help the EU to prosper in a low-carbon, resource-constrained world while preventing environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and unsustainable use of resources. It will also underpin economic, social and territorial cohesion.
- **Inclusive growth:** fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion. Inclusive growth means empowering people through high levels of employment, investing in skills, fighting poverty and modernising labour markets, training and social protection systems. It is also essential for strengthening territorial cohesion. It is about ensuring access and opportunities for all throughout the lifecycle.

Based on the EMFF Regulation, the linkage between Europe 2020 and EMFF thematic objectives as indicated in Annex I, and the description of the Union strategy pillars, FAME has assessed the extent to which each EMFF measure contributes to the Union strategy pillars. As a result, all measures can be divided into two groups: those that have a direct impact on Union strategy, and those with only an indirect influence. Articles 26, 28, 31, 47 and 52 are considered to have a direct impact on the smart growth pillar. Articles 27, 30, 32, 33, 35, 40.1.h, 42, 43.1 + 3, 48.1.a-d, f-h, 49, 55, 56, 57 66, 67, 68, 69 and 70 tend to have only indirect influence.

Table 27 demonstrates the contribution of the EMFF to the smart growth priority by distinguishing direct and indirect contributions.

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<sup>24</sup>EUROPEAN COMMISSION – Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Unit D.3 (2019): FAME working paper AIR 2018 Part C, Brussels

**Table 27: EMFF contribution to the smart growth priority**

Type of contribution	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations
Direct	281 591 501	203 931 422	1 622
Indirect	2 852 405 337	2 329 372 559	109 119
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 133 996 838</b>	<b>2 533 303 981</b>	<b>110 741</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

Table 28 provides an overview of direct EMFF contributions to smart growth priority per MS.

**Table 28: EMFF contribution to the smart growth priority**

MS	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations
AT	35 753	35 706	3
BE	4 595 054	3 191 505	30
BG	5 218 499	2 012 456	22
CY	375 000	241 837	1
CZ	971 698	688 832	38
DE	16 182 243	14 542 870	39
DK	15 782 837	9 530 640	81
EE	9 135 145	8 985 143	23
EL	12 748 555	6 000 201	45
ES	24 456 844	20 918 866	320
FI	5 503 096	5 501 988	27
FR	43 687 185	32 688 232	287
HR	5 634 482	1 459 539	41
HU	7 110 282	3 949 210	22
IE	10 189 539	10 170 436	203
IT	13 914 245	8 686 838	123
LT	401 601	378 724	9
LV	10 152 208	5 882 204	21
MT	616 931	521 636	1
NL	26 615 997	19 716 291	59
PL	20 396 000	10 407 408	26
PT	30 858 968	23 816 193	103
SE	4 581 874	3 773 735	31
UK	12 427 465	10 830 934	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>281 591 501</b>	<b>203 931 422</b>	<b>1 622</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

All EMFF measures contributing to Thematic Objective (TO) 4 and TO6 should be considered as having a direct impact on the pillar of sustainable growth. Similarly, all EMFF measures attributed to TO8 are

considered to have a direct impact on the Union strategy of inclusive growth. MSs should provide information on the OP's contribution to each pillar of Union strategy:

- number of operations;
- EMFF funding allocated,
- EMFF funding committed
- EMFF funding paid
- any other specific features of the operations that need to be accentuated.

As a minimum, data on the measures with direct impact should be taken into account in the case of the smart growth pillar. Optionally, a separate dataset for measures with indirect impact could also be presented. A differentiation between TO4 and TO6 for measures contributing to the sustainable growth pillar is also recommended.

Table 29 provides an overview of EMFF contribution to the pillar of sustainable growth.

**Table 29: EMFF contribution to the sustainable growth priority**

Thematic objective	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations
TO04	28 584 602	21 208 959	2 307
TO06	1 960 061 332	1 586 828 822	12 934
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 988 645 933</b>	<b>1 608 037 781</b>	<b>15 241</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

Table 30 provides an overview of the EMFF contribution to the pillar of sustainable growth per MS.

**Table 30: EMFF contribution to the sustainable growth priority**

MS	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2022)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2022)	Number of operations
AT	1 806 433	1 677 335	13
BE	27 475 651	20 501 340	79
BG	17 247 220	13 592 798	88
CY	15 273 409	13 377 535	228
CZ	4 912 484	4 214 407	110
DE	113 082 229	112 307 043	1 310
DK	149 056 552	133 005 752	1 457
EE	23 993 609	23 048 442	727
EL	133 449 602	65 053 636	1 379
ES	285 485 761	258 715 033	2 568
FI	38 494 200	38 494 200	302
FR	191 644 415	148 990 248	538
HR	81 565 160	47 382 330	332
HU	6 016 887	5 962 670	95

MS	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2022)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2022)	Number of operations
IE	84 105 255	83 425 315	740
IT	237 817 113	170 368 298	1 462
LT	25 642 687	19 855 686	130
LV	20 930 987	19 751 048	117
MT	10 249 700	9 610 063	19
NL	67 047 336	40 004 183	34
PL	135 413 293	106 471 677	1 811
PT	72 535 171	50 487 232	387
RO	33 721 775	26 010 046	71
SE	72 623 248	80 418 021	463
SI	5 231 717	4 901 352	45
SK	57 238	92 968	1
UK	133 766 803	110 319 125	735
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 988 645 933</b>	<b>1 608 037 781</b>	<b>15 241</b>

Table 31 shows the EMFF contribution to the pillar of inclusive growth per MS.

**Table 31: EMFF contribution to the smart growth priority**

MS	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations
AT	233 888	194 765	6
BE	58 110	30 699	3
BG	16 004 395	9 496 922	217
CY	15 438 804	10 050 096	57
DE	19 739 679	18 210 835	218
DK	5 988 819	5 859 937	318
EE	23 661 625	22 997 022	1 230
EL	109 885 033	17 612 168	1 169
ES	113 330 439	98 053 073	3 687
FI	4 552 223	4 552 223	361
FR	21 667 855	18 063 539	589
HR	39 605 868	13 022 044	434
IE	8 491 059	8 484 110	1 509
IT	47 730 952	32 354 186	1 095
LT	9 745 978	8 772 750	165
LV	20 619 108	20 020 444	426
MT	335 172	335 172	1

MS	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Number of operations
PL	92 750 586	68 170 834	3 585
PT	33 203 582	24 964 911	401
RO	56 627 883	40 845 793	581
SE	9 193 675	9 797 487	225
SI	6 059 762	5 670 225	89
UK	17 392 119	16 031 486	488
<b>Total</b>	<b>672 316 613</b>	<b>453 590 720</b>	<b>16 854</b>

Source: Infosys 2023

Below are examples of the achievement of the objectives of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for selected MSs.

**AT** underlined that due to the small size of the EMFF programme only a limited contribution to supporting the Europe 2020 strategy was possible. It was therefore necessary to focus on the most important needs relating to Austrian fisheries and aquaculture – support for projects and investments has been allocated to TO3 (SMEs).

The support from the EMFF OP 2014-2020 has made a significant contribution to this objective. Aquaculture production in Austria increased by almost 40% between 2014 and 2022, from around 3,400 tonnes to around 4,700 tonnes per year. This very positive development of production also had – as intended – a positive impact on employment in production and related processing.

With a view to achieving the objectives of the Union’s Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the Austrian OP has contributed to sustaining maritime fish stocks through substitution based on increased aquaculture production. Its data collection, monitoring and enforcement measures have also contributed to achieving the objectives of the CFP.

**DK** noted that based on the final evaluation, it assesses that the 2014-2020 EMFF programme supports the objectives of the EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

**FR** reported that under TO3 the large volume of support covers very heterogeneous operations, one-third of which are in fact covered by schemes to compensate for additional costs in the outermost regions. Almost a quarter of the amounts committed also relate to support for investment in aquaculture, in particular shellfish farming. Although the measure is not directly allocated to TO3, FR highlights the contribution of the CLLD approach to smart growth, through projects currently being selected to increase the added value of products (including the valorisation of by-products) and also through innovation projects involving experiments and feasibility studies (development of bio-based products and eco-processes, use of alternative materials, etc.). Under TO6 (sustainable growth) the main and substantial contribution of the EMFF relates to the acquisition of knowledge about ecosystems and the implementation of management measures.

In **NL** projects contributed to smart growth by new acquisitions of vessels, innovative investments on board, investments promoting sales channels for (by-)catches, innovations aimed at returns, new

partnerships, innovations in the fish farming and shellfish sectors, new forms of aquaculture, new chain cooperations and new outlets for unwanted catches. In addition to smart growth, the young fishers scheme also indirectly contributed to another Europe 2020 strategy, namely inclusive growth.

The projects in NL contributed to sustainable growth through innovations aimed at environmental sustainability: alternatives to beam trawling, and innovations in fishing methods and processes aimed at the landing obligation and further sustainability of fisheries; data collection for the implementation of the CFP; investments in the development and purchase of hardware and software for digital controls and investments in black boxes; waste collection systems in rivers and educational activities; and implementation of marine environmental protection measures. Also noted were projects to remove knowledge gaps regarding the (cumulative) effects of underwater noise on the ecosystem; studies on the effects of microplastics on the marine environment; projects facilitating cooperation between parties and contributing to the achievement of biodiversity objectives; and the restocking of glass eels (under the EU conservation measure).

### **13 Issues affecting the performance of the programme – performance framework**

The EMFF performance framework consists of the following elements: financial indicators, output indicators, milestones for 2018 and targets for 2023.

The performance review examined the achievement of the milestones of the programmes at the level of UPs, on the basis of the information and the assessments presented in the AIRs submitted by the MSs in 2019.

The performance reserve was established in the Partnership Agreement (PA) and the OP, section 8.1. It constituted between 5% and 7% of the allocation to each UP within an OP. The total amount of the performance reserve allocated by the Fund – at the Union and MS levels – is 6%.

A priority will be deemed to **have achieved its milestone** in the following cases (Article 6(2) of the CIR):

- if there are no more than two indicators in the PF related to a priority, when all indicators have achieved at least 85% of their milestone values by the end of 2018;

or

- if there are three or more indicators in the PF related to a priority, when all indicators except for one have achieved at least 85% of their milestone values by the end of 2018 and the remaining indicator has achieved at least 75% of its milestone value.

A priority will be deemed to **have seriously failed to achieve the milestone** in the following cases (Articles 6(3) and (4) CIR):

- if there are no more than two indicators in the PF related to a priority and any of these two indicators has failed to achieve at least 65% of the milestone value by the end of 2018;

or

- if there are more than two indicators in the PF related to a priority and at least two of these indicators have failed to achieve at least 65% of the milestone value by the end of 2018.

Where priorities have not achieved their milestones, the MS had to propose the reallocation of the corresponding amount of the performance reserve to priorities set out in the COM decision communicated to the MS.

In this AIR section the majority of MSs provided quantitative information in relation to the fulfilment of the 2018 milestones and 2023 targets. Several MSs referred to AIR sections 3 and 11 for further information.

There follows a non-exhaustive compilation of information provided in this AIR section for selected MSs.

**BE** provided planning for the closure of the programme. To achieve the 2023 targets, BE has applied overcommitment of around 18% by the end of 2023. This is expected to provide the necessary assurance, considering the residual commitments.

**CZ** noted that for UP3 the Commission set a fixed financial allocation. Despite all the MA's efforts (extension of eligible expenditure and applicants, cooperation of the MA with applicants in preparing and implementing projects), there was insufficient absorption capacity for these activities (in particular, for data collection). For UP5 under the measure related to marketing of products, several projects were submitted by one applicant, but due to the applicant's inability to complete project administration, these projects were cancelled, and the remaining allocation could no longer be recommitted to other UP5 projects.

**DK** mentioned that during the programme period the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on programme performance. Some projects have been delayed or cancelled due to the lockdown. This has affected programme performance in terms of outputs and result indicators. The overall results become sensitive to annual fluctuations, which may be due to external factors. The 2021 programme amendment revised many performance targets upwards, with some of these targets being set too optimistically.

**FR** noted that overall the targets for output indicators are met, except for UP6. The main reason for the low achievement here is that it started late due to lack of communication and initial animation; the need to set up a specific animation and organisation within the respective Directorate; the late validation of the selection criteria for files under sub-measures 80.1.b and 80.1.c; and the need to mobilise a network of actors around a new system.

**HU** noted that UP1 did not meet the minimum requirement for achieving its milestones in 2018. As a result, the EMFF performance reserve could not be used to finance UP1 and the envelope of the measure had to be reduced. HU also noted that non-fulfilment of the performance indicators may be due to design errors, insufficient consideration of the needs of the sector, quality deficiencies in the submitted aid applications and other eligibility issues. However, considering the past period, it can also be concluded that due to the change in the economic situation and the significant increase in prices, beneficiaries had to plan projects at much higher costs, so that fewer projects could be realised from the funds allocated to the calls. In addition, due to the economic crisis caused by the Ukrainian conflict, with market disturbances and price increases for building materials, energy and fuel, several beneficiaries renounced the implementation of their projects.

Overall, in the assessment of the **LV** MA, the 2023 objectives of the performance framework have been achieved at a good level, given the global challenges and crises that have occurred in the last four years – the COVID-19 pandemic started in 2020, and Russia started the war in Ukraine in 2022, which had a very negative impact on the whole economy, including the fisheries sector. As a result, several projects were delayed during the implementation phase and the beneficiaries made their payments for the supplies and services provided under the projects at the last permissible moment, i.e. 31 December 2023.

**RO** listed challenges that had harmed the achievement of milestones and targets for all priorities. Notably, with a co-financing rate of 50% private beneficiaries do not have sufficient revenues to invest in their projects.



The international situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic crisis and the conflict in Ukraine have created serious obstacles to project implementation. Construction was affected by rising material prices, problems paying wages, and distancing rules that required working with fewer staff. Inflation rose; deliveries of imported products suffered significant delays; and fishing and aquaculture are unattractive because of long production cycles and existing risks such as climate change and workforce shortages.

All this led most beneficiaries to extend the implementation period of the contract and to defer their schedules for submitting reimbursement applications, and some projects were terminated at the request of the beneficiaries.

SI explained that achievement of the performance framework milestones and targets was influenced by various factors already described in the previous chapters of the AIR and in the evaluation reports. Delays in the adoption of legislation and guidelines at EU level delayed the start of the actual implementation of the OP at national level, while the small size of the sector and the reality of its absorption according to European and national rules in the allocation of grants were also an objective limiting factor. That affected the effectiveness of the implementation of actions via calls for tenders. All three sectors (sea fishing, aquaculture and processing) are small and economically weak according to key indicators (number of employees, value added).

SI elaborated that the link between some measures and result indicators does not reflect the real capacity of the marine commercial fishing, aquaculture and processing sectors. A particular challenge was to determine the estimated value for each indicator at the level of the operation, which can be measured only a few years after the operation is complete, while the managing authority has to report values annually. Beneficiaries were also reluctant to declare due to sanctions if they did not achieve the required values of result indicators. The level of funding also posed a problem, given the economic weakness of a large part of the fisheries sector.

The non-implementation of individual measures or lower interest among potential beneficiaries was also affected by the failure of arbitration between the governments of Slovenia and Croatia in relation to sea fishing, which has led to additional uncertainty for fishers and a negative impact on local development on the coast. This unforeseen and significant change in the economic situation of the coastal region has an enormous negative impact on the achievement of the financial milestones of the EMFF.

The implementation of the OP EMFF 2014-2020 was also affected by the slow exit from the economic crisis. The banks imposed very strict conditions on fishers to obtain loans for implementing operations under the OP, and do not accept fishing vessels as loan guarantees.

In the fishery and aquaculture sectors, ensuring the financial coverage of operations is one of the major challenges when applying for co-financing under the EMFF. Banks mostly classify fisheries as high-risk – too small and too risky – and therefore require a number of documents to prove that loan applicants are solvent and have collateral. This is an important obstacle for beneficiaries when applying for funding under the EMFF OP.

The difficulty in implementing EMFF 2014-2020 measures was further aggravated by the large scale of the COVID-19 epidemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which particularly affected small sectors such as marine commercial fishing, aquaculture and mariculture in Slovenia.

## 14 Annexes

### 14.1 Annex 1: EMFF contributions to policy objectives and specific topics

The EMFF Regulation ((EC) No. 508/2014) structures support by measures (EMFF Articles). The EMFF intervention logic links EMFF articles to TOs, SOs and UPs.

To determine EMFF support for various policy objectives within the CFP, IMP and Europe 2020 strategy, and also for specific topics (for example SSCF, outermost regions, and innovation), links had to be established between the EMFF articles and these objectives and topics. These links are presented in the table below.

Policies	Objectives	EMFF Article 508/2014	UP
CFP objectives	CFP(2)2: Ensure that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield	37, 38 (partially), 39, 40(1)(a,b-g,h)	1
	CFP(2)3: Ensure that fisheries activities avoid the degradation of the marine environment	76	3
	CFP(2)4: Collection of scientific data	77 <sup>25</sup>	3
	CFP(2)5 a, b: Gradually eliminate discards, by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches, and by gradually ensuring that catches are landed; where necessary, make the best use of unwanted catches	38 (partially), 42, 43(2)	1
		68 (partially)	5
	CFP(2)5 c: Provide conditions for economically viable and competitive fishing capture and processing industry and land-based fishing-related activity	26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 35, 41(1)(a-c), 41(2), 43(1,3)	1
		62, 63, 64	4
		68 (partially), 69	5
	CFP(2)5 d: Adjust the fishing capacity of the fleets according to fishing opportunities	33, 34, 36	1
	CFP(2)5 e: Promote the development of sustainable aquaculture activities	47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57	2
	CFP(2)5 f: Contribute to a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities	29, 32	1
		67, 70	5
	CFP(2)5 g: Contribute to an efficient and transparent internal market for fisheries and aquaculture	66	5
CFP(2)5 h: Take into account the interests of both consumers and producers	68 with Infosys codes 124-127 <sup>26</sup>	5	
IMP objectives	IMP 3.2.a: Development of the Common Information Sharing Environment for the Union maritime domain, in line with the principles of the Integrated Maritime Surveillance	80(1)(a)	6

<sup>25</sup> EC 508/2014 Article 13(4): limited allocation possible.

<sup>26</sup> Infosys fields for types of operations: 124 – Transparency of production, 125 – Traceability and eco-labels, 126 – Standard contracts, 127 – Communication and promotional campaigns.

Policies	Objectives	EMFF Article 508/2014	UP
	IMP 2.c: Promote the protection of the marine environment, in particular its biodiversity, and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources	80(1)(b)	6
	IMP 3.2 c: Development of a comprehensive and publicly accessible high quality marine data and knowledge base	80(1)(c) <sup>27</sup>	6
EU 2020 objectives	TO3: Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 40.1.h, 42, 43(1,3)	1
		47, 48(1)(a-d,f-h), 49, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57	2
		66, 67, 68, 69, 70	5
	TO4: Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	41(1)(a-c), 41(2)	1
		48(1)(k)	2
	TO6: Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	34, 36, 37, 38, 40(1)(a,b-g,i), 43(2)	1
		48(1)(e,i,j), 53, 54	2
		77, 76	3
		80(1)	6
	TO8: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	29(1)(a,b), 29(2), 29(3)	1
		50	2
		62(1)(a), 63, 64	4
EC 508/2014 Article 5	508/2014 Article 5(a): Promoting competitive, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible fisheries and aquaculture	UP1, 2, 5	1, 2, 5
	508/2014 Article 5(b): Fostering the implementation of the CFP	UP3	3
	508/2014 Article 5(c): Promoting a balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas	UP4	4
	508/2014 Article 5(d): Fostering the development and implementation of the Union's IMP in a manner complementary to cohesion policy and to the CFP	UP6	6
Specific topics	Small-scale coastal fisheries	26, 28, 29(1,2), 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40(1)(a,b-g,h,i), 41(1)(a-c), 41(2), 42, 43(1), 43(3), 63, 69, 70, 76. All operations with fleet register number filtered by the size of vessel (<12m)	1,3,4,5
	Outermost regions	NUTS codes (outermost regions for ES, FR, PT)	
	Innovation	26, 28, 39, 47	1,2

<sup>27</sup> EC 508/2014 Article 13(7): limited allocation possible.

Policies	Objectives	EMFF Article 508/2014	UP
	Landing obligation (narrow approach)	37, 38, 39, 68 – partially, based on Infosys codes relevant to LO 42, 43(2) – all operations	1,5
	Landing obligation (broader approach)	37, 38, 39, 42, 43(2), 68 – partially, based on Infosys code relevant to LO	1,5
	Energy efficiency	41(1)(a-c), 41(2), 43(1,3), 48(1)(e,i,j), 48(1)(k), 53	1,2
	Climate change adaptation	38(1)(c,d), 43(1,3), 43(2)	1
<b>Horizontal principles</b>	Gender equality and non-discrimination	29(1,2)	1
	Sustainability	26, 27, 29, 30, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41	1
		47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57	2
		63	4
		68	5

## 14.2 Annex 2: EMFF implementation per Member State

### 14.2.1 EMFF implementation per Member State (Infosys)

MS	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
AT	6 965 000	7 742 171	111.2	6 964 436	100.0	225
BE	41 746 051	49 875 977	119.5	37 786 577	90.5	393
BG	80 823 727	80 239 945	99.3	55 815 936	69.1	931
CY	39 715 209	47 103 415	118.6	34 819 768	87.7	1 589
CZ	31 108 015	33 001 718	106.1	28 346 720	91.1	1 247
DE	219 596 276	199 973 398	91.1	193 385 864	88.1	4 178
DK	208 355 420	204 898 975	98.3	182 142 670	87.4	2 127
EE	100 970 418	95 996 766	95.1	93 643 876	92.7	2 293
EL	379 745 523	572 400 074	150.7	292 585 891	77.0	19 785
ES	1 057 143 957	1 049 472 053	99.3	958 475 240	90.7	31 624
FI	74 393 168	73 718 546	99.1	73 652 185	99.0	3 307
FR	587 980 173	610 889 284	103.9	500 788 641	85.2	7 194
HR	252 643 138	311 726 643	123.4	194 798 994	77.1	6 350
HU	38 412 223	37 252 760	97.0	27 821 093	72.4	442
IE	147 601 979	145 537 847	98.6	144 151 868	97.7	3 717
IT	537 262 559	610 106 818	113.6	430 494 190	80.1	24 595
LT	63 432 222	62 325 595	98.3	53 840 346	84.9	1 066
LV	139 833 742	137 006 569	98.0	118 866 393	85.0	1 357
MT	22 627 422	22 800 721	100.8	22 065 789	97.5	114
NL	101 523 244	110 125 276	108.5	73 420 996	72.3	535
PL	531 219 456	604 275 995	113.8	436 755 999	82.2	15 678
PT	392 485 464	447 243 000	114.0	373 128 875	95.1	11 056
RO	168 421 371	162 761 937	96.6	129 604 264	77.0	903
SE	120 156 004	100 583 023	83.7	107 463 509	89.4	1 061
SI	21 777 441	22 228 362	102.1	21 064 912	96.7	258
SK	7 736 596	4 697 619	60.7	3 070 128	39.7	42
UK	243 139 437	244 748 927	100.7	209 624 916	86.2	3 042
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 616 815 235</b>	<b>6 048 733 415</b>	<b>107.7</b>	<b>4 804 580 077</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>145 109</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023

**14.2.2 EMFF implementation per Member State (AIR)**

MS	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
AT	6 965 000	7 687 616	110.4	6 914 718	99.3	224
BE	41 746 051	49 425 283	118.4	37 498 469	89.8	393
BG	80 823 727	80 127 067	99.1	55 684 579	68.9	931
CY	39 715 209	47 082 971	118.6	34 805 654	87.6	1 614
CZ	31 108 015	33 565 986	107.9	31 713 233	101.9	1 092
DE	219 596 276	199 345 346	90.8	193 991 255	88.3	3 632
DK	208 355 420	209 429 024	100.5	187 538 043	90.0	2 682
EE	100 970 418	100 007 550	99.0	97 463 741	96.5	2 309
EL	379 745 523	560 147 276	147.5	318 982 469	84.0	19 785
ES	1 057 143 957	1 032 660 825	97.7	942 174 881	89.1	30 830
FI	74 393 168	75 100 170	101.0	75 018 114	100.8	3 307
FR	587 980 173	615 498 378	104.7	503 706 766	85.7	7 285
HR	252 643 138	295 279 039	116.9	190 320 337	75.3	4 359
HU	38 412 223	38 259 220	99.6	27 821 097	72.4	409
IE	147 601 979	145 599 943	98.6	144 255 694	97.7	2 883
IT	537 262 559	545 888 927	101.6	401 256 569	74.7	17 040
LT	63 432 222	62 350 520	98.3	53 865 271	84.9	1 066
LV	139 833 742	136 688 103	97.8	118 547 927	84.8	1 197
MT	22 627 422	22 803 649	100.8	19 998 790	88.4	30
NL	101 523 244	110 093 033	108.4	73 388 753	72.3	513
PL	531 219 456	531 574 395	100.1	435 844 672	82.0	15 119
PT	392 485 464	425 200 257	108.3	384 433 103	97.9	10 270
RO	168 421 371	162 732 549	96.6	142 309 045	84.5	903
SE	120 156 004	120 101 149	100.0	97 376 770	81.0	1 061
SI	21 777 441	21 934 503	100.7	21 063 230	96.7	179
SK	7 736 596	4 668 869	60.3	2 604 596	33.7	43
UK	243 139 437	245 951 741	101.2	209 867 478	86.3	3 042
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 616 815 235</b>	<b>5 879 203 389</b>	<b>104.7</b>	<b>4 808 445 254</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>132 198</b>

Source: AIR 2023

### 14.3 Annex 3: EMFF implementation per measure

#### 14.3.1 EMFF implementation per measure (Infosys)

EMFF Article	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
Article 26	53 934 256	53 097 429	98.4	37 618 144	69.7	353
Article 27	8 092 212	7 657 739	94.6	6 821 772	84.3	96
Article 28	56 673 756	56 261 431	99.3	44 463 649	78.5	239
Article 29(1)(2)	19 591 098	20 111 274	102.7	15 724 022	80.3	1 445
Article 29(3)	822 127	459 026	55.8	64 330	7.8	56
Article 30	11 996 510	11 207 821	93.4	7 178 923	59.8	382
Article 31	8 768 077	8 814 217	100.5	8 493 041	96.9	298
Article 32	46 423 985	51 260 711	110.4	42 153 963	90.8	3 811
Article 33	233 773 619	240 378 944	102.8	224 805 659	96.2	48 286
Article 34	93 962 155	120 380 331	128.1	92 058 183	98.0	1 825
Article 35	–	–	–	–	–	–
Article 36	8 616 212	9 465 575	109.9	8 294 798	96.3	21
Article 37	33 734 467	36 899 060	109.4	31 582 971	93.6	445
Article 38	25 411 965	24 961 643	98.2	23 129 463	91.0	1 795
Article 39	40 704 817	41 543 280	102.1	30 302 588	74.4	202
Article 40(1)(a)	22 351 825	23 658 743	105.8	21 753 638	97.3	667
Article 40(1)(b-g,i)	222 838 966	254 491 708	114.2	195 453 917	87.7	2 978
Article 40(1)(h)	5 746 948	6 203 333	107.9	6 168 523	107.3	2 931
Article 41(1)(a-c)	14 904 640	17 008 749	114.1	12 995 600	87.2	1 270
Article 41(2)	3 617 638	3 253 130	89.9	2 811 702	77.7	752
Article 42	59 022 712	62 570 673	106.0	53 977 245	91.5	2 910
Article 43(1.3)	376 755 503	489 365 226	129.9	307 328 890	81.6	1 736
Article 43(2)	20 745 710	19 491 461	94.0	17 137 839	82.6	64
Article 47	144 747 209	151 309 539	104.5	108 462 281	74.9	646
Article 48(1)(a-d,f-h)	511 157 320	573 785 035	112.3	449 514 849	87.9	7 191
Article 48(1)(e,i,j)	50 486 338	53 617 910	106.2	32 769 229	64.9	285
Article 48(1)(k)	8 399 135	8 322 722	99.1	5 401 657	64.3	285
Article 49	16 103 921	18 789 601	116.7	12 104 741	75.2	133
Article 50	10 656 179	10 385 206	97.5	8 472 827	79.5	233
Article 51	18 746 980	21 999 458	117.3	14 386 446	76.7	112
Article 52	9 734 942	12 108 886	124.4	4 894 307	50.3	86
Article 53	560 645	9 000	1.6	9 000	1.6	1
Article 54	102 429 752	100 094 307	97.7	96 698 980	94.4	2 104
Article 55	66 235 076	65 533 379	98.9	62 374 392	94.2	2 831
Article 56	20 334 976	23 953 521	117.8	20 171 309	99.2	409
Article 57	5 745 102	6 672 637	116.1	4 864 702	84.7	135

EMFF Article	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate %	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate %	Number of operations
Article 62(1)(a)	5 143 108	4 922 673	95.7	4 452 871	86.6	262
Article 63 CLLD	565 689 178	624 200 544	110.3	417 067 691	73.7	14 367
Article 64	12 410 722	12 237 890	98.6	7 808 979	62.9	491
Article 66	128 925 673	127 809 456	99.1	113 467 974	88.0	676
Article 67	25 677 779	16 060 022	62.5	15 895 814	61.9	78
Article 68	427 809 617	382 182 808	89.3	341 317 101	79.8	28 871
Article 69	556 706 650	590 239 519	106.0	485 794 856	87.3	3 655
Article 70	192 500 000	178 734 911	92.8	175 431 845	91.1	4 988
Article 76	472 272 184	564 695 559	119.6	418 009 021	88.5	1 865
Article 77	586 072 784	626 781 402	106.9	550 691 926	94.0	292
Article 78	251 024 173	253 774 031	101.1	209 647 594	83.5	2 273
Article 80(1)(a)	13 011 506	17 375 556	133.5	12 686 690	97.5	35
Article 80(1)(b)	12 955 540	11 940 927	92.2	10 820 823	83.5	81
Article 80(1)(c)	32 789 547	32 655 411	99.6	31 043 311	94.7	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 616 815 235</b>	<b>6 048 733 415</b>	<b>107.7</b>	<b>4 804 580 077</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>145 109</b>

Source: AIR/Infosys 2023



**14.3.2 EMFF implementation per measure (AIR)**

EMFF Article	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate (%)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate (%)	Number of operations
Article 26	53 934 256	51 396 960	95.3	37 734 525	70.0	351
Article 27	8 092 212	7 674 960	94.8	6 821 746	84.3	94
Article 28	56 673 756	56 681 621	100.0	44 553 078	78.6	238
Article 29(1,2)	19 591 098	20 395 968	104.1	15 552 935	79.4	1 435
Article 29(3)	822 127	459 051	55.8	64 330	7.8	56
Article 30	11 996 510	9 758 805	81.3	7 158 698	59.7	349
Article 31	8 768 077	8 815 774	100.5	8 493 396	96.9	297
Article 32	46 423 985	49 028 515	105.6	42 092 048	90.7	3 652
Article 33	233 773 619	227 724 231	97.4	217 172 012	92.9	42 484
Article 34	93 962 155	113 435 100	120.7	92 101 375	98.0	1 809
Article 35	–	–	–	–	–	–
Article 36	8 616 212	9 533 493	110.6	8 260 051	95.9	21
Article 37	33 734 467	37 556 131	111.3	31 922 868	94.6	442
Article 38	25 411 965	24 939 827	98.1	23 235 627	91.4	1 868
Article 39	40 704 817	42 286 862	103.9	30 242 993	74.3	205
Article 40(1)(a)	22 351 825	23 412 228	104.7	21 431 594	95.9	666
Article 40(1)(b-g,i)	222 838 966	257 788 139	115.7	197 500 537	88.6	3 168
Article 40(1)(h)	5 746 948	6 346 374	110.4	6 324 178	110.0	2 931
Article 41(1)(a-c)	14 904 640	16 360 908	109.8	13 006 432	87.3	1 202
Article 41(2)	3 617 638	3 191 862	88.2	2 801 939	77.5	722
Article 42	59 022 712	61 428 779	104.1	53 586 965	90.8	2 873
Article 43(1,3)	376 755 503	452 087 970	120.0	306 186 692	81.3	1 691
Article 43(2)	20 745 710	19 759 342	95.2	17 044 600	82.2	66
Article 47	144 747 209	150 141 392	103.7	111 218 267	76.8	637
Article 48(1)(a-d,f-h)	511 157 320	558 282 595	109.2	453 100 189	88.6	6 964
Article 48(1)(e,i,j)	50 486 338	50 181 657	99.4	33 475 616	66.3	267
Article 48(1)(k)	8 399 135	7 335 442	87.3	5 557 117	66.2	265
Article 49	16 103 921	18 657 592	115.9	12 107 327	75.2	132
Article 50	10 656 179	10 453 749	98.1	8 391 412	78.7	231
Article 51	18 746 980	21 395 554	114.1	14 338 744	76.5	111
Article 52	9 734 942	12 535 999	128.8	5 294 736	54.4	69
Article 53	560 645	9 000	1.6	9 000	1.6	1

EMFF Article	Total EMFF allocation (EUR) (AIR, 2023)	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (AIR, 31/12/2023)	Commitment rate (%)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Absorption rate (%)	Number of operations
Article 54	102 429 752	98 869 122	96.5	95 226 556	93.0	1 550
Article 55	66 235 076	57 309 401	86.5	55 414 493	83.7	2 191
Article 56	20 334 976	25 486 338	125.3	20 442 835	100.5	407
Article 57	5 745 102	6 672 637	116.1	4 890 251	85.1	134
Article 62(1)(a)	5 143 108	4 886 928	95.0	4 422 740	86.0	263
Article 63 CLLD	565 689 178	599 925 617	106.1	456 329 746	80.7	13 010
Article 64	12 410 722	11 840 756	95.4	7 535 860	60.7	431
Article 66	128 925 673	127 526 273	98.9	113 355 200	87.9	626
Article 67	25 677 779	16 057 882	62.5	15 895 814	61.9	65
Article 68	427 809 617	349 384 332	81.7	322 511 761	75.4	25 804
Article 69	556 706 650	579 394 802	104.1	484 420 724	87.0	3 384
Article 70	192 500 000	177 898 977	92.4	175 402 878	91.1	4 428
Article 76	472 272 184	535 818 978	113.5	400 334 600	84.8	1 821
Article 77	586 072 784	625 606 737	106.7	547 372 679	93.4	267
Article 78	251 024 173	270 970 788	107.9	223 735 540	89.1	2 260
Article 80(1)(a)	13 011 506	16 198 583	124.5	11 901 115	91.5	32
Article 80(1)(b)	12 955 540	12 227 727	94.4	10 571 357	81.6	54
Article 80(1)(c)	32 789 547	34 071 631	103.9	31 900 078	97.3	174
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 616 815 235</b>	<b>5 879 203 389</b>	<b>104.7</b>	<b>4 808 445 254</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>132 198</b>

Source: AIR 2023

#### 14.4 Annex 4: Types of operations per selected article

##### Article 38: Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment and adapting fishing to the protection of species

Type of investment	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Selectivity of gear	13 224 552	11 884 274	1023
Reduce discards or deal with unwanted catches	4 822 396	4 789 065	295
Protecting gears and catches from mammals and birds	4 661 645	4 640 694	353
Eliminating impacts on ecosystem and sea bed	2 235 266	1 804 074	123
Fish aggregating device in outermost regions	17 784	11 356	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 961 643</b>	<b>23 129 463</b>	<b>1 795</b>

##### Article 40(1)(b-g,i): Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity

Type of operation	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Other actions enhancing biodiversity	97 910 798	60 775 272	1 224
Management of resources	77 727 021	65 585 335	1 343
Management of MPAs	32 440 458	30 061 762	55
Management of Natura 2000	17 770 183	16 560 956	105
Investment in facilities	16 802 388	13 107 088	120
Management plans for Natura 2000 and SPA	7 513 720	6 045 318	69
Increasing awareness	4 327 140	3 318 185	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>254 491 708</b>	<b>195 453 917</b>	<b>2 978</b>

##### Article 41(2): Energy efficiency and mitigation of climate change

Type of operation	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Replacement of engine	2 474 557	2 076 684	626
Modernisation	778 573	735 018	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 253 130</b>	<b>2 811 702</b>	<b>752</b>

**Article 48(1)(a-d,f-h): Productive investments in aquaculture**

Type of investment	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Productive	357 884 937	281 636 843	3 541
Modernisation	177 572 631	135 468 562	2 952
Quality of products	11 502 755	10 537 264	200
Diversification	10 034 623	7 778 753	140
Restoration	6 325 443	5 857 258	114
Animal health	6 149 170	4 721 167	175
Complementary activities	4 315 477	3 515 001	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>573 785 035</b>	<b>449 514 849</b>	<b>7 191</b>

**Article 48(1)(e,i,j): Productive investments in aquaculture – resource efficiency**

Type of investment	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Closed systems	34 717 388	18 962 034	147
Environmental and resources	12 699 923	9 366 637	93
Water usage and quality	6 200 599	4 440 558	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>53 617 910</b>	<b>32 769 229</b>	<b>285</b>

**Article 54: Aquaculture providing environmental services**

Type of operation	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Aquaculture operations including conservation and improvement of environment and biodiversity	56 449 858	55 728 672	1 557
Aquaculture in Natura 2000 areas	42 421 405	39 852 129	514
Ex-situ conservation and reproduction	1 223 044	1 118 178	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 094 307</b>	<b>96 698 980</b>	<b>2 104</b>

**Article 63: Implementation of local development strategies**

Type of operation	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Adding value	183 442 601	110 886 929	4 216
Diversification	146 880 026	92 728 528	3 679
Socio-cultural	125 139 646	91 986 870	4 033
Running costs and animation	93 146 148	64 945 903	661
Environment	60 086 208	45 741 692	1 452
Governance	15 505 915	10 777 768	326
<b>Total</b>	<b>624 200 544</b>	<b>417 067 691</b>	<b>14 367</b>

Type of beneficiary	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Legal person	228 787 977	155 410 307	5 608
Public authority	194 242 677	132 287 869	3 395
Natural person	83 735 738	40 623 048	2 679
NGO	62 006 308	40 863 418	966
Mixed	24 666 328	20 863 127	385
Organisation of fishermen	22 585 961	20 053 697	1 103
Producers' organisations	4 126 467	3 702 508	103
Research centre/University	4 049 089	3 263 715	128
<b>Total</b>	<b>624 200 544</b>	<b>417 067 691</b>	<b>14 367</b>

**Article 69: Processing of fisheries and aquaculture products**

Type of operation	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
New or improved products, processes or management system	335 789 723	274 063 774	2 008
Improve safety, hygiene, health, working conditions	110 907 784	93 481 029	783
Energy saving or reducing impact on the environment	99 864 006	77 950 334	675
Processing catches not for human consumption	20 749 080	19 983 876	31
Processing of organic aquaculture products	13 902 546	12 400 977	87

Type of operation	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Processing by-products	9 026 381	7 914 866	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>590 239 519</b>	<b>485 794 856</b>	<b>3 655</b>

**Article 68: Marketing measures**

Type of operation	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Find new markets and improve marketing conditions (focus on species with marketing potential)	119 175 340	106 367 876	12 467
Communication and promotional campaigns	105 179 509	87 144 099	4 705
Standard contracts	61 913 126	59 141 588	3 344
Promoting quality and value-added (focus on direct marketing)	46 791 706	45 066 583	4 126
Transparency of production	18 794 963	17 836 281	3 336
Promoting quality and value-added (focus on certification and promotion sustainable products)	10 885 164	9 042 605	112
Find new markets and improve marketing conditions (focus on products with low impact or organic products)	5 032 394	4 344 752	475
Traceability and eco-labels	4 508 220	4 129 134	58
Find new markets and improve marketing conditions (focus on unwanted catches)	3 049 406	2 838 392	31
Create Producers Organisations, association or inter-branch organisations	2 800 255	2 601 619	145
Promoting quality and value-added (focus on packaging)	2 256 988	1 569 705	33
Promoting quality and value-added (focus on quality schemes)	1 795 737	1 234 467	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>382 182 808</b>	<b>341 317 101</b>	<b>28 871</b>

**Article 76: Control and enforcement**

Type of operation	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
Purchase, installation and development of technology	131 739 918	95 042 334	331
Purchase of other control means	124 524 470	87 144 390	192
Operational costs	105 855 713	82 056 489	77
Modernisation and purchase of patrol vessels, aircrafts and helicopters	94 479 951	57 109 778	83
Development, purchase and installation of the components to ensure data transmission	36 972 809	32 703 110	878
Implementation of programmes for exchanging and analysing data	34 629 822	29 130 044	38
Implementation of an action plan	13 500 169	13 666 784	20
Development, purchase and installation of the components necessary to ensure traceability	11 908 148	10 789 194	132
Development of innovative control and monitoring systems and pilot projects	5 384 506	5 304 373	43
Training and exchange programmes	3 417 129	2 786 422	37
Seminars and media tools	2 146 748	2 153 955	30
Cost/benefit analyses and assessments of audits	136 176	122 147	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>564 695 559</b>	<b>418 009 021</b>	<b>1 865</b>

**Article 80(1)(b): Promotion of protection of marine environment and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources**

Type of operation	Total EMFF committed by Managing Authority (EUR) (Infosys, 31/12/2023)	Total eligible EMFF expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority (EUR)	Number of operations
MPA	8 431 258	7 714 286	53
Natura 2000	3 509 669	3 106 537	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 940 927</b>	<b>10 820 823</b>	<b>81</b>

## 14.5 Annex 5: EMFF common result indicators (Infosys data)

### UP1 Result indicators

SO	RI	RI description	RI unit	Target value (a)	RI ex-ante (b)	(c) =b/a	RI ex-post (d)	(e) =d/a
1	1.4.a	Change in unwanted catches	tonnes	-26 629	20 825	-78.2%	7 841	-29.4%
1	1.4.b	Change in unwanted catches	%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	1.10.a	Change in the coverage of Natura 2000 areas designated under the Birds and Habitats directives	km <sup>2</sup>	31 632	121 233	383.3%	39 512	124.9%
2	1.10.b	Change in the coverage of other spatial protection measures under Article 13(4) of the Directive 2008/56/EC	km <sup>2</sup>	291 074	11 203	3.8%	10 983	3.8%
3	1.3	Change in net profits	thousand euros	9 105	3 006	33.0%	2 455	27.0%
3	1.6	Change in the % of unbalanced fleets	%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
4	1.1	Change in the value of production	thousand euros	93 149	1 238 603	1 329.7%	623 196	669.0%
4	1.2	Change in the volume of production	tonnes	54 698	149 965	274.2%	12 722	23.3%
4	1.3	Change in net profits	thousand euros	32 399	186 627	576.0%	40 500	125.0%
4	1.7	Employment created (FTE) in the fisheries sector or complementary activities	FTE	1 742	2 326	133.5%	2 026	116.3%
4	1.8	Employment maintained (FTE) in the fisheries sector or complementary activities	FTE	19 266	47 082	244.4%	30 676	159.2%
4	1.9.a	Change in the number of work-related injuries and accidents	number	-310	-550	177.2%	79	-25.4%
5	1.1	Change in the value of production	thousand euros	11 882	195 763	1 647.6%	103 233	868.8%
5	1.2	Change in the volume of production	tonnes	3 845	39 908	1 037.9%	2 427	63.1%
5	1.3	Change in net profits	thousand euros	17 665	50 176	284.0%	9 176	51.9%
6	1.7	Employment created (FTE) in the fisheries sector or	FTE	844	2 167	256.8%	823	97.5%



SO	RI	RI description	RI unit	Target value (a)	RI ex-ante (b)	(c) =b/a	RI ex-post (d)	(e) =d/a
		complementary activities						
6	1.8	Employment maintained (FTE) in the fisheries sector or complementary activities	FTE	3 626	6 982	192.6%	6 378	175.9%
6	1.9.a	Change in the number of work-related injuries and accidents	number	-10	488	-5 007.7%	-37	379.7%

Source: Infosys 2023

### UP2 Result indicators

SO	RI	RI description	RI unit	Target value (a)	RI ex-ante (b)	(c) =b/a	RI ex-post (d)	(e) =d/a
1	2.1	Change in volume of aquaculture production	tonnes	20 134	44 970	223.4%	14 581	72.4%
1	2.2	Change in value of aquaculture production	thousand euros	73 701	227 764	309.0%	102 852	139.6%
1	2.3	Change in net profit	thousand euros	11 329	229 085	2 022.1%	4 606	40.7%
2	2.4	Change in volume of aquaculture production	tonnes	253 644	1 177 578	464.3%	423 135	166.8%
2	2.2	Change in value of aquaculture production	thousand euros	814 407	11 514 566	1 413.9%	5 758 434	707.1%
2	2.3	Change in net profit	thousand euros	125 370	3 789 318	3 022.5%	2 162 620	1 725.0%
2	2.8	Employment created	FTE	773	3 135	405.4%	1 274	164.8%
2	2.9	Employment maintained	FTE	8 377	12 391	147.9%	9 822	117.2%
3	2.4	Change in the volume of production organic aquaculture	tonnes	3 543	22 593	637.6%	-163 697	-4 619.8%
3	2.5	Change in the volume of production recirculation system	tonnes	12 094	9 140	75.6%	4 761	39.4%
3	2.6	Change in the volume of aquaculture production certified under voluntary sustainability schemes	tonnes	939	2 837	302.1%	1 849	196.9%
3	2.7	Aquaculture farms providing environmental services	number	21	583	2 744.8%	11	51.8%
3	2.8	Employment created	FTE	80	706	884.3%	677	847.1%
3	2.9	Employment maintained	FTE	2 915	344	11.8%	346	11.9%

SO	RI	RI description	RI unit	Target value (a)	RI ex-ante (b)	(c) =b/a	RI ex-post (d)	(e) =d/a
4	2.1	Change in volume of aquaculture production	tonnes	19 728	24 792	125.7%	23 806	120.7%
4	2.2	Change in value of aquaculture production	thousand euros	33 628	1 278 435	3 801.7%	255 601	760.1%
4	2.4	Change in the volume of production organic aquaculture	tonnes	3 030	7	0.2%	7	0.2%
4	2.5	Change in the volume of production recirculation system	tonnes	20	50	245.8%	–	0.0%
4	2.6	Change in the volume of aquaculture production certified under voluntary sustainability schemes	tonnes	201	6	3.0%	6	3.0%
4	2.7	Aquaculture farms providing environmental services	number	1 170	625	53.4%	500	42.7%
5	2.8	Employment created	FTE	356	128	36.0%	39	11.0%
5	2.9	Employment maintained	FTE	2 317	1 048	45.2%	821	35.4%

Source: Infosys 2023

### UP3 Result indicators

SO	RI	RI description	RI unit	Target value (a)	RI ex-ante (b)	(c) =b/a	RI ex-post (d)	(e) =d/a
1	3.B.1	Increase in the percentage of fulfilment of data calls	%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	3.A.1	Number of serious infringements detected	number	7 479	6 771	90.5%	1 899	25.4%

Source: Infosys 2023

### UP4 Result indicators

SO	RI	RI description	RI unit	Target value (a)	RI ex-ante (b)	(c) =b/a	RI ex-post (d)	(e) =d/a
1	4.1	Employment created (FTE)	FTE	3 350	8 855	264.3%	4 887	145.9%
1	4.2	Employment maintained (FTE)	FTE	9 509	15 109	158.9%	11 124	117.0%
1	4.3	Businesses created	number	754	1 373	182.0%	1 024	135.8%

Source: Infosys 2023

**UP5 Result indicators**

SO	RI	RI description	RI unit	Target value (a)	RI ex-ante (b)	(c) =b/a	RI ex-post (d)	(e) =d/a
1	5.1.a	Change in value of first sales in POs	thousand euros	636 427	46 551 653	7 314.5%	46 071 780	7 239.1%
1	5.1.b	Change in volume of first sales in POs	tonnes	343 490	1 064 102	309.8%	-313 559 523	-91 286.3%
1	5.1.c	Change in value of first sales in non-POs	thousand euros	82 741	1 398 303	1 690.0%	811 966	981.3%
1	5.1.d	Change in volume of first sales in non-POs	tonnes	32 032	169 955	530.6%	-37 766	-117.9%
2	5.1.a	Change in value of first sales in POs	thousand euros	34 116	200 768	588.5%	237 586	696.4%
2	5.1.b	Change in volume of first sales in POs	tonnes	29 203	62 445	213.8%	25 606	87.7%
2	5.1.c	Change in value of first sales in non-POs	thousand euros	215 933	42 731 362	19 789.2%	38 315 715	17 744.3%
2	5.1.d	Change in volume of first sales in non-POs	tonnes	90 110	520 372	577.5%	457 939	508.2%

Source: Infosys 2023

**UP6 Result indicators**

SO	RI	RI description	RI unit	Target value (a)	RI ex-ante (b)	(c) =b/a	RI ex-post (d)	(e) =d/a
1	6.1	Increase in the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) for the surveillance of the EU maritime domain	%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1	6.2.a	Change in the coverage of Natura 2000 areas designated under the Birds and Habitats directives	km <sup>2</sup>	25 600	101	0.4%	100	0.4%
1	6.2.b	Change in the coverage of other spatial protection measures under Article 13(4) of the Directive 2008/56/EC	km <sup>2</sup>	146 575	497 181	339.2%	550 485	375.6%

Source: Infosys 2023

**14.6 Annex 6: EMFF common result indicators (AIR data)**

RI code	Common result indicator	Measurement unit	RI target (ex-ante) value	RI cumulative (ex-post) value
	<b>UP1</b>			
1.1	Change in the value of production	thousand EUR	105 031	11 884 470
1.2	Change in the volume of production	tonnes	58 543	2 596 575
1.3	Change in net profits	thousand EUR	59 169	282 529
1.4.a	Change in unwanted catches (tonnes)	tonnes	-26 629	3 101
1.4.b	Change in unwanted catches (%)	%	n/a	n/a
1.5	Change in fuel efficiency of fish capture	litres fuel/tonnes landed catch	90 539	-8 340 709
1.6	Change in the % of unbalanced fleets	%	n/a	n/a
1.7	Employment created (FTE) in the fisheries sector or complementary activities	FTE	2 806	2 419
1.8	Employment maintained (FTE) in the fisheries sector or complementary activities	FTE	22 942	28 800
1.9.a	Change in the number of work-related injuries and accidents	number	-320	-1 339
1.9.b	Change in the % of work-related injuries and accidents in relation to total fishers	%		
1.10.a	Change in the coverage of Natura 2000 areas designated under the Birds and Habitats directives	km <sup>2</sup>	31 632	3 643
1.10.b	Change in the coverage of other spatial protection measures under Article 13(4) of the Directive 2008/56/EC	km <sup>2</sup>	291 074	348
	<b>UP2</b>			
2.1	Change in volume of aquaculture production	tonnes	293 505	318 871
2.2	Change in value of aquaculture production	thousand EUR	921 737	45 616 586
2.3	Change in net profit	thousand EUR	136 699	5 046 399
2.4	Change in the volume of production organic aquaculture	tonnes	6 573	7 170
2.5	Change in the volume of production recirculation system	tonnes	12 205	7 151
2.6	Change in the volume of aquaculture production certified under voluntary sustainability schemes	tonnes	1 140	1 481
2.7	Aquaculture farms providing environmental services	number	1 192	1 138
2.8	Employment created	FTE	1 329	1 296
2.9	Employment maintained	FTE	13 659	6 804
	<b>UP3</b>			
3.B.1	Increase in the percentage of fulfilment of data calls	%	n/a	n/a
3.A.1	Number of serious infringements detected	number	7 480	3 802
3.A.2	Landings that have been the subject to physical control	%	n/a	n/a
	<b>UP4</b>			
4.1	Employment created (FTE)	FTE	3 350	5 055
4.2	Employment maintained (FTE)	FTE	9 509	15 724
4.3	Businesses created	number	754	947
	<b>UP5</b>			

RI code	Common result indicator	Measurement unit	RI target (ex-ante) value	RI cumulative (ex-post) value
5.1.a	Change in value of first sales in POs	thousand EUR	670 544	45 217 931
5.1.b	Change in volume of first sales in POs	tonnes	372 693	36 159 966
5.1.c	Change in value of first sales in non-POs	thousand EUR	298 674	14 584 291
5.1.d	Change in volume of first sales in non-POs	tonnes	122 141	5 743 465
	<b>UP6</b>			
6.1	Increase in the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) for the surveillance of the EU maritime domain	%	n/a	n/a
6.2.a	Change in the coverage of Natura 2000 areas designated under the Birds and Habitats directives	km <sup>2</sup>	25 600	–
6.2.b	Change in the coverage of other spatial protection measures under Article 13(4) of the Directive 2008/56/EC	km <sup>2</sup>	146 575	328 739

Source: AIR 2023

## 14.7 Annex 7: EMFF programme specific result indicators (AIR data)

MS specific result indicators	Specific result indicator (working translation)	RI target (ex-ante) value	RI cumulative (ex-post) value
<b>UP1</b>			
Area of the sites restored under the MAHOP		1 000	189
Asistentes a actividades de formación	Attendees at training activities	7 240	18 477
Buques pesqueros afectados	Affected fishing vessels	42	161
Creación de nuevas Redes y Asociaciones	Creation of new Networks and Associations	19	38
Ilość użytego materiału zarybieniowego	The amount of restocking material used	7	
Innovaatilised tooted, protsessid	Innovative products, processes	6	13
Investicinē žvejybos Baltijos jūroje grāža (ROI)	Return on investment (ROI) of fishing in the Baltic Sea	11	
Isstrādātas inovācijas	Developed innovations	11	10
Kuro sunaudojimo (litrai/ iškrautam kg) efektyvumo padidējimas	Increase in efficiency of fuel consumption (litres/kg landed)	5	19
Mere viden om fiskeriets påvirkning af og samspil med det marine økosystem	More knowledge about fishing's impact on and interaction with the marine ecosystem	5	4
Muutus kalapüügi kütusesäästlikkuses	Change in fishing fuel efficiency	-3	-8
Number of businesses maintained		178	150
Nerštaviečių ir migruojančių rūšių migracijos kelių atkūrimas	Restoration of spawning grounds and migration routes of migratory species	5	4
Number of protected areas Natura 2000 covered by operations		17	-
Number of sites restored under the MAHOP		15	12
Number of vessels having purchased the gear referred to in Article 38(1)(a)-c		200	271
Number of vessels having purchased the gear referred to in Article 38(1)(d)		20	10
Odsetek wyłowionych sieci-widm	Percentage of ghost nets retrieved	50	
Ohranjeno število plovil privezanih v ribiških pristaniščih	Maintained number of vessels moored in fishing ports	33	65
Omfang af opnået god økologisk tilstand	Extent of achieved good ecological status	1 700	1 686
Ostu skaits, kurās attīstīta infrastruktūra	Number of ports with developed infrastructure	7	9
Partnerlusvõrgustiku tegevustes osalevad ettevõtjad	Entrepreneurs participating in the activities of the partnership network	350	521
Pescadores afectados	Affected fishers	41 209	439 706
Pescadores afectados por sustitución de motor en buques menores de 12 metros	Fishers affected by engine replacement in vessels less than 12 metres	47	80
Pescadores que se benefician de la operación	Fishers benefiting from the operation	2 456	6 879
Pesquerías analizadas	Fisheries analysed	9	13
Povečano število plovil privezanih v ribiških pristaniščih	Increased number of vessels moored in fishing ports	3	-
Raven zavržkov	Level of waste	15	8
Selektiivsed (sh hülgekendlad) püügivahendid	Selective (including seal-proof) fishing gear	830	929
Taastatud kudealad (sh kunstkoelmud)	Restored spawning grounds (incl. artificial nests)	15	15

MS specific result indicators	Specific result indicator (working translation)	RI target (ex-ante) value	RI cumulative (ex-post) value
Variación del valor de la producción	Change in the value of production	2 000	10 155
Variación en % de los buques en desequilibrio	Change in % of vessels in imbalance	-14	-82
Verandering van het aantal obstakels voor vismigratie in het rivierbekken van Maas en Rijn	Change in the number of obstacles to fish migration in the Meuse and Rhine river basin	-15	-19
Viden om og til fremme af reduktion af uønskede fangster og landingsforpligtelse	Knowledge and promotion of the reduction of unwanted catches and landing obligations	8	4
Zmiana odsetka podmiotów, która skorzysta z projektów wymiany doświadczeń	Change in the percentage of entities that will benefit from experience exchange projects	14	-
Zmiana odsetka portów i przystani, w których zapewniono możliwość odbioru niechcianych połowów	Change in the percentage of ports and harbours where unwanted catches can be received	10	-
Zmiana w % niezrównoważonych flot	Change in the percentage of unsustainable fleets	-31	-
Zmiana zasięgu obszarów o ulepszonym zarządzaniu	Change in coverage of areas with improved management	7 361	6 578
Zušu krājumu pārvaldības pasākumu īstenošana atbilstoši paredzētajam Zivju resursu mākslīgās atražošanas plānā 2017.–2020. gadam	Implementation of eel stock management measures in accordance with the planned Fish Resources Artificial Reproduction Plan for the years 2017-2020.	2	2
<b>UP2</b>			
Ændring i mængden af økologisk akvakulturproduktion	Change in the amount of organic aquaculture production	3 000	4 620
Ændring i mængden af produktion fra recirkulerede anlæg	Change in the amount of production from recirculation systems	15 000	8 208
Anlagen – Becken und Fließkanäle	Facilities – basins and flow channels	430 000	52 928
Anlagen – Gehege und Kreislaufanlagen	Facilities – closed and recirculation systems	7 000	14 597
Anlagen – Teiche	Facilities – ponds	1 900	320
Aquaculture farms providing environmental services		14 670	15 377
Asistentes que participan en las actividades de formación	Attendees participating in training activities	546	814
Beschäftigung in Aquakultur	Employment in aquaculture	240	333
Change in net profits		1 706	
Change in the value of production		16 500	25
Cuantificación de la energía renovable en el proyecto	Quantification of renewable energy in the project	327	328
Employment maintained		51	93
Explotaciones afectadas	Affected holdings	2	
Ferme de acvacultură afectate de pierderi de venituri din vânzări în contextul epidemiei de COVID-19	Aquaculture farms affected by loss of sales revenue in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic	161	26
Förändrad produktionsvolym inom recirkulerande vattenbrukssystem genom startstöd	Changed production volume within recirculating aquaculture systems through start-up support	50	90

MS specific result indicators	Specific result indicator (working translation)	RI target (ex-ante) value	RI cumulative (ex-post) value
Innovaatilised tooted, protsessid	Innovative products, processes	4	7
Isstrādātas inovācijas	Developed innovations	6	4
Isveidoti konsultāciju pakalpojumi	Established consulting services	4	4
Množství vysazeného úhoře	Amount of eel planted	5 000	6 830
Number of businesses maintained		73	–
Number of jobs maintained		73	–
Number of trained people		2 400	4 033
Partnerlusvõrgustiku tegevustes osalevad ettevõtjad	Entrepreneurs participating in the activities of the partnership network	49	56
Počet rybochovných zariadení využívaných na hospodársky chov rýb	Number of fish farming facilities used for commercial fish farming	5	10
Počet udržaných pracovných miest na plný úväzok	Number of full-time jobs maintained	21	154
Production value of intensive aquaculture systems		2 152	5 392
Production volume of intensive aquaculture system		795	1 898
Projekte	Projects	10	2
Reduction of energy consumption in aquaculture facilities incl. moving towards renewable energy		5	–
Relación Privado / Público de los beneficiarios	Private / Public relationship of the beneficiaries	1	1
Tauidvaba staatuse saanud ettevõtete osakaal kogu sektori ettevõtete arvust	The share of companies with disease-free status out of the total number of companies in the sector	100	–
Udržení objemu akvakulturní produkce	Maintaining the volume of aquaculture production	18 440	18 263
Zmena v počte rybníkov využívaných na hospodársky chov rýb	Change in the number of ponds used for commercial fish farming	4	–
Zmena v počte rybochovných zariadení využívaných na hospodársky chov rýb	Change in the number of fish farming facilities used for commercial fish farming	21	–
Zmiana odsetka podmiotów wdrażających innowacje		25	–
<b>UP3</b>			–
Anzahl einschlägiger wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten	Number of relevant scientific papers	144	7
Festgestellte schwerwiegende Verstöße im Aquakulturbereich auf Basis der Analytik hinsichtlich Rückverfolgbarkeit	Identified serious violations in the aquaculture sector based on analytics regarding traceability	5	–
Procentní podíl proškolených kontrolorů v oblasti sledovatelnosti produktů v oblasti akvakultury	Percentage of inspectors trained in aquaculture product traceability	20	–
Value of first sales of POs		415	377
Volume of first sales of POs		70	54
Volume of processed fish of domestic origin		80	100
<b>UP4</b>			



MS specific result indicators	Specific result indicator (working translation)	RI target (ex-ante) value	RI cumulative (ex-post) value
Población total abarcada por el GALP	Total population covered by the FLAG	2 710 845	3 453 878
Proyectos de diversificación de las actividades económicas en la zona	Projects for the diversification of economic activities in the area	300	546
<b>UP5</b>			
Ændring i mængden af akvakulturproduktion, der er certificeret (ASC)	Change in the amount of aquaculture production certified (ASC)	15 000	20 449
Annual value of turnover of EU-marketed production		26 600	19 707
Area of fish farms providing environmental services		1 600	752
Beschäftigte in Verarbeitung und Vermarktung	Employees in processing and marketing	290	127
Bevaret beskæftigelse	Preserved employment	30	646
Employment (FTE)		1	1
Empresas beneficiadas	Companies benefited	250	417
Empresas y otras entidades que se benefician de la operación	Companies and other entities that benefit from the operation	20 244	57 677
Erhaltene Arbeitsplätze	Employment maintained	316	913
Fish consumption		2	
Geschaffene Arbeitsplätze	Employment created	111	35
Hodnota produkcie v spracovaní produktov rybolovu a akvakultúry	Production value in the processing of fishery and aquaculture products	99	36
Increase in the estimated per capita fish consumption		1	258
Lisandväärtus töötaja kohta	Value of employee	10	30
Number of businesses maintained		271	–
Number of jobs maintained		17	–
Objem produkcie v spracovaní produktov rybolovu a akvakultúry	Volume of production in the processing of fishery and aquaculture products	25	10
Pro Kopf Verbrauch	Per capita consumption	8	–
Produkce zpracovaných ryb	Production of processed fish	380	1 235
Proyectos subvencionados	Subsidised projects	526	954
Unități de procesare afectate de pierderi de venituri din vânzări în contextul epidemiei de COVID-19	Processing units affected by loss of sales revenue in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic	6	1
Volumen de la producción compensada	Compensated production volume	265 671	274 221
Zmena v spotrebe rýb a rybích produktov na obyvateľa	Change in consumption of fish and fish products per capita	1	–
Zmiana w zysku netto	Change in net profit	1 500	4 776
Zvejas un akvakultūras produktu apstrādes uzņēmumi, kas veikuši investīcijas	Fishery and aquaculture product processing companies that have made investments	25	31
<b>UP6</b>			
Comprehensive and integrated database on the marine environment		1	1

MS specific result indicators	Specific result indicator (working translation)	RI target (ex-ante) value	RI cumulative (ex-post) value
Kvalitatīvie raksturlielumi laba jūras vides stāvokļa noteikšanai, kuros uzlabotas zināšanas par jūras vides stāvokli	Qualitative characteristics for determining good marine environmental status in which knowledge about marine environmental status is improved	11	11
Número de Km <sup>2</sup> cartografiados de superficie marina	Number of km <sup>2</sup> mapping of marine surface	125 000	128 023
Sprememba v pokritosti z izboljšanim statusom upravljanja/ohranjanja	Change in coverage with improved management/maintenance status	1	1
Zmiana zasięgu obszarów o ulepszonym zarządzaniu	Change in coverage of areas with improved management	3 060	–

Source: AIR 2023

## 14.8 Annex 8 EMFF Articles

EMFF Article (short name)	EMFF Article (long name)
Article 26	Article 26 Innovation (+ Article 44(3) Inland fishing)
Article 27	Article 27 Advisory services (+ Article 44(3) Inland fishing)
Article 28	Article 28 Partnerships between fishermen and scientists (+ Article 44(3) Inland fishing)
Article 29(1)(2)	Article 29(1) + 29.2 Promoting human capital and social dialogue – training, networking, social dialogue; support to spouses and life partners (+ Article 44(1)(a) Inland fishing)
Article 29(3)	Article 29(3) Promoting human capital and social dialogue – trainees on board of SSCF vessels/social dialogue (+ Article 44(1)(a) Inland fishing)
Article 30	Article 30 Diversification and new forms of income (+ Article 44(4) Inland fishing)
Article 31	Article 31 Start-up support for young fishermen (+ Article 44(2) Inland fishing)
Article 32	Article 32 Health and safety (+ Article 44(1)(b) Inland fishing)
Article 33	Article 33 Temporary cessation of fishing activities
Article 34	Article 34 Permanent cessation of fishing activities
Article 35	Article 35 Mutual funds for adverse climatic events and environmental incidents
Article 36	Article 36 Support to systems of allocation of fishing opportunities
Article 37	Article 37 Support for the design and implementation of conservation measures
Article 38	Article 38 Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment and adapting fishing to the protection of species (+ Article 44(1)(c) Inland fishing)
Article 39	Article 39 Innovation linked to the conservation of marine biological resources (+ Article 44(1)(c) Inland fishing)
Article 40(1)(a)	Article 40(1)(a) Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity – collection of lost fishing gear and marine litter
Article 40(1)(b-g,i)	Article 40(1)(b)-g, i Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity – contribution to a better management or conservation, construction, installation or modernisation of static or movable facilities, preparation of protection and management plans relate
Article 40(1)(h)	Article 40(1)(h) Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity – schemes for the compensation of damage to catches caused by mammals and birds
Article 41(1)(a) to (c)	Article 41(1)(a), b, c Energy efficiency and mitigation of climate change – on board investments; energy efficiency audits and schemes; studies to assess the contribution of alternative propulsion systems and hull designs (+ Article 44(1)(d) Inland fishing)
Article 41(2) and Article 44(1)(d)	Article 41(2) Energy efficiency and mitigation of climate change – Replacement or modernisation of main or ancillary engines (+ Article 44(1)(d) Inland fishing)
Article 42	Article 42 Added value, product quality and use of unwanted catches (+ Article 44(1)(e) Inland fishing)
Article 43(1) and (3)	Article 43(1) + 3 Fishing ports, landing sites, auction halls and shelters – investments improving fishing port and auctions halls infrastructure or landing sites and shelters; construction of shelters to improve safety of fishermen (+ Article 44(1)(f) Inland fishing)
Article 43(2)	Article 43(2) Fishing ports, landing sites, auction halls and shelters – investments to facilitate compliance with the obligation to land all catches
Article 47	Article 47 Innovation
Article 48(1)(a-d,f-h)	Article 48(1)(a-d,f-h) Productive investments in aquaculture
Article 48(1)(e,i,j)	Article 48(1)(e,i,j) Productive investments in aquaculture – resource efficiency, reducing usage of water and chemicals, recirculation systems minimising water use

EMFF Article (short name)	EMFF Article (long name)
Article 48(1)(k)	Article 48(1)(k) Productive investments in aquaculture – increasing energy efficiency, renewable energy
Article 49	Article 49 Management, relief and advisory services for aquaculture farms
Article 50	Article 50 Promoting human capital and networking
Article 51	Article 51 Increasing the potential of aquaculture sites
Article 52	Article 52 Encouraging new sustainable aquaculture farmers
Article 53	Article 53 Conversion to eco-management and audit schemes and organic aquaculture
Article 54	Article 54 Aquaculture providing environmental services
Article 55	Article 55 Public health measures
Article 56	Article 56 Animal health and welfare measures
Article 57	Article 57 Aquaculture stock insurance
Article 62(1)(a)	Article 62(1)(a) Preparatory support
Article 63	Article 63 Implementation of local development strategies
Article 64	Article 64 Cooperation activities
Article 66	Article 66 Production and marketing plans
Article 67	Article 67 Storage aid
Article 68	Article 68 Marketing measures
Article 69	Article 69 Processing of fisheries and aquaculture products
Article 70	Article 70 Compensation regime
Article 76	Article 76 Control and enforcement
Article 77	Article 77 Data collection
Article 78	Article 78 Technical assistance, MSs initiative
Article 80(1)(a)	Article 80(1)(a) Integrating Maritime Surveillance
Article 80(1)(b)	Article 80(1)(b) Promotion of the protection of marine environment, and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources
Article 80(1)(c)	Article 80(1)(c) Improving the knowledge on the state of the marine environment