



FAMENET

Working paper on EMFF/ EMFAF evaluation synthesis

FINAL
December 2025

Copyright notice:

© European Union, 2025

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Disclaimer:

The information and views set out in this working paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this working paper. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission's behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The approach and methodologies proposed do not constitute legal interpretation and are not binding. They are considered recommendations by technical experts to enhance exchange among stakeholders and to enrich the body of knowledge on EMFAF implementation.

Recommended citation:

EUROPEAN COMMISSION - Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Unit D.3 (2025): FAMENET working paper on EMFF/EMFAF evaluation synthesis, Brussels.

Authors:

Richard FREEMAN, Matthew RUDH, Angelos SANOPPOULOS

Contact:

FAMENET

Boulevard de la Woluwe 2

1150 Brussels

info@famenet.eu

Table of Contents

Executive summary	5
1 Introduction	7
1.1 Background	7
1.2 Objectives and target audiences	7
1.3 How to use this evaluation synthesis	8
2 Data sources and methodology of the working paper	9
2.1 Gathering and compiling the evaluations	9
2.2 Synthesising the evaluations	9
3 Summary of MS evaluations of the EMFF and EMFAF	11
3.1 Overview	11
3.2 ‘Timeframe’ of evaluations	11
3.3 Types of evaluations included in the synthesis	12
3.4 Timeline of delivery of evaluations	13
3.5 Evaluations by Member State	15
3.6 Sectors covered in the evaluations	16
3.7 Union Priorities covered in the evaluations	18
3.7.1 EMFF Union Priorities	18
3.7.2 EMFAF Priorities	19
4 Methodologies	20
4.1 Evaluation criteria covered	20
4.2 Data collection methods	22
4.3 Data sources	23
4.4 Types of analysis	24
4.5 Good practices from the MS evaluations	25
4.5.1 Using counterfactual analysis: An example from Lithuania	25
4.5.2 Using ‘gap analysis’: An example from Italy	26
4.5.3 Evaluating implementation structures and administrative processes in a complex, decentralised governance system: An example from Germany	28
5 Key limitations listed in the evaluations	30
6 Key recommendations made in the evaluations	31
Annex 1: Internal evaluation database fields	33
Annex 2: List of evaluations included in the working paper	35

Tables and Figures

Table 1: Types of EMFF evaluations received by MS	15
Table 2: Timeframe of evaluations conducted by MSs.....	16
Table 3: Sectors covered in the evaluations	17
Table 4: EMFF Union Priorities covered by the MS evaluations	18
Table 5: Evaluation criteria covered for the EMFF and EMFAF	21
Figure 1: Number of evaluations per Fund	11
Figure 2: Timeframe of evaluations conducted	12
Figure 3: Definitions of different types of evaluations:	12
Figure 4: Types of evaluations included for the EMFF and the EMFAF	13
Figure 5: Timeline of delivery of the different types of evaluations	14
Figure 6: Data collection methods identified in the evaluations.....	22
Figure 7: Percentage of MS evaluations based on the following data collection methods:	22
Figure 8: Percentage of MS evaluations by data source:.....	23
Figure 9: Percentage of MS evaluations by type of analysis:.....	24

List of acronyms

CBA	Cost–Benefit Analysis
CEA	Cost–Effectiveness Analysis
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (European Commission)
EMFAF	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (2021–2027)
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (2014–2020)
EU	European Union
FAME	Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring and Evaluation
FAMENET	Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring, Evaluation and Network
FLAG	Fisheries Local Action Group
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IB	Intermediate Body
IMP	Integrated Maritime Policy
MA	Managing Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MS	Member State(s)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OP	Operational Programme
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
TA	Technical Assistance
ToC	Theory of Change
UP	Union Priority

Executive summary

This working paper provides an in-depth summary of the EMFF/EMFAF evaluations conducted by Member States (MSs) up to November 2025, and synthesises the methodologies, findings and conclusions from the evaluations. It was developed in response to repeated requests from Managing Authorities (MAs) across the EU for more information on the types of evaluations conducted in other MSs, the methodologies applied, and examples of best practices in evaluating the EMFF/EMFAF.

The aim of this working paper is to provide MAs, DG MARE officers and evaluation experts with useful information on **methodologies** used; **challenges** encountered; and **findings, conclusions and recommendations** identified in MS evaluations of the EMFF/EMFAF. The paper draws on **best practices and lessons from** EMFF and EMFAF evaluations, with the aim of supporting MAs and evaluation experts in conducting better evaluations in the future.

FAMENET included **80 evaluations** in this working paper, collected during annual needs assessments with MSs, covering every MS with an EMFAF programme.

The following **types of evaluations** were included:

- **44 Implementation** evaluations
- **13 Process** evaluations
- **9 Impact** evaluations
- **10 Thematic studies**
- **2 'Other'**
- **2 Baseline studies**

There were a total of **67 evaluations related to the EMFF**, and **thirteen evaluations related to the EMFAF** received and included in the paper. **The majority (52) were interim/mid-term evaluations; 21 ex-post evaluations and six were ex-ante evaluations.** Evaluations were published between **June 2015 and April 2025**.

A wide range of **methodologies for data collection** were utilised in the evaluations:

- 95% undertook desk research.
- 73% conducted interviews.
- 49% distributed surveys/questionnaires.
- 27% developed case studies.
- 25% organised focus groups.
- 26% used 'other' methods.

A variety of data sources were used to conduct the evaluations as well:

- 84% used monitoring/implementation data.
- 77% used data gathered from MA/IB staff.
- 68% used data gathered from beneficiaries.
- 64% used official statistics.
- 54% used data from scientific studies/research.
- 20% used 'other' sources of data.

There were also many different **types of analyses** used in the evaluations:

- 81% used thematic analyses.
- 79% performed *descriptive* statistical / quantitative data analyses
- 26% used 'other' types of data analyses.
- 19% used contribution analyses (related to the Theory of Change¹)
- 7% designed counterfactual studies.
- 5% performed *inferential* statistical / quantitative data analyses.
- 2% performed Cost Benefit Analyses/Cost Effectiveness Analyses.

¹ The Theory of Change is a framework that outlines how and why a specific intervention is expected to achieve its desired outcomes. It maps the logical sequence from inputs (resources) to outputs, outcomes, and long-term impact, considering key assumptions and external factors.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Evaluations conducted by Member States are an important source of evidence on the achievements of their EMFF and EMFAF programmes. They are essential for improving the implementation of the national EMFF/EMFAF Programmes.

One of the key pillars of the FAMENET Support Unit is to provide evaluation support to EMFF/EMFAF MAs, DG MARE officers and other experts involved with the monitoring and evaluation of the EMFF and EMFAF. To provide the most effective monitoring and evaluation support possible and to improve the quality of future evaluations across MSs, it is important to understand what types of evaluations have been undertaken, and to utilise experiences, lessons learnt and best practices from previous MS evaluations. As regards the EMFF programming period (2014–2020), FAME (and later FAMENET) only assessed MS evaluations on an ad-hoc basis, mainly from information received through annual implementation reports. Although MSs have implemented many evaluations of the EMFF and the EMFAF until late 2025, there was no system in place to compile and synthesise their findings, or to provide policymakers and other key stakeholders with valuable information on methodologies, experiences and lessons learnt from the evaluations.

To address this, DG MARE assigned FAMENET to develop a systematic approach for collecting, compiling and summarising MS evaluations of the EMFF and the EMFAF, and for making important evaluation findings easily available to policymakers and stakeholders.

1.2 Objectives and target audiences

The **objective of this evaluation synthesis working paper** is to:

- Summarise the methodologies, challenges, findings, conclusions and recommendations from MS evaluation reports on the EMFF and the EMFAF.
- Provide an easily accessible document where DG MARE officers, EMFF/EMFAF MAs and evaluation experts can gain useful information on methodologies, challenges, findings, conclusions and recommendations from MS evaluations of the EMFF/EMFAF.
- Assist MAs and evaluation experts in conducting better evaluations.

This working paper does not 'rate' or 'evaluate' the MS evaluation reports in terms of quality. Rather, it provides evaluation practitioners with a synthesis of the evaluations conducted across the MSs, summarising valuable information on methodologies and best practices across the MSs, to assist in improving MS evaluations in the future.

The **target audiences** of the working paper are MAs, DG MARE desk officers and evaluation experts interested in learning more about EMFF/EMFAF evaluations undertaken in MSs across the EU until late 2025, and in improving the quality of future evaluations based on experiences and lessons learned.

1.3 How to use this evaluation synthesis

This working paper is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1** outlines the **background, purpose and target audiences**, providing a general introduction.
- **Chapter 2** provides a description of the **data sources and methodology** used to compose the working paper, for context and understanding.
- **Chapter 3** provides summary statistics on the evaluations gathered and analysed, including an overall timeline of delivery and an overview of the types of evaluations, methodologies, sources of data, evaluation questions covered, as well as other key categorical information from the evaluations.
- **Chapter 4** details the **methodologies used by MS** in their EMFF/EMFAF evaluations, including examples of best practices in evaluation methodologies. This section should be referenced by evaluation practitioners for examples of the types of evaluations and methodologies undertaken in other Member States, which can be replicated elsewhere.
- **Chapter 5** describes **key limitations listed in the evaluations**.
- **Chapter 6** outlines **key recommendations made in the evaluations**.
- **Annexes** provide additional supporting information as described throughout the report.

2 Data sources and methodology of the working paper

2.1 Gathering and compiling the evaluations

To ensure that as many MS evaluations of the EMFF/EMFAF as possible were included in the report, a systematic approach was necessary. However, it was also important to limit the administrative burden on MAs as much as possible.

To avoid additional administrative steps for MAs, evaluations were gathered in early 2025 during regularly recurring 'needs assessment' meetings held between FAMENET and MAs.² During these needs assessment meetings, MAs were asked to refer FAMENET to any evaluations of the EMFF or EMFAF already completed in their MS³ (either via a simple URL link or email attachment). These evaluations were then translated (when necessary) and compiled for analysis for this working paper.

FAMENET followed up with a small number of MSs who did not provide any evaluations during the 2025 needs assessments; these MSs then provided FAMENET with evaluations which were included in the synthesis. Additionally, during the third round of FAMENET country talks in October 2025, a few MAs provided FAMENET with references to recently completed evaluations, which were also included in this working paper.

This paper does not claim to provide a definitive figure on the number of MS evaluations completed, or to assess whether or not MS evaluation obligations were fulfilled. It only aims to look at the methodologies and practices of evaluations that were referred to FAMENET during the country talks and needs assessments (as of October 2025).

In total, FAMENET collected 106 evaluations. Only those with full reports available were included in the final synthesis. Consequently, 26 evaluations were excluded because they lacked sufficient depth or methodological detail for comparative analysis, resulting in a final sample of 80 evaluations. These exclusions included shorter inputs (e.g. brief PowerPoint summaries), reports only marginally relevant to EMFF/EMFAF evaluations, and evaluations covering multiple EU funds in addition to the EMFF/EMFAF. Only full in-depth evaluation reports were considered sufficiently robust for inclusion in the synthesis.

2.2 Synthesising the evaluations

Once all evaluations were received, FAMENET systematically screened the evaluations so that the desired information could be gathered and synthesised in a standardised, comparable way.

The information gathered from the evaluations included the MS/region of the evaluation, the fund covered (EMFF or EMFAF), the type of evaluation, the evaluation period (ex-ante/mid-term/ex-post), the publication date, length, sectors covered, Union Priorities/Specific Objective covered, data sources

² Each year, FAMENET conducts needs-assessment interviews between its Geographic Experts and MAs to identify priorities for support in the year ahead. Geographic Experts are FAMENET team members with in-depth knowledge of fisheries and aquaculture in their respective Member States and often act as the main liaison with MAs at national or regional level.

³ EU Reg. No. 1303/2013 Article 54(4) specifies that all EMFF evaluations shall be made available to the public. EU Reg. No 2021/1060 Article 44(7) specifies that all EMFAF evaluations shall be published on the website referred to in Article 49(1).

and methodologies used, evaluation questions covered, and other details. All the fields of information gathered from the evaluations can be found in Annex 1.

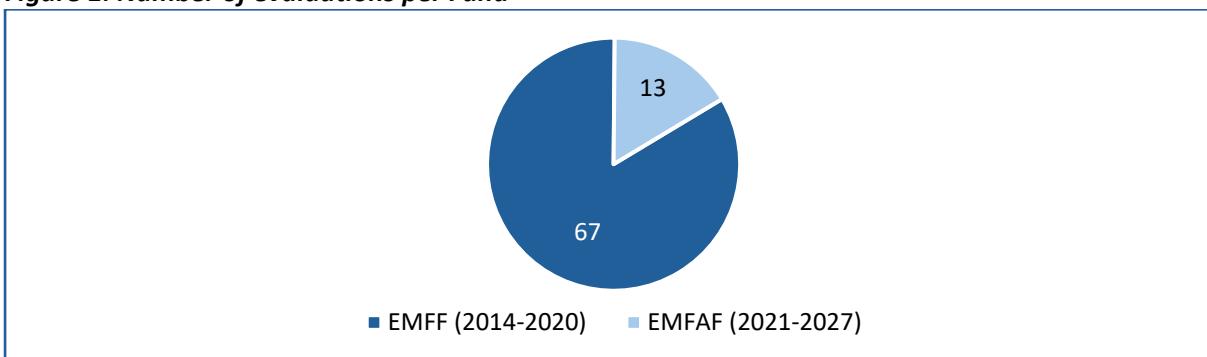
3 Summary of MS evaluations of the EMFF and EMFAF

3.1 Overview

In total, there were 80 evaluations included and analysed for the working paper, with a cut-off date of end October 2025. **Annex 2** provides a full list of the evaluations analysed.

As expected, given that the EMFF implementation is almost complete while EMFAF implementation is still ongoing, by November 2025, there had been significantly more evaluations related to the EMFF than to the EMFAF. In total, 67 evaluations covered the EMFF, and thirteen evaluations covered the EMFAF; *Error! Reference source not found.* summarises this distribution. This pattern is consistent with earlier programming periods: by the fourth year of EMFF implementation, the number of evaluations carried out was also limited and remained below ten.

Figure 1: Number of evaluations per Fund



Source: FAMENET 2025

3.2 ‘Timeframe’ of evaluations

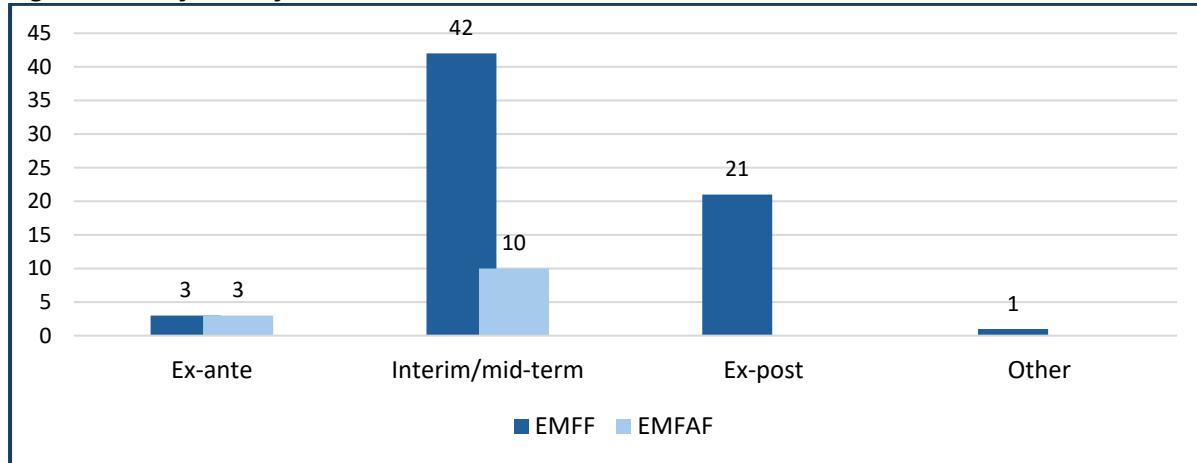
All evaluations fall under one of three different ‘categories’ in terms of timeframe:⁴

- **Ex-ante**, undertaken *prior to* the programme implementation.
- **Interim/mid-term**, undertaken *during* the programme implementation.
- **Ex-post**, undertaken *after* the programme implementation.

⁴ *This description is provided for explanatory purposes only. Only the EMFF ex ante evaluation is explicitly required under Article 55 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.*

Figure 2 shows the number of **ex-ante**, **interim/mid-term** and **ex-post** evaluations conducted:

Figure 2: Timeframe of evaluations conducted

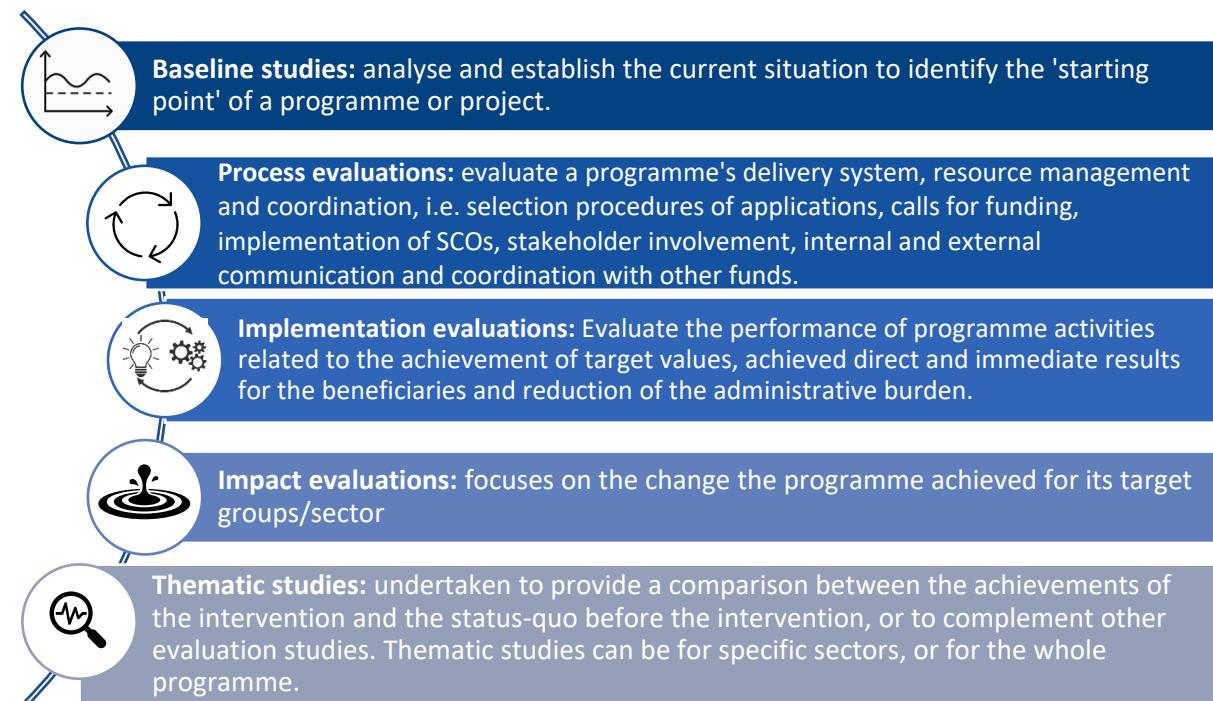


Source: FAMENET 2025

3.3 Types of evaluations included in the synthesis

When preparing an evaluation of a public programme or policy, there are many different 'types' of evaluations that can be conducted, depending on the legal requirements, the information sought by evaluators or public authorities, the contextual and data needs of the report, the timeframe of implementation and delivery, and the overall objectives of the evaluation. Figure 3 provides definitions for the different types of evaluation undertaken by the MSs.

Figure 3: Definitions of different types of evaluations:⁵

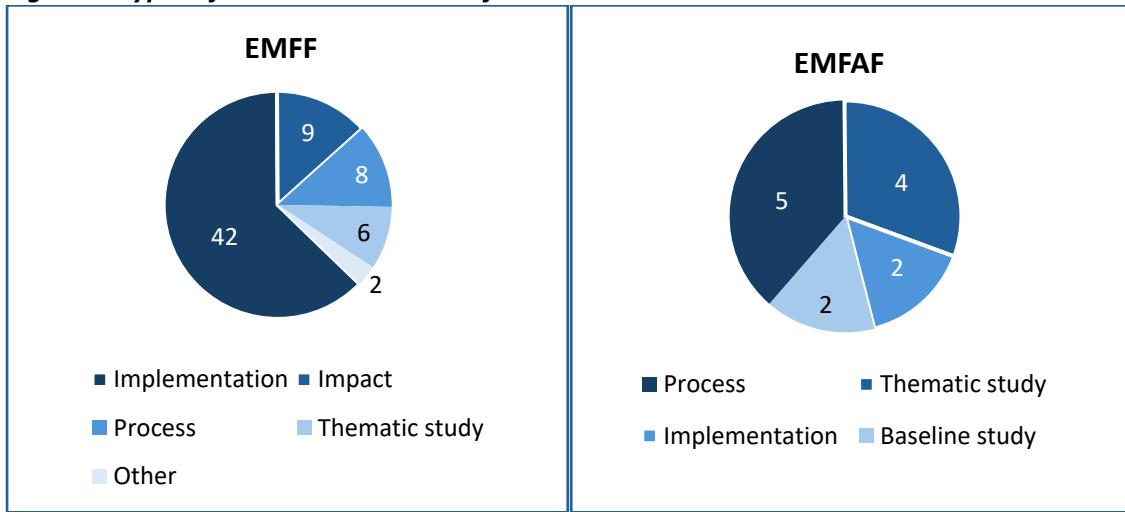


Source: FAMENET 2025

⁵ 'Baseline studies' definition from [EUROSTAT Glossary of Key Terms](#); other definitions from [European Commission - Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Unit D.3 \(2023\): FAMENET Working paper EMFAF evaluation, Brussels](#).

Figure 4 illustrates the **total number of different types of evaluations included from the MSs**:

Figure 4: Types of evaluations included for the EMFF and the EMFAF



Source: FAMENET 2025

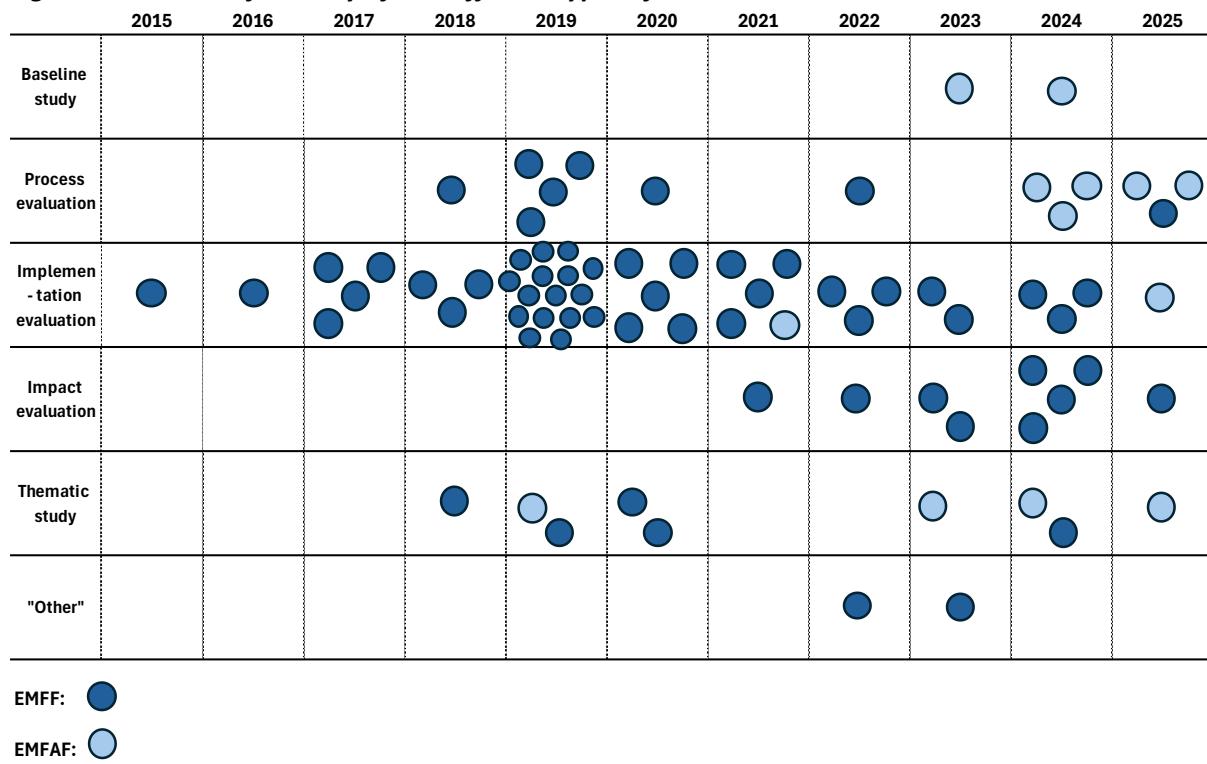
The majority (42) of the evaluations analysed were *implementation evaluations* of the EMFF. Under the EMFF there were also 9 *impact evaluations* received, 8 *process evaluations*, 6 *thematic studies*, and a small number of 'other' studies (2). Under the EMFAF, there have so far been only five *process evaluations*, four thematic studies, two *implementation evaluations*, and two *baseline studies* reported.

Overall, the findings reflect a much larger volume of EMFF evaluations due to the almost completed EMFF implementation, compared to the ongoing EMFAF implementation. Thus, only a limited number of EMFAF evaluations have been conducted to date.

3.4 Timeline of delivery of evaluations

Evaluations were published from January 2015 through April 2025, with the largest number being conducted in 2019. Figure 5 below shows the **overall timeline of when the different types of evaluations were conducted** in the synthesis:

Figure 5: Timeline of delivery of the different types of evaluations



Source: FAMENET 2025

The timeline shows a continuous distribution of evaluations over time, with most EMFF evaluations clustered in 2019 and 2020. From 2015–2017, only a small number of evaluations were conducted, as EMFF programmes were only approved in 2015 and implementation had not yet progressed sufficiently to support in-depth evaluation.

A further increase is observed from 2021 to 2025, particularly as EMFAF evaluations begin to emerge. Under the EMFF, most evaluations were delivered in the last two years of the formal duration of the programming period (2019–2020). Similarly, under the EMFAF it could be expected that most evaluations will begin to be delivered in 2026–2027.

Overall, the pattern reflects a steady flow of EMFF evaluations over the years, peaking around 2019 and 2020, followed by later EMFAF reports emerging in the last few years as the EMFAF 2021–2027 programme cycle progresses.

3.5 Evaluations by Member State

The number of evaluations varied by MS, reflecting differences in programme funding, sector size and scope, and evaluation capacity. It should be noted that a higher number of evaluations does not necessarily indicate greater evaluative value. Evaluations vary in scope and depth, and a single comprehensive evaluation may provide as much or more insight than several smaller studies. Consequently, comparisons based solely on the number of evaluations delivered should not be interpreted as a value judgement on evaluation performance. Table 1 summarises the different types of evaluations received by each MS for the EMFF.

Table 1: Types of EMFF evaluations received by MS

MS	Baseline study	Process	Implementation	Impact	Thematic study	Other
AT			1			
BE			1	1		
BG			2			1
CY			4	1		
CZ			4			
DE		1				
DK			2			
EE				1		
EL			1			
ES		1	2	1	1	
FI			3			
FR		1	2	1		
HR			3			
HU			1			
IE			1	1		
IT		2	2		2	
LT			1	1	1	
LV		1	2		1	
MT			1			
NL			1			
PL			1			
PT			1			
RO			1			
SE			1	2	1	1
SI			4			
SK		2				

Source: FAMENET 2025

Among EMFF evaluations, there was a wide variety in the types and numbers of evaluation reports conducted across MSs, with *implementation evaluations* being far more frequently undertaken than other types. Several MS (e.g., Cyprus, Czechia, Croatia, Latvia, Slovenia) completed multiple *implementation evaluations*, while others produced only one or none. *Impact, process, thematic, and baseline evaluations* were far less common and are concentrated in only a handful of countries; for example, Spain, Ireland, Malta and Slovenia produced a variety of different evaluation types while many MS produced only one type of evaluation. Overall, the distribution indicates that although implementation evaluations are very common, more specialised or resource-intensive evaluations (*impact evaluations, thematic studies, baseline evaluations*) were undertaken more selectively.

So far, for the EMFAF, there have been two baseline studies, five process evaluations, two implementation evaluations and three thematic studies conducted. This lower number is expected given the current stage of implementation of the EMFAF.

Most evaluations undertaken were interim/mid-term evaluations. There were also a high number of ex-post evaluations, and a smaller number of ex-ante evaluations⁶ undertaken. Table 2 summarises the timeframe of evaluations conducted by MSs, for both the EMFF and the EMFAF:

Table 2: Timeframe of evaluations conducted by MSs			
MS	Ex-ante	Interim/ mid-term	Ex-post
AT		1	
BE		1	1
BG		3	
CY	1	5	1
CZ	1	3	
DE		2	
DK		2	1
EE			1
EL		1	
ES		3	2
FI			3
FR		3	1
HR	1	1	1
HU		1	
IE		1	1
IT		4	2
LT	1	1	2
LV	1	8	
MT		1	
NL		1	1
PL		1	
PT		1	
RO		1	
SE		3	3
SI	1	3	
SK		1	1

Source: FAMENET 2025

3.6 Sectors covered in the evaluations

The EMFF and the EMFAF provide support to beneficiaries in several different sectors pertaining to fishing, aquaculture, processing, tourism, environment, maritime (except fishing and aquaculture), integrated/multisector and other related marine activities.⁷

Table 3 summarises the sectors covered by the MS evaluations.

⁶ All MSs were obligated to complete an ex-ante evaluation of the EMFF operational programmes (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Article 55). Given that most ex-ante EMFF evaluations were conducted over ten years ago and many are not available anymore via online publications, only those ex-ante evaluations that were referred to FAMENET and are currently publicly available online were included in the synthesis for this working paper. A synthesis of the EMFF ex-ante evaluations can be found here: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a47f1ad1-055d-11e7-8a35-01aa75ed71a1>

⁷ Sectors' categories compliant with EU Implementing Reg. No. 2022/79, Annex II, Table 1.

Table 3: Sectors covered in the evaluations

MS	Fisheries	Aquaculture	Processing	Tourism	Environment	Maritime*	Integrated/multisector	Other
AT	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
BE	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
BG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CZ	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
DE	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
DK	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
EE	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
EL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
ES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FI	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
FR	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
HR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
HU	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
IE	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
IT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
MT	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
NL	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
PL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
PT	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
RO	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
SE	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X
SI	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
SK	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X

*Excluding fisheries and aquaculture

Source: FAMENET 2025

The majority of MSs covered a broad range of sectors in their evaluations, with most covering nearly all sectors. ‘Fisheries’ and ‘aquaculture’ were covered in all MS evaluations, and ‘processing’ was covered in nearly all. ‘Tourism’ was the least-covered sector in the evaluations; this is expected, since maritime tourism is not an equally prominent priority across all MSs.

3.7 Union Priorities covered in the evaluations

3.7.1 EMFF Union Priorities

The EMFF is structured around **six Union Priorities**⁸, each reflecting a core dimension of EU fisheries, aquaculture, community-led local development, and maritime policy. These priorities guide how MSs planned, selected, and implemented measures under their EMFF Operational Programmes:

- **UP1:** Promoting environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fisheries.
- **UP2:** Fostering environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based aquaculture.
- **UP3:** Promoting the implementation of the CFP.
- **UP4:** Increasing employment and territorial cohesion.
- **UP5:** Fostering marketing and processing.
- **UP6:** Fostering the implementation of Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP).
- **TA:** Technical Assistance.

Table 4 illustrates **the EMFF Union Priorities covered by the MSs** in their evaluations:

MS	UP1	UP2	UP3	UP4	UP5	UP6	TA
AT	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
BE	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
BG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
CY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
CZ	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
DE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
DK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
EL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
ES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
FR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
HU	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
IE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
IT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
LV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
MT	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
NL	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
PL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
RO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
SE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
SI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
SK	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗

Source: FAMENET 2025

⁸ EMFF Union Priorities are set up in Article 6 of EU Reg. No. 508/2014.

Most MS evaluations covered **all six EMFF Union Priorities** (with the exception of Technical Assistance). UP2 and UP3 were covered across all MS evaluations. **UP4 (employment and territorial cohesion), UP6 (Integrated Maritime Policy)** and **Technical Assistance** were covered the least. Generally, UP 1, UP4 and UP6 are not covered in the landlocked countries, as can be seen here (with the exception of AT and HU, who have a small number of operations under UP1). Additionally, countries that do not implement Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), which UP4 exclusively covers, did not evaluate UP4, which is of course expected. Only a small number of MSs omitted one or two priorities, and no clear regional pattern emerged. The evaluations show a comprehensive EU-wide coverage of EMFF priorities, with only limited, country-specific exceptions.

3.7.2 EMFAF Priorities

The EMFAF is structured around **four Priorities**⁹:

- **Priority 1:** Fostering sustainable fisheries and the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources.
- **Priority 2:** Fostering sustainable aquaculture activities, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products.
- **Priority 3:** Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities.
- **Priority 4:** Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed.

Additionally, Technical Assistance is covered, though it is not technically a Priority.

Among the small number of EMFAF evaluations received, most covered **all four EMFAF Priorities** (excluding Technical Assistance).

It is expected that as the EMFAF implementation will advance over the remaining period (2021–2027) many more evaluations of the EMFAF will be conducted in the coming months and years.

⁹ EMFAF Priorities set out in Article 3 EU Reg. No. 2021/1139.

4 Methodologies

This chapter provides an overview of the different methodological approaches and practices utilised in the MS evaluations.

4.1 Evaluation criteria covered

Evaluation criteria are the principles or standards used to assess an intervention's performance and results. These define the key evaluation questions to be answered. Evaluation criteria provide a systematic framework for judging the merit, worth or significance of an intervention by examining the intervention along different dimensions.

According to Article 44 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU Reg. No. 2021/1060), MS evaluations should base their analysis on one or more of the following **evaluation criteria**:¹⁰

- **Effectiveness:** how successful EU action has been in achieving or progressing towards its objectives.
- **Efficiency:** the resources used by an intervention for the changes generated by the intervention.
- **Coherence:** how well (or not) different interventions, EU/international policies or national/regional/local policy elements work together.
- **Relevance:** the relationship between the needs and problems at the time of introducing an intervention, and the needs and problems during its implementation and beyond.
- **EU added value:** looks for changes that are due to the EU intervention, over and above what could reasonably have been expected from national actions by the MS.

Evaluations may cover also **other relevant criteria:** inclusiveness, non-discrimination, visibility, etc.

The EMFF and EMFAF evaluations were screened to assess **which evaluation criteria were covered** across MS' evaluations (see Table 5).

¹⁰ Definitions of different evaluation criteria taken from the [EU Better Regulation Toolbox](#) (2023; Tool #47).

Table 5: Evaluation criteria covered for the EMFF and EMFAF

MS	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Coherence	Relevance	EU added value	Additional criteria ¹¹
AT	✓	✓	X	X	X	X
BE	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
BG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CZ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DE	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
DK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
EE	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
EL	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓
ES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HU	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
IE	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
IT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MT	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
NL	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
PL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
PT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
SE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SK	✓	✓	X	X	X	X

Source: FAMENET 2025

Most MSs covered the **full set of EU evaluation criteria** in their evaluations, with the most consistent attention to **effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and relevance**.

Effectiveness and **efficiency** were always addressed, being covered at least once in every MS, while **coherence** and **relevance** were also widely included. **EU added value** and **additional criteria** appeared less frequently. Overall, the pattern indicates that the majority of national evaluations covered most evaluation criteria, showing systematic assessment of programme performance and strategic contribution across nearly all MSs. This finding is consistent with the earlier observation that the majority of evaluations are implementation-focused, with primary emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency as the main areas of interest.

¹¹ In addition to the five main evaluation criteria, Member States may include 'other relevant criteria' in accordance with Article 44 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU Reg. No. 2021/1060), reflecting horizontal EU principles such as inclusiveness, non-discrimination, visibility, etc. The European Commission's [Better Regulation Toolbox](#) (2023; Tool #47, Section 7, p. 414) also suggests that additional, frequently used evaluation criteria may be included, such as utility, complementarity, coordination, equity, sustainability and acceptability.

4.2 Data collection methods

To ensure that an evaluation most accurately assesses the intended outputs and outcomes of an intervention, it is crucial to use the appropriate methodology to gather reliable, high-quality data.

The evaluations were assessed to determine the most frequently used data collection methods among evaluators; Figure 6 lists the methods used across the MSs.

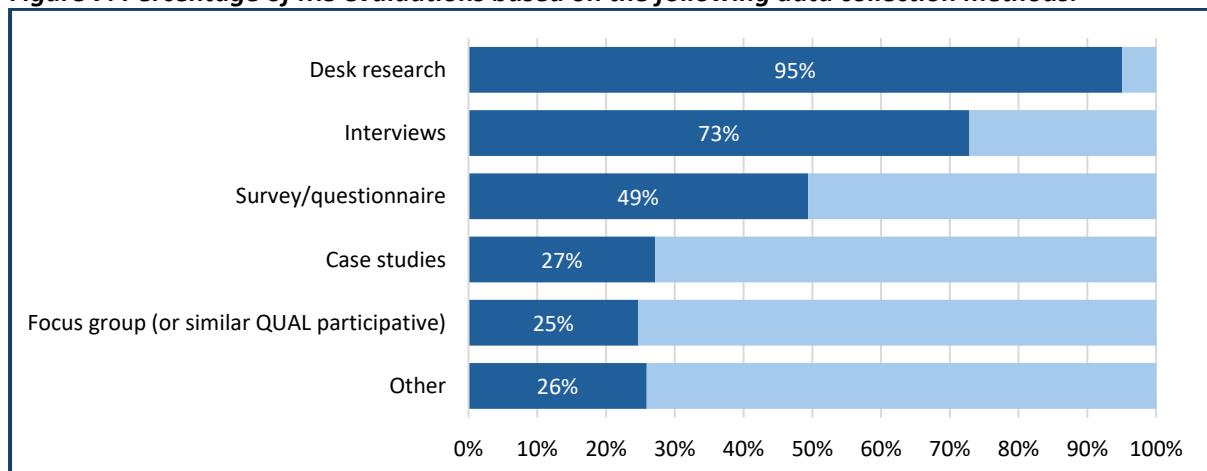
Figure 6: Data collection methods identified in the evaluations



Source: FAMENET 2025

Most of these methods were widely used among the MSs. Figure 7 shows the frequency of use of the different data collection methods across all MSs:

Figure 7: Percentage of MS evaluations based on the following data collection methods:



Source: FAMENET 2025

Evaluators relied most heavily on desk research, which was carried out in nearly all evaluations (95%). Desk research was frequently supplemented with more focused and detailed primary data from interviews (73%) and surveys/questionnaires (49%). More in-depth qualitative methods such as case studies (27%) and focus groups or similar participatory approaches (25%), were used less frequently. Overall, the data suggests that evaluators tend to prioritise document-based analysis, given easier access to existing data. However, they also make strong use of primary sources of data collection methods such as interviews and questionnaires, which can also be implemented without requiring major resources. More involved methods, such as case studies and focus groups, were used more sparingly.

4.3 Data sources

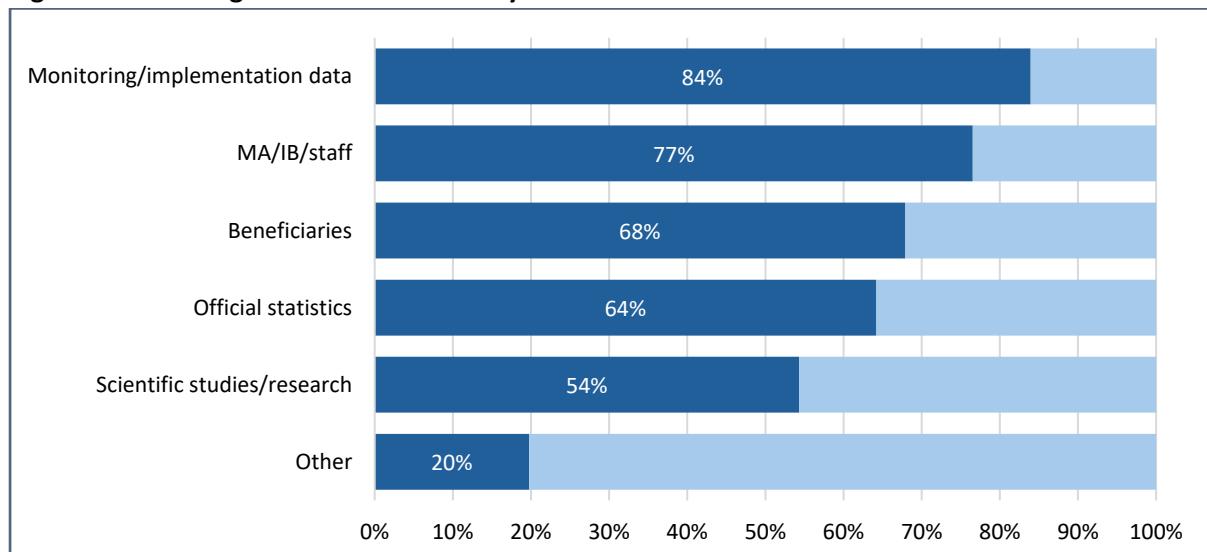
Not to be confused with *data collection methods* described above, *data sources* are the actual point origin of the data collected and used for analysis.

In analysing the evaluations, the following distinct **data sources were identified**:

- **Monitoring / implementation data:** quantitative data sourced from existing public datasets, based on information formally reported by MAs on programme funding, implementation progress, and common indicators.
- **MA/Intermediate Bodies (IB) staff:** qualitative information obtained directly from personnel working with MAs, IBs and other relevant public administrations, reflecting administrative experience, interpretation, and operational insights.
- **Beneficiaries:** coming directly from project beneficiaries, i.e. companies or individuals receiving funding from the EMFF/EMFAF.
- **Official statistics:** Existing quantitative statistical data coming from recognised national or international authorities or organisations.
- **Scientific studies/research:** sourced from existing published scientific studies, research or reports from universities, research institutes, NGOs, or other similar organisations.

Figure 8 shows how frequently these data sources were used across MSs.

Figure 8: Percentage of MS evaluations by data source:



Source: FAMENET 2025

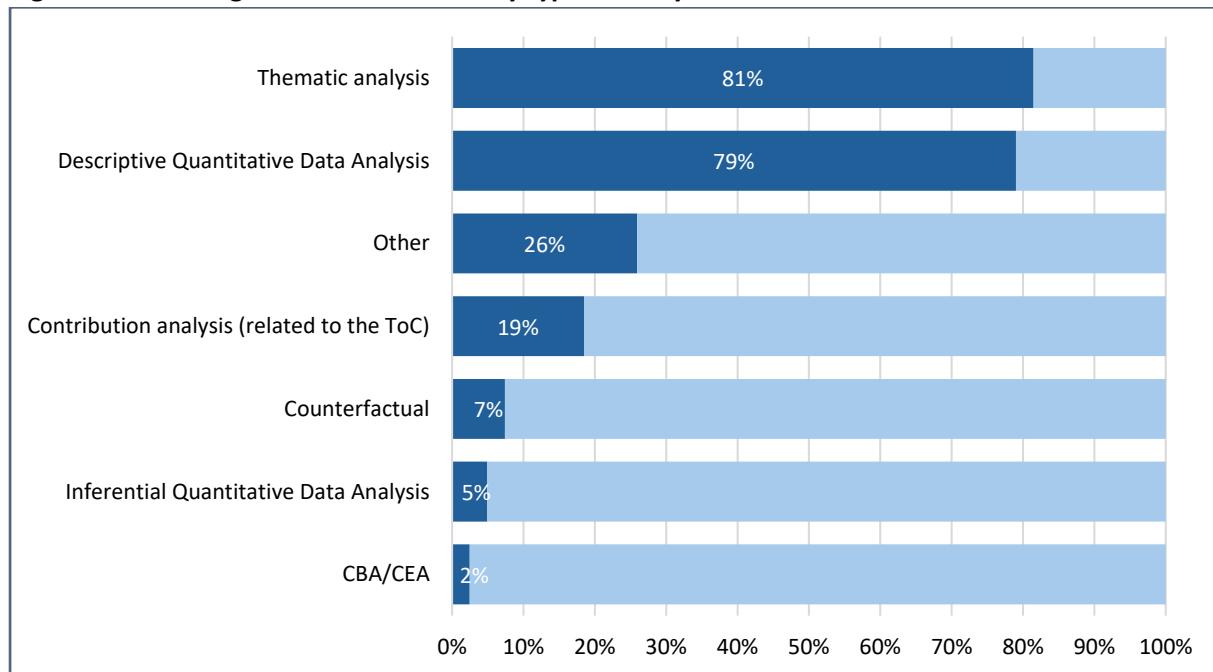
4.4 Types of analysis

In screening and analysing the MS evaluations, several distinct types of analysis were identified:

- **Thematic analyses:** a qualitative method for systematically identifying, analysing, and reporting recurring patterns ('themes') within qualitative data, allowing researchers to interpret meaning across a dataset.
- **Descriptive quantitative data analyses:** summarising numerical data to describe the basic features of a dataset through statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, medians, etc., without inferring beyond the observed sample.
- **Inferential quantitative data analyses:** using statistical techniques to make generalisations from a sample to a wider population, testing hypotheses, estimating relationships, or determining whether differences are statistically significant.
- **Contribution analyses (related to the theory of change):** a theory-based evaluation approach that tests the extent to which an intervention contributed to observed results, using the theory of change to assess causal links and examine alternative explanations.
- **Counterfactual analyses:** comparing actual outcomes with an estimate of what would have occurred without the intervention, typically using experimental or quasi-experimental designs (e.g., control groups, matching, difference-in-differences).
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** assessing whether the total monetised benefits of an intervention exceed its monetised costs.
- **Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA):** compares the relative costs of achieving a specific, non-monetised outcome across different interventions to determine which option delivers the greatest effect per unit cost.

Figure 9 shows how frequently these different analysis methods were used across all MSs.

Figure 9: Percentage of MS evaluations by type of analysis:



Source: FAMENET 2025

The evaluations relied predominantly on *qualitative and basic quantitative techniques*, with **thematic analysis** (81%) and **descriptive quantitative analysis** (79%) being used far more frequently than any other method. More specialised or complex analytical approaches were seen less commonly: **contribution analysis based on a theory of change** was used in 19% of evaluations, **counterfactual methods** were used in 7% of evaluations and **inferential quantitative analysis** was used in just 5% of evaluations. **Cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis (CBA/CEA)** was the rarest, appearing in only 2% of cases. Overall, the pattern suggests that the MS evaluations tend to prioritise interpretative qualitative insights and straightforward numerical summaries, with rigorous causal or economic analyses applied more infrequently. This is largely expected, given these more demanding analytical approaches.

4.5 Good practices from the MS evaluations

This subsection provides good practice examples in evaluation methodologies from the MS evaluations.

4.5.1 Using counterfactual analysis: An example from Lithuania

The Lithuanian mid-term evaluation of the EMFF programme (*'Assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the 2014–2020 action programme of the Lithuanian fisheries sector, 2019'*) used among other methods, also counterfactual analysis to measure the impact of programme interventions by comparing two groups:

- **Beneficiaries who received support** (the target group).
- **Applicants rejected or where their applications were not processed yet**, and thus have not received support (the control group).

The target group consisted of enterprises and stakeholders that received EMFF funding through approved projects, while the control group included applicants who did not receive funding or whose applications were still pending. Data were collected through structured surveys and administrative records, capturing perceptions of programme implementation, effectiveness and impact in both groups. The analysis focused on differences in experiences and reported outcomes.

Some differences in perceptions were observed between beneficiaries and the control group. Beneficiaries generally rated their experience with the programme, project administration and procedural clarity more positively, and more often agreed that programme investments met their needs and contributed to employment, sector competitiveness and sustainability. Control group respondents were, on average, less positive and more likely to report unclear procedures or difficulties related to financing and results indicators.

Both groups broadly agreed on the positive effects of the programme in terms of sector development, employment and resource protection. However, the control group tended to express more reservations or neutral views, particularly regarding the effectiveness and transparency of implementation procedures. Survey results cited in the report indicate, for example, that 85.7% of the control group considered administrative procedures clear, compared with 76.1% of beneficiaries reporting clarity in project administration. Non-beneficiaries were also more divided or uncertain when assessing partnership involvement and social inclusion. Overall, the differences between groups were modest but visible, especially in relation to administrative and partnership-related aspects.

The main strength of this approach lies in its direct comparison between supported and unsupported participants, which helps illustrate differences associated with programme support. Using participants from the same sector enhances the relevance of the findings, and the clear reporting of group composition and data sources supports transparency. At the same time, several limitations are noted. A large number of projects were still ongoing, limiting the scope for statistically robust measurement and reducing the precision of impact estimates. Sample sizes, particularly for the control group, were relatively small and subject to selection bias, which may affect comparability. In addition, the analysis relies mainly on descriptive comparisons and self-reported perceptions, without applying advanced inferential statistical controls, resulting in more limited attribution of impacts.

Overall, the counterfactual analysis should be interpreted in light of these methodological constraints, but it provides useful comparative insights into programme implementation and perceived effects.

4.5.2 Using 'gap analysis': An example from Italy

The Italian evaluation of the EMFF programme (*Gap analysis of the 2014–2020 EMFF, 2020*) applies a structured methodology based on gap analysis to examine programme implementation. The approach is used to assess the extent to which implementation has addressed the needs identified during the programme design phase.

The evaluation focuses on comparing the programmed (expected) contribution of EMFF interventions with the realised (actual) contribution achieved through implementation up to March 2020. This comparison allows unmet needs to be identified and implementation progress to be assessed, providing a basis for informing potential programme adjustments. The analysis relies on predefined scoring rules, systematic use of monitoring data, and explicit links to the programme's intervention logic.

The evaluation defines gap analysis as a method to 'measure the performance of a programme by identifying the degree to which its objectives have been achieved relative to what was foreseen'. In the context of the EMFF, it quantifies the gap between:

- Needs identified in the SWOT analysis, which informed programme design.
- Planned contribution of the EMFF measures to addressing those needs.
- Actual implementation results, measured through financial commitments.

The purpose is not to re-evaluate the programme strategy or intervention logic, but to assess whether implementation is effectively closing the gaps relative to the needs. By the fifth year of implementation, sufficient data was available to undertake this quantitative assessment. This interpretation of gap analysis provides a strong methodological bridge between the ex-ante reasoning and mid-term corrective steering of the programme.

The Italian evaluation employs a **two-dimensional scoring model** that combines both expected and realised contributions of each EMFF measure to each identified need. The methodology is explicitly documented (pp. 3–4), ensuring transparency and replicability.

This dimension quantifies how much each measure was intended to contribute to addressing a specific need. The calculation follows:

$$Cpm = R \times Ri$$

- R is the relevance score (direct = 1; indirect = 0.5; none = 0), based on expert judgement of whether a measure is directly or indirectly linked to the need.
- Ri represents the magnitude of financial resources initially programmed for that measure, scaled through weighted thresholds (>40M€ = 1; 10–40M€ = 0.5; 5–10M€ = 0.25).

This dimension integrates both strategic relevance and financial intensity.

The actual contribution during implementation is calculated as:

$$Crm = Cpm \times A$$

- A represents the measure's implementation rate, expressed as committed resources relative to programmed resources. Weighted categories ensure proportionality (>60% = 1; 40–60% = 0.5; <20% = 0.1).

This second dimension translates financial progress into realised contribution towards identified needs.

For each need, the aggregated programmed contribution (CpPO) is compared to the aggregated realised contribution (CrPO):

$$Gap = 1 - \frac{CrPO}{CpPO}$$

A value close to 1 indicates a large gap still to be addressed; a value near 0 signifies that implementation is closely aligned with expectations.

This formula provides a rigorous, quantifiable measure of how effectively a programme is addressing its strategic needs.

The evaluation exhibits several methodological and practical elements that can be considered good practice in EU programme evaluation. Each measure is linked systematically to specific needs derived from the SWOT analysis. This maintains conceptual consistency from programme design to mid-term evaluation and reinforces the logic chain from needs, to priorities, to measures, to results.

All parameters, weighting thresholds, and formulas are documented in detail, making the method reproducible by other MSs or programmes. This level of transparency strengthens the credibility of the evaluation.

The relevance scoring (R) incorporates expert qualitative assessment, while the scoring model quantifies these judgements. This hybrid model balances precision with interpretative nuance.

The evaluation relies solely on existing monitoring data for commitments and financial progress, reducing reporting burden and ensuring consistency. The completeness and quality of the EMFF monitoring system enables a robust implementation assessment.

The methodology produces detailed results per need within each EMFF Priority. This granularity allows policymakers to pinpoint precisely where corrective action is necessary and which measures are contributing less than expected.

The gap values are easy to interpret and support targeted adjustments. Needs with large gaps can be prioritised for accelerated implementation, reprogramming, or increased support.

The Italian gap analysis represents an analytically rigorous, transparent, and policy-relevant approach to an evaluation. By combining expert-based relevance assessments with quantitative financial progress data, the method provides a credible way to measure how effectively implementation is responding to the programme's original needs. The structured, two-dimensional scoring model and clear gap metrics provide actionable insights for programme management and offer a transferable methodology for other EU MSs.

4.5.3 Evaluating implementation structures and administrative processes in a complex, decentralised governance system: An example from Germany

The *German Evaluation of the Implementation Structures and Processes of the German EMFAF* Programme examines how implementation structures and administrative processes operate within a complex, decentralised governance system. The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency of programme delivery, the functioning of multi-level implementation arrangements, and areas where administrative burden could be reduced, including through greater use of digital tools.

The German EMFAF is implemented through a federal model involving eleven autonomous programme authorities. This required an approach capable of capturing differences across regions while still allowing conclusions to be drawn at national level. The evaluation therefore operationalises the European Commission's evaluation criteria within a structured analytical framework. A detailed impact model is used to identify key success conditions for effective implementation and to map relationships between organisational structures, legal frameworks, coordination mechanisms, data flows, communication processes and external contextual factors. These elements are used to define eight success conditions against which implementation performance is assessed.

The evaluation uses a mixed-methods approach drawing on several complementary sources of evidence. Expert interviews were conducted with all eleven programme authorities and the federal managing body, providing insight into administrative practice across regions. These interviews were complemented by document analysis covering legal texts, national and regional implementation rules, procedural guidance, IT strategies and previous evaluations. Workshops with federal and regional authorities were used to validate findings and to support comparison of administrative practices. Monitoring data from the Infosys system were also analysed to assess implementation progress and data management processes. No beneficiary surveys were conducted, but the evaluation relies on triangulation across administrative sources.

The analysis combines two perspectives. An internal perspective examines processes such as staffing, competencies, coordination arrangements and communication flows within the EMFAF implementation system. An external perspective benchmarks the German system against approaches used in other Member States and other EU funds (ELER, EFRE). This comparison supports assessment of proportionality, efficiency and potential scope for simplification. The evaluation also includes a structured assessment of administrative burden in relation to expected effectiveness for selected types of measures. Using expert scoring, measures are grouped according to their administrative

effort relative to their strategic value, helping to identify areas where simplification or adjustment may be considered.

The evaluation provides insights into how administrative processes and implementation arrangements influence programme delivery and clarifies how organisational structures, coordination mechanisms, and procedural rules shape effectiveness, efficiency, and administrative burden. By linking these elements to observed implementation outcomes, the evaluation highlights where administrative arrangements support delivery and where they may constrain it, offering a clearer basis for identifying areas for adjustment within a decentralised governance system.

5 Key limitations listed in the evaluations

Throughout the MS evaluation reports limitations hindering delivery were not heavily emphasised. However, when assessed as a whole, a clear picture emerged where some evaluations were said to be limited in terms of **timing, data quality, and implementation context**.

The most mentioned limitation, reported mainly in evaluations related to the EMFF, was a **premature stage of programme implementation at the time the evaluation was conducted**: programmes starting late, projects still ongoing, and only a small share of funds having been spent were recurring themes said to 'limit' some evaluations. This limitation was reported mainly in evaluations carried out relatively early in the programming period, where the focus was necessarily on outputs and early results rather than final outcomes or impacts. Evaluators of EMFF programmes often said that as a result they could assess outputs and early results but sometimes had limited evidence of final outcomes or impacts. Consequently, many conclusions are explicitly described as indicative or tentative. This is also linked to **time lags in data**, with monitoring and financial data for some evaluations often available only up to 2018 or 2020 (for the EMFF), creating a gap between the time of the evaluation and the actual progress of programmes. This limitation will also be present in the EMFAF in future evaluations but to a lesser degree. The European Commission utilised lessons learned under the EMFF and defined the EMFAF MEF in a way that data time lags are less likely and less severe.

Second, short evaluation windows (in some cases only a few months) were reported to have restricted the depth of analysis. In practice, this limited the range of methods that could be applied and the scale of data collection, with evaluators relying mainly on rapid approaches such as a small number of interviews or focus groups. As a result, opportunities for broader stakeholder coverage, longitudinal analysis, or more detailed quantitative assessment were constrained in order to meet tight delivery deadlines.

A third major cluster of recurring limitations, reported primarily in EMFF evaluations, concerns **data availability, quality and monitoring systems**. Many reports mentioned incomplete or delayed monitoring data, gaps for indicators (especially environmental, socio-economic or cost/benefit data), missing baselines, small sample sizes, fragmented or manually collated databases, misaligned IT systems, and inconsistent indicator definitions across regions or funds. However, this relates primarily to the EMFF and less to the EMFAF, as lessons learned have been incorporated into improvements made to the EMFAF monitoring and evaluation framework (MEF).

In some cases, particularly in EMFF evaluations, programme indicators were said to be poorly adapted to real conditions or not clearly linked to objectives, which reduced their usefulness for assessing effectiveness of programmes. Several evaluations highlighted **low response rates and representativeness issues in surveys, difficulties in reaching beneficiaries** (outdated contact information, GDPR restrictions), and **limited participation in interviews, focus groups or workshops**. This means that in these cases much of the evidence base may need to rely on qualitative judgements, beneficiary self-reporting or proxy indicators, which evaluators acknowledge as subjective and potentially biased. A few reports explicitly stated that advanced statistical or counterfactual analysis was not possible because of these data constraints, so attribution of impacts to EMFF support could have been stronger in some evaluations. These limitations were reported mainly in relation to EMFF evaluations and are less pronounced for the EMFAF, reflecting improvements introduced in the EMFAF monitoring and evaluation framework.

Additionally, many limitations cited by evaluators in the evaluation reports related to the **wider implementation environment and governance structure**. Recurrent themes include legal and administrative complexity, regulatory delays (especially licensing and state-aid procedures), heavy administrative burdens, fragmented and small budgets, staff shortages in MAs and IBs, and weak or uneven stakeholder engagement (e.g. in aquaculture or processing). These factors slowed project uptake, created long appraisal and payment times, and produced large cross-country and regional differences that made synthesis and comparison difficult. External shocks such as Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic also feature repeatedly, both as confounding factors for impact assessment and as practical constraints on fieldwork (e.g., reduced in-person meetings and increased reliance on written procedures). Russia's military aggression against Ukraine is also mentioned in some evaluations, although its impact is mainly reflected in changes to implementation arrangements, including the use of compensation measures and simplified cost options, rather than in constraints on evaluation activities.

Overall, the recurring message from evaluation limitations listed in the MS evaluation reports is that mid-term EMFF evaluations were often undertaken with **immature implementation, incomplete and imperfect data, and significant contextual and administrative barriers**, which could be improved in future evaluations.

6 Key recommendations made in the evaluations

Across the evaluations, recommendations cluster around a few strong, recurring themes aimed at making future EMFF/EMFAF-type programmes **simpler, more strategic, and more evidence-driven**.

Administrative simplification and faster procedures were by far the most common themes. Many reports called for shorter processing times, longer or more flexible application windows, clearer and shorter guidance, simplified forms and cost options (flat rates, lump sums), lighter documentation requirements for small projects, and more user-friendly IT systems. There were also recommendations to **reduce fragmentation**: concentrating resources on fewer, higher-impact measures; streamlining FLAG structures; limiting multi-UP schemes; and aligning eligibility rules and procedures across MAs and IBs.

A second major set of recommendations concerns **monitoring, data and indicators**. Evaluators recommended stronger monitoring systems (including integrated, interoperable databases), more timely and complete data collection, clearer indicator definitions, and a smaller but better-designed indicator set that is directly linked to programme objectives. These recommendations arise mainly from evaluations under the EMFF, where monitoring systems were less mature. Several reports suggested upgrading national data-collection frameworks, requiring end-of-scheme reports, tracking contextual and result indicators more systematically, and designing evaluation and learning cycles that run throughout the programme rather than only at the end. In more recent evaluations, there is greater emphasis on early tracking of result indicators and baselines to support future impact evaluations, reflecting improvements in the monitoring and evaluation framework.

Third, there is a strong emphasis on **improving uptake and alignment with sector needs**. Recommendations included rebalancing budgets, reallocating funds from underused measures, and actively stimulating demand through targeted awareness campaigns, sector-specific information meetings, rolling or more predictable calls, and better pipeline-building for projects. Many reports suggested that programmes better match measures to real needs in fisheries, aquaculture and

processing (e.g. support for generational renewal, energy transition, diversification, coastal communities, and market access), as well as tailored support for specific groups such as small-scale fishers, SMEs, youth, and women.

Capacity building and governance were another recurring theme. Evaluators frequently recommend strengthening human resources in MAs and IBs, clarifying roles and responsibilities, improving internal coordination, and making fuller use of Monitoring Committees and fisheries groups/FLAGs. They also stressed the importance of training and networking for FLAG staff, local action groups, producer organisations and other intermediaries, and of fostering cross-sector and international cooperation. In addition, many reports underline the need to enhance governance and stakeholder engagement through more effective Monitoring Committee functioning, greater transparency in decision-making, and better use of stakeholder expertise, complemented by targeted communication and visibility strategies tailored to specific audiences.

Finally, many recommendations look ahead to **innovation, sustainability and long-term strategies**. Reports frequently proposed more systematic support for innovation in fishing gear, processing and aquaculture technologies; investment in digitalisation; development of financial instruments alongside grants; and stronger integration of environmental, climate and circular-economy objectives (for example, by conditioning aid on environmental performance or supporting ecosystem-service projects). Several evaluations called for clearer intervention logics and tighter links between needs, objectives, measures and indicators, so that future programmes can demonstrate their contribution to EU Green Deal priorities while delivering tangible benefits for fisheries-dependent communities.

Annex 1: Internal evaluation database fields

Field	Description
ID	Unique ID created for each entry in the database
Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMFF (2014–2020) • EMFAF (2021–2027)
MS	Code of country completing evaluation (AT, BE, BG, etc.)
Region (if applicable)	Region of focus of the evaluation, if applicable
Original Title	The name of the report in the original language
English Title	The name of the report in English
Number of pages	Number of pages of the final report
Type of evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline study • Process evaluation • Implementation evaluation • Impact evaluation • Thematic study • Other
Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex-ante • Interim/mid-term • Ex-post
Publication date	Date of publication of report
No. of months evaluation took	(If specified in report)
Hyperlink to Publication	Link to web publication (if available)
Short description/ abstract in English	A 1–2 paragraph summary overview of the evaluation report
What additional information is included in annexes?	Description of any supplementary information included in any annexes (if applicable)
EMFF Union Priorities covered	UP1, UP2 etc.
EMFAF Union Priorities covered	UP1, UP2 etc.
Sector (text, enter any that apply from codes list, separated by semicolon)	<p>Sectors covered in evaluation report (from Infosys regulation EU Reg. 2022/79):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisheries • Aquaculture • Processing • Tourism • Environment • Maritime (except fishing and aquaculture) • Integrated/multisector • Other
Covers effectiveness evaluation criteria?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, explicitly • yes, suggested • no
Covers efficiency evaluation criteria?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, explicitly • yes, suggested • no
Covers relevance evaluation criteria?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, explicitly • yes, suggested • no
Covers coherence evaluation criteria?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, explicitly • yes, suggested • no

Covers EU added value evaluation criteria?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, explicitly • yes, suggested • no
Additional criteria addressed (non-discrimination, gender equality, etc.)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, explicitly • yes, suggested • no
Describe methodologies (1–2 paragraph)	A 1–2 paragraph written description of all methodologies used to complete the evaluation
Contains Theory of Change/ logic framework?	Yes or no
Contains Evaluation Matrix?	Yes or no
Methods of data collection (select as many as apply, enter from codes list separated by comma)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk research • Interviews • Survey/questionnaire • Focus group (or similar QUAL participative) • Case studies • Other
If other, what	
Data sources	A text description of all data sources used in the evaluation
Sources of data (select as many as apply, enter from codes list separated by comma)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring/implementation data • Official statistics • Scientific studies/research • Beneficiaries • MA/IB/staff • Other
If other, what?	
Type of analysis (select as many as apply, enter from codes list separated by comma)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic analysis • Contribution analysis (related to the ToC) • Statistical / Quantitative Data Analysis (descriptive) • Statistical / Quantitative Data Analysis (inferential) • CBA/CEA • Modelling/econometrics/simulation • Counterfactual • Other
If other, explain	
List any limitations to the evaluation mentioned in report	Text description, only if described in report by evaluators
List of any recommendations made in report	Text description, only if described in report by evaluators
Additional comments/remarks	Additional comments or remarks on the evaluation from the FAMENET team

Source: FAMENET 2025

Annex 2: List of evaluations included in the working paper

MS	Fund	Title (EN)	Period	Type	Date
AT	EMFF	Evaluation of the Austrian European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Programme 2014–2020	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	May 2019
BE	EMFF	Ex-post evaluation of the Belgian EMFF Operational Programme	Ex-post	Impact	November 2024
		Interim evaluation of the OP of the Belgian fisheries and aquaculture	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	April 2019
BG	EMFF	Interim Evaluation of the Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014/2020 the period from the start of the 2014/2020 MFP to 31.12.2018.	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	May 2019
		Second mid-term evaluation	Interim/ mid-term	Other	January 2022
		Report on monitoring and control of the environmental impact of the Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014–2020	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	July 2022
CY	EMFF	Efficacy and Efficiency Assessment Study for the Specific Objectives of the Union Priorities 1,2,3,5 and 6	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	October 2017
		2nd Evaluation of Procedures	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	July 2021
		CLLD evaluation	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	July 2021
		EMFAF baseline study	Ex-ante	Baseline study	June 2024
		1st Evaluation of Procedures	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	December 2018
		Impact assessment	Ex-post	Impact	July 2021
	EMFAF	1st Process Evaluation	Interim/ mid-term	Process	December 2024
CZ	EMFF	Evaluation of Multiannual National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	November 2017
		Interim evaluation of the Fisheries OP and analysis of the introduction of financial instruments	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	March 2019
		Final report on the internal evaluation of the 1st and 2nd calls of the OP Fisheries 2014 – 2020	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	February 2016
		Final evaluation of the implementation of the objectives of the Fisheries Operational Programme 2014–2020, including cross-cutting themes	Ex-ante	Implementation	N/A
DE	EMFAF	Evaluation of the Implementation Structures and Processes of the German EMFAF Programme	Interim/ mid-term	Process	April 2025
		(Interim Evaluation of the) Operational Programme (OP) Germany for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)	Interim/ mid-term	Process	April 2025
DK	EMFF	Evaluation of the Danish Marine and Fisheries Development Programme 2014–2020	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	June 2019
		Final evaluation of the EMFF programme 2014–2020 Evaluation report	Ex-post	Implementation	July 2024
	EMFAF	Process evaluation of the Danish EMFAF programme 2021–2027 Evaluation report	Interim/ mid-term	Process	March 2025
EE	EMFF	Evaluation of the performance and impact of the European Maritime and	Ex-post	Impact	September 2023

		Fisheries Fund 2014–2020 Operational Programme			
EL	EMFF	(mid-term) evaluation of the implementation progress of the EMFF OP 2014–2020	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	January 2022
ES	EMFF	UP4 thematic evaluation report	Ex-post	Thematic study	December 2024
		Evaluation of the effectiveness of Spain's 2014–2020 EMFF OP	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	December 2024
		Assessment of the process for the EMFF OP Spain 2014–2020	Interim/mid-term	Process	September 2019
		Evaluation and recommendations to improve the implementation of the EMFF in Spain.	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	July 2019
		Impact Evaluation of Spain's EMFF Operational Programme 2014–2020 – Final Evaluation Report, December 2024	Ex-post	Impact	December 2024
FI	EMFF	Final evaluation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Operational Programme 2014–2020	Ex-post	Implementation	2023
		Evaluation of the EMFF's maritime measures	Ex-post	Implementation	December 2022
		Evaluation of Finnish fisheries groups (2014–2020 programming period)	Ex-post	Implementation	April 2020
FR	EMFF	Assessment of Investment Aid and Crisis Aid of the European Maritime and Fisheries	Ex-post	Impact	January 2024
		Evaluation of the operational programme of the Fund European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2014–2020. Final report 2019	Interim/mid-term	Process	May 2019
		Evaluation of the operational programme of the Fund European Maritime Affairs Fund (EMFF) 2014–2020 and the Performance Framework: Highly mobilised action sheets	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	May 2019
		Evaluation of the operational programme of the Fund European Maritime Affairs Fund (EMFF) 2014–2020 and the Performance Framework: Lowly mobilised action sheets	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	May 2019
HR	EMFF	Value on the union priority level Operational Programme for community and fishing of the Republic of Croatia for the programme period 2014–2020	Ex-post	Implementation	December 2021
		Ex-ante evaluation of the Operational Programme for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Croatia 2014–2020	Ex-ante	Implementation	January 2015
		Assessment of Effectiveness and Activity of the Operational Programme for Community and Fisheries of the Republic of Croatia for the Programme Period 2014–2020 and Preparation of an Analysis for Reporting to the European Commission in 2019.	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	May 2019
HU	EMFF	The Hungarian Fish Management Operational Programme assessment plan 2019 evaluation	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	Nov 2019
IE	EMFF	Evaluation of European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2014–2020	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	November 2020
		Impact Evaluation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme 2014–2020	Ex-post	Impact	April 2025
IT	EMFF	Evaluation of the operational programme of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2014/2020 Procedural and technical aspects for the construction of aquaculture facilities Environmental focus	Interim/mid-term	Process	February 2019

		Evaluation of the operational programme of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2014/2020 Thematic analysis: the potential environmental impacts of aquaculture activities	Ex-post	Thematic study	December 2019
		Ongoing Evaluation Report of the Operational Programme of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2014–2020 - Interim evaluation report	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	June 2017
		Evaluation of the Operational Programme of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2014–2020 – Thematic In-depth Analysis: Gap Analysis of the EMFF OP 2014–2020	Interim/ mid-term	Thematic study	November 2020
		Evaluation of the Operational Programme of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund – EMFF 2014/2020 Final Evaluation Report	Ex-post	Process	June 2022
		Mid-term Evaluation of the Operational Programme of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2014/2020 – Interim Evaluation Report	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	December 2019
LT	EMFF	Assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the implementation of the Operational Programme for the Lithuanian Fisheries Sector for 2014–2020	Ex-post	Impact	2024
		The evaluation of environmental and sustainable methods and practices in aquaculture activities in Lithuanian aquaculture farms Study report	Ex-post	Thematic study	2013
		Assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the implementation of the Operational Programme for the Lithuanian Fisheries Sector for 2014–2020	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	2019
		Implementation of the Lithuanian fisheries sector for the 2014–2020 action programme between activity, efficiency and impact assessment	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	2019
LV	EMFF	Contribution of the CLLD activities to implementation of Priority 4 of the EMFF	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	November 2018
		EMFF contribution to reaching objectives of Priority 5 'Promoting marketing and processing'	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	July 2018
		Exploring innovative delivery mechanisms within the framework of the EMFF 2014–2020 project	Interim/ mid-term	Process	January 2022
		Fisheries as part of the bioeconomy and its potential contribution to the circular economy	Interim/ mid-term	Thematic study	December 2020
	EMFAF	Evaluation of Blue Economy Sectors in Latvia within the scope of the new EMFAF 2021–2027 framework	Ex-ante	Thematic study	2019
		Fisheries Development Programme (FDP) 2021–2027: Initial assessment of the situation in fisheries and coastal areas at the start of FDP implementation	Interim/ mid-term	Thematic study	2023
		What is the added value of implementing LEADER/CLLD in coastal Local Action Groups (LAGs)	Interim/ mid-term	Thematic study	2025

		Fisheries Development Programme 2021–2027: Qualitative assessment of sector resilience	Interim/mid-term	Thematic study	August 2023
		Support opportunities for coastal fishermen under Latvia's Fisheries Development Programme 2021–2027	Interim/mid-term	Thematic study	2024
MT	EMFF	Summary of the outcomes and recommendations of the Interim Evaluation of the EMFF Operational Programme Implementation in Malta	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	May 2019
NL	EMFF	Final evaluation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014–2020 (EMFF)	Ex-post	Implementation	April 2024
	EMFAF	Baseline determination and first measurement progress and results EMFAF	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	April 2025
PL	EMFF	Evaluation study – mid-term assessment of the Operational Programme Fisheries and Sea FINAL REPORT	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	December 2020
PT	EMFF	Evaluation of the implementation of the Operational Programme	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	March 2020
RO	EMFF	Mid-Term Evaluation of Romania's EMFF Operational Programme (POPAM) 2014–2020	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	September 2019
SE	EMFF	Improved competitiveness and growth through support? Impact of investment and start-up aid for aquaculture and processing industries in the Maritime and Fisheries Programme	Ex-post	Impact	2022
		Applying for and Managing Support in the Maritime, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Programme 2021–2027: A Process Evaluation with a Focus on Administration	Interim/mid-term	Process	2024
		Effects of aid on selective and predator-proof gear	Ex-post	Implementation	2020
		Support for control and enforcement and protected areas; an evaluation of support under the Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014–2020	Ex-post	Impact	March 2023
		How can we evaluate the effects of investment support on the impact of agriculture and fisheries on the nutrient balance in water? A preliminary study for the evaluation of environmental investments aimed at improving water quality within the Rural Development Programme and investment support for aquaculture within the Maritime and Fisheries Programme.	Interim/mid-term	Thematic study	2018
SI	EMFF	Support for aquaculture in the Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme 2021–2027. A process evaluation focusing on continued implementation and gender equality and non-discrimination.	Interim/mid-term	Process	June 2024
		Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014–2020: Synthesis of previous analyses and assessment of the contribution of aid to the objectives of the programme	Other	Other	2023
SI	EMFF	Ongoing evaluation of the operational programme for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in Slovenia for the period 2014–2020 final evaluation report for 2021 and 2022	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	May 2023
		Intermediate evaluation of the Operational Programme for the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in	Interim/mid-term	Implementation	March 2019

		Slovenia for the period 2014–2020 Final report			
		Ex-ante evaluation report Operational Programme for the Implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2014–2020	Ex-ante	Implementation	June 2015
		Ongoing Evaluation of the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2014–2020 Final Report for the Years 2019 and 2020	Interim/ mid-term	Implementation	May 2021
SK	EMFF	Internal evaluation report on the achievement of performance framework indicators for the Operational Programme Fisheries 2014–2020	Interim/ mid-term	Process	February 2018
		Final Report on Process Evaluation – Final Version	Ex-post	Process	March 2019



FAMENET