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# Interim evaluation study of the implementation of the direct management component of the EMFF Regulation (Articles 15 and 125)

Final Report

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(Articles 15 and 125)**

Final Report

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

AC(s)	Advisory Council(s)
BalticBOOST	Baltic Sea project to boost regional coherence of marine strategies through improved data flow, assessments, and knowledge base for development of measures
CCAMLR	Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CISE	Common Information Sharing Environment
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
DCF	Data Collection Framework
DG ENV	Directorate-General for Environment
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EMODNet	European Marine Observation and Data Network
EQM	Evaluation Questions Matrix
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
EUCISE	European Union Common Information Sharing Environment
EUMOFA	EU Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products
EUMSS	EU Maritime Security Strategy
FAME	Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring and Evaluation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARNET	the European Fisheries Areas Network
FLAGs	Fisheries local action groups
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission
IATTC	Inter-American-Tropical-Tuna-Commission
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IMP	Integrated Maritime Policy
IMS	Integrated Maritime Surveillance

IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
MEA	Marine Economic Activities
MSs	Member States
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSP	Maritime Spatial Planning
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
NASCO	The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
NEAFC	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NWWAC	North Western Waters Advisory Council
OSPAR	The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
RMFOs	Regional Fisheries Management Organisations
SEAFO	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation
SIMCelt	Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Celtic Seas
STECF	Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries
SU	Support Unit
SWIOFC	Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission
TA	Technical Assistance
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
WECAF	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
WP(s)	Work Package(s)



## **ABSTRACT**

The consortium led by Coffey International and comprising Poseidon, F&S (partners), Eurofish and C-P Engineering (subcontractors) was contracted by Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries to conduct the Interim evaluation study of the implementation of the direct management component 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 ("EMFF Regulation").

The interim evaluation study is required under Articles 15 and 125 of the Regulation. The period under consideration for this evaluation study were the years 2014-2016.

The evaluation study was structured around ten thematic Work Packages (WPs) to address the seven intervention categories of the EMFF direct management component (including four for the sub-categories relating to Integrated Maritime Policy). The evaluation study also included a separate horizontal WP to support the requirements for general mandatory evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value).

The findings, conclusions and recommendations that emerge from this study will inform the potential adjustment of the indicative distribution of funds, as laid down in Annex III of the EMFF Regulation, and will inform the implementation of subsequent direct management spending under the 2021-2028 EMFF.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The establishment and objectives of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) are set out in **Regulation (EU) No 508/2014**<sup>1</sup>. This interim evaluation study of the implementation of the direct management component of the EMFF Regulation is required under Articles 15 and 125 of the Regulation. The period under consideration for this evaluation study is the years 2014-2016. The evaluation study focussed on seven intervention categories (Integrated Maritime Policy, Scientific Advice, Fisheries Control and Enforcement, Voluntary Contributions to International Organisations, Advisory Councils, Market Intelligence and Technical Assistance), as well as five mandatory evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value). The evaluation study also included five case studies: SIMCelt<sup>2</sup>, BalticBOOST<sup>3</sup>, STECF<sup>4</sup>, NWWAC<sup>5</sup> and EUMOFA<sup>6</sup>.

The conclusions and recommendations presented below are grouped separately by intervention (“thematic”) and by mandatory evaluation criteria (“horizontal”).

### ***Thematic conclusions and recommendations***

Direct management EMFF actions have contributed to the development of **EU Integrated Maritime Policy** and at a national level by supporting a more integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs in fields such as maritime intersectoral cooperation at basin-level scale, which enhanced relationships between stakeholders in EU MS, non-EU countries and regions. Blue Economy calls for innovation, education and scaling-up technologies, and specific actions such as the Atlantic Action Plan, helped define and share a vision of Blue Economy in sea-basins and support awareness on the potential of investors’ (EIB, etc.) and private sector Blue Economy initiatives. MSFD implementation is expected to support the consistency and development of a sustainable Blue Economy in each sea basin in accordance with the Ecosystem Approach and MSFD objectives for EU MS in the marine or submarine regions.

With regards to **integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs**, it is recommended to make improvements to project monitoring, indicator setting and reporting at all stages to increase the traceability of the specific objectives in EMFF-funded projects; and to reinforce requirements for regional/sub-regional action plans to clearly demonstrate complementarity with marine spatial planning set-up, not only for drafting plans (stakeholder involvement) but also for their implementation (including revision/adaptation), in order to support more integrated governance in the next cycles/plans for sea basin strategies.

In the area of **sustainable economic growth, employment, innovation and new technologies**, it is recommended to improve the traceability of EMFF objectives in projects funded by EMFF, at all stages, e.g. by improving the monitoring of these projects (indicators clearly related to policy/regulation instrument objectives, reporting from projects). Strategic innovation and investment in sectors/geographic areas with strong potential for Blue Growth should (continue to be) supported. This support is to pave the way for private investments.

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<sup>1</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

<sup>2</sup> Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Celtic Seas

<sup>3</sup> The Baltic Sea project to boost regional coherence of marine strategies through improved data flow, assessments, and knowledge base for development of measures

<sup>4</sup> Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries

<sup>5</sup> North Western Waters Advisory Council

<sup>6</sup> European Union Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture products

With regards to **promotion of the protection of the marine environment**, it is recommended to ensure that EMFF funding is made available to support MS marine strategies for the protection of the marine environment; and to improve the contribution of cross-cutting and cross-policy actions to environmental objectives, e.g. by introducing meaningful indicators on environmental spending. A central repository or warehouse of past IMP projects should be created at EC level, which would be accessible through portal and search tools.

On **maritime surveillance**, sharing civil-military information among MS maritime authorities brought benefits, including contributing to the reporting and detection systems for illegal activities at MS, EU and International levels. It is recommended that the EFCA, EMSA and EBCGA (Frontex) continue to explore areas for inter-agency cooperation and raise the level of cooperation between Member States. The CISE process needs to take account of their mandate, activities and operational work to avoid duplication and provide a framework for information sharing. It is recommended to request that the MS involved in the CISE development projects share their experiences and knowledge with other Member States, via the MS Expert Sub-Group on Integrated Maritime Surveillance, or other specialised fora.

**Marine knowledge** activities made a significant impact on increasing understanding of the marine environment. EMODnet played a pivotal role in developing a new transnational platform to access marine data, which contributed to a new common culture of data sharing across the European maritime sector. The progress on developing an integrated common platform is on-going in particular in relation to data on the distribution and diversity of marine life. It is recommended to expand the scope of EMODnet's data collection activities, which will support the coordination and implementation of the emerging framework towards a European Ocean Observing System. It is also recommended to require EMODnet to develop new tools to track its users and how they reference EMODnet data in scientific publications to improve the quantification of offshore and coastal impact.

For **maritime spatial planning**, in terms of overall progress in meeting the deadline for having complete maritime spatial plans by 2021, EMFF funding under direct management to date has catalysed MS actions; allowed the development of MSP implementation structures and frameworks; and facilitated progress on national maritime spatial planning. Direct EMFF funding of transboundary MSP also encouraged inter-sectoral discussions and pro-active MSP engagement across maritime boundaries. It is recommended to include ex-post evaluations in future MSP projects to allow long-term needs to be formalised and implementation structures to be put in place where relevant. In some cases, this might include a second, follow-up project. It is also recommended to focus the targeting of support for MSP more on national and sub-national MSP practitioners to increase their level of engagement and to develop generic MSP progress milestones. Milestones should provide guidance rather than obligations to support MS progress in reaching the MSP Directive goal by 2021. It is recommended to support convergence of MSP and Integrated Coastal Zones Management (ICZM), to take better account maritime space in ICZM projects/policies thanks to a shared governance (stakeholders and mechanisms).

With regards to **collection, management and dissemination of scientific advice** under the CFP, the factors contributing to the effectiveness of EMFF support to ICES and STECF advice include: well-established arrangements for both perennial and *ad hoc* requests; the independence of advice providers from DG MARE and the MS; involvement of independent experts from many different MS; robust internal peer review procedures; and the wide dissemination of results with outputs available online. It is recommended to improve co-ordination between STECF work on Mediterranean and Black Sea stocks and GFCM activities through joint work planning and potentially joint commissioning to avoid assessment duplication and ensure greater acceptance of the resulting advice.

Regarding **specific control and enforcement measures**, any uptake of the joint chartering and/or purchase of control means measure is unlikely over the second part of the EMFF programming period. The measure has been abandoned by DG MARE, which

withdrew the measures from its EMFF article 87 funding programmes as from 2017. It is recommended to consider launching an expression of interest for projects under article 87.3 of the Regulation on the implementation of transnational control projects. Given the problems to finalise and implement the IT tools envisaged in the EU legislation, consideration should be given to an increase of the relevant financial envelope. It is recommended to assess the eligibility of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) to manage EMFF direct management funding in view of its mandate and possible involvement in data exchange and transnational cooperation. Consideration should be given to launching an expression of interest for projects falling under article 87.3 of the EMFF Regulation on transnational projects in the field of control and enforcement.

EU **voluntary contributions to international organisations** are in line with the objectives of the CFP and contributed to the activities of international organisations (CFP art. 29.1), by improving available scientific advice on relevant conservation and management measures (CFP article 29.2); supporting IOs' performance reviews and modernising their legal basis which helped IOs strengthen performance in the conservation and management of fish stocks (CFP article 29.2); and contributing to improved consistency between regulatory frameworks. It is recommended to continue to provide voluntary support to international organisations, taking into account the CFP commitment to maintain and restore support to levels that can produce the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). It is also recommended to continue work with the FAO to improve the functioning of the regional fisheries organisations created under Article VI of the FAO Constitution of interest for the Union, in particular to decrease the dependence of these organisations on EU funding. Finally, where possible, grant agreements with IOs should be negotiated to minimise transaction costs and request IOs to establish multiannual work plans highlighting needs for extra-budgetary funding.

**Advisory Councils** rely on EMFF direct management support. Most provide recommendations on fisheries management measures to the Commission and the Member States. But it can be difficult to produce advice that is accepted by different interest groups. Member States often give ACs insufficient time to engage and rarely respond to their recommendations. In consequence, ACs perceive that their input is less relevant to the MS than to the Commission. It is recommended to undertake a full consultation of Advisory Councils and other stakeholders on potential changes, such as: the definition/categorisation of AC members to improve representativeness and reduce conflict; guidance and training for secretariats; and the participation and role of the Commission in ACs. This could be via an Open Public Consultation.

EUMOFA delivers most of the commitments on **market intelligence** defined in article 42 of the CMO regulation. No specific action has been implemented so far to provide the practical support to Producers' Organisations or inter-branch organisations as per CMO article 42.1 b), but EUMOFA was not the only relevant action. EUMOFA contributes to most EU commitments on market transparency and compares favourably with other Commission-led observatories on accessibility and content. It is recommended to develop initiatives to deliver the CMO article 42.1 b) commitment in relation to provision of practical support to Producers' Organisations and inter-branch organisations, possibly aside of EUMOFA; and to continue to provide equivalent financial support to EUMOFA to maintain and increase the quality and the flexibility of services for both stakeholders in the Member States and EU institutions in charge of policy-making.

Both FARNET and FAME SU are relevant, effective and efficient instruments to provide **technical assistance** (TA) in support of CLLD and to enhance MS and EU M&E capacity. As there are no structures in place to carry out the tasks performed by the two TA bodies, it would not have been possible to achieve comparable results at national, regional or local level. This is due to several factors, including the high level of specialization of their expertise and their added-value and support for learning due to the transnational nature of the two networks. Regarding FARNET, it is recommended to strengthen support of FLAGS' trans-border cooperation; encourage the simplification of national administrative procedures to prevent delays in CLLD implementation at local level; and generate greater MA autonomy in the implementation of CLLD, whilst also supporting

mechanisms for best practice-sharing at EU level. Consider strengthening the number of FTEs in the SU core team and simplifying the procedures for managing the FARNET website. With regards to FAME, it is recommended to consider developing a visual identity comparable to FARNET's (logo, website) to foster stakeholder awareness and enhance the dissemination of tools.

### **Horizontal conclusions and recommendations**

#### **Relevance:**

The needs identified in the Intervention Logic of the direct management component of EMFF continue to exist. EMFF support provides an appropriate solution to most of these needs, including:

- enabling cooperation in **MSP** across national and sub-national boundaries;
- needs for structured stakeholder advice processes and greater regionalisation including in relation to landing obligations, which are being addressed by the Advisory Councils, who are contributing to finding workable solutions;
- needs related to market intelligence for fisheries and aquaculture products, in particular commitments under CMO article 42.1 a), c) and d) and article 42.2. Although as of early 2018, EUMOFA is not the most relevant instrument to deliver the targeted support to be provided to Producers' Organisations as per CMO article 42.1 b7). It is recommended to develop initiatives to deliver on the CMO article 42.1 b) commitment to provide practical support to Producers' Organisations and inter-branch organisations, possibly aside of EUMOFA.

Despite efforts by DG MARE to promote funding opportunities for **joint chartering and/or purchase of control means**, the measure has not been utilised. It seems unlikely that this measure will be updated over the second part of the EMFF programming period.

#### **Effectiveness:**

The EMFF direct management component contributed to a more integrated governance of **maritime and coastal affairs** and implementation of the MSP directive by enhancing understanding of the European marine environment and improving the efficiency of maritime enterprises through EMODnet; and addressing the non-prospective nature of MSP projects, which allowed MS to adopt systems that best meet their needs.

There was an increase in the effectiveness of **scientific advice** relating to: the work areas and format of ICES advice in informing fisheries managers' delivery of CFP objectives; STECF delivery of scientific advice in relation to the CFP at the request of DG MARE; provision of scientific advice where EU fleets are operating beyond EU waters; and regional cooperation in-line with MS data collection under the DCF.

**On control and enforcement**, MS have been reluctant to apply for joint chartering and/or purchase of control means, despite DG MARE efforts. This is not expected to change in the remaining EMFF programming period.

**Voluntary contributions to international organisations** enhanced their capacity to conserve and manage fish stocks through: research programmes; independent external reviews of RFMOs; and interventions to modernise funding conventions.

Gathering key fisheries stakeholders in the **Advisory Councils** supported the Commission's fisheries management. Some proposed improvements were adopted (e.g. NWWAC recommendations on management of sole in VIIId). However, as highlighted

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<sup>7</sup> providing practical support to Producer Organisations' and inter-branch organisations to better coordinate information between operators and processors

earlier, sometimes ACs found it difficult to provide a consensus view, which limited their contribution.

**Market intelligence:** EUMOFA has contributed to market transparency on the markets for fisheries and aquaculture products. Public and private sector stakeholders use EUMOFA market information and compare it favourably with other Commission-led observatories.

**Technical assistance:** FARNET successfully meets the needs of the local communities. The FAME SU has contributed to a more efficient and effective implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system of the shared management of EMFF by publishing working papers, which helped to operationalise M&E concepts at EU and MS level.

It is recommended to consider the possibility of directing additional EMFF funds to the development of MS' MSP capacity (e.g. without a cross-border focus) or of introducing funding (via the shared EMFF funding arrangement or its successor) to address specific MS' MSP needs where there is an EU-wide benefit. Finally, develop regional RMFO data collection projects on biological data over longer time frames and with appropriate funding mechanisms and organisational infrastructures to harness the full potential benefits of regional cooperation.

### **Efficiency:**

**Table 1: Implementation ratios (annual amounts committed as a proportion of the budget programmed):**

year	scientific advice	control and enforcement	voluntary contributions	Advisory Councils	market intelligence
2014	93%	26%	99%	100%	82%
2015	75%	42%	96%	64%	82%
2016	97%	80%	98%	82%	95%
2017		87%	62%		

*Source: data provided by DG MARE in Summer 2018.*

Many cross-boundary **MSP** projects struggled to develop the necessary cross-border working relationships, and to design and implement activities in the time available. It is recommended to endorse the introduction of a second phase in MSP projects, to review outputs, update analyses, and make use of new/subsequent MSP development funding streams, especially if ex-post and ex-ante evaluations are built into projects to ensure the relevance of successors.

The single largest beneficiaries of the budgetary programming are the two main providers of **scientific advice:** ICES and STECF. The efficiency of the STECF depends on the balance struck between cost-effectiveness and quality and level of acceptance of advice provided to DG MARE. This is influenced by the number of MS experts required to address perceptions of bias.

On **control and enforcement**, the development of IT services and supplies to harmonise standards and messaging systems to support the exchange fisheries data was onerous for the Commission. Initial commitments for the release of IT tools have not been delivered. It is recommended to consider increasing the relevant financial envelope to support IT development and make a detailed assessment of issues, including non-financial, for IT development.

For the **Advisory Councils**, the recent increase in the overall budget is reported to be sufficient to deliver the tasks required. However, there is desire for more flexibility to use underspend by allowing additional funding requests for scientific research. If multi-annual support is possible, it would allow increased flexibility for ACs to better manage their resources against requests for advice.

The decision to contract out **EUMOFA** implementation almost entirely to a single contractor increased its efficiency by reducing the transaction costs and administrative burden from multiple procurements for data purchase, IT developments, analyses, etc.

With regards to **FARNET**, the SU's ability to cope with urgencies is hampered by the number of full-time staff. Also, publishing the FARNET Magazine only on a yearly basis is not sufficient to underpin the image of the network and the relationship between the EU and the FLAGS. It is recommended to increase the linguistic coverage of FARNET outputs to increase FLAGS' uptake of the available thematic and methodology tools. This implies additional budget.

### **Coherence:**

The work of **STECF** is coherent with (and dependent upon) the collation and provision of data under the DCF by the Member States. MS implementation of the landing obligation is coherent with the work of STECF, which reviews the joint recommendations put forward by MS groups. **ICES'** coherence with CFP and wider EU objectives was ensured via its MoU with DG MARE.

**EUMOFA** is the main implementing tool of CMO article 42. It is designed to deliver CMO commitments with respect to market intelligence and this confirms EUMOFA's internal coherence. EUMOFA is also coherent with other Commission initiatives aimed at improving market transparency, such as market observatories for agriculture products or energy prices.

As the **Advisory Councils** are established under the CFP, their coherence with CFP objectives is inherent.

It is recommended to link marine environmental protection with a shared vision for a sustainable Blue Economy, and to ensure that ongoing efforts to develop more synergies between H2020 and the ESIFs, including EMFF, include an explicit focus on coherence in the future. The lack of coherence between STECF and GFCM assessment activities should continue to be addressed by DG MARE, GFCM and STECF to avoid duplication and discrepancies. The focus of the IMP on the integration of maritime surveillance is viewed by stakeholders as contributing towards the development of a coherent and coordinated approach to maritime issues, calling for closer cooperation across sectoral boundaries involving national and EU maritime authorities. This leads to more structured and systematic collaboration to share information through the development of a Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) established at national and EU levels.

### **EU Added Value:**

The interventions supported by the direct management component of EMFF achieve benefits beyond what could have been achieved by national and/or regional spending. EUMOFA, STECF, Advisory Councils and FARNET, as well as maritime policy interventions such as EMODnet and mechanisms and projects for fostering cross-border maritime spatial planning would have not existed had it not been for EMFF support.

The involvement of the Commission in **EUMOFA** can be considered as beneficial, as public bodies are sometimes seen as more objective and credible than private bodies in this field. Involvement of the Commission also ensures that the needs of all Member States are addressed.

Support to **Advisory Councils** should be maintained as EU added-value is evident: a stakeholder group without EU funding may not be as well-resourced if member organisations or Member States were expected to foot the bill. EU support also ensures participation of certain smaller sector groups.

Increasing the proportion of funding programmed to the **EMODnet** biological data group will contribute to the development of the right tools to make high quality aggregated biological and biodiversity data (which exist in different unconnected organisations and data systems) more easily accessible via EMODnet.

Handing over **FARNET**'s tasks to more narrow levels of intervention creates a high risk of localisation. National budgetary constraints mean some MS are unable to invest in establishing national networks. The MS who are able to invest cannot deploy financial resources that are comparable to those supporting FARNET operations. What is more, national networks are not as highly specialized as FARNET and cannot capitalize on the learning potential generated by a transnational network such as FARNET.



## NOTE DE SYNTHÈSE

L'établissement et les objectifs du Fonds européen pour les affaires maritimes et la pêche (FEAMP) sont définis dans le **Règlement (UE) N° 508/2014**<sup>8</sup>. Ce rapport intérimaire d'évaluation de la mise en œuvre de la composante de gestion déléguée du Règlement FEAMP est requis en vertu des articles 15 et 125 du Règlement. Il couvre la période allant de 2014 à 2016. L'évaluation porte sur sept catégories d'intervention : la politique maritime intégrée (PMI), les avis scientifiques, le contrôle et l'exécution, les contributions volontaires à des organisations internationales, les conseils consultatifs, les informations sur le marché, et l'assistance technique ; et cinq critères d'évaluation obligatoires : la pertinence, l'efficacité, l'efficience, la cohérence et la valeur ajoutée européenne. L'évaluation comprend également cinq études de cas : SIMCelt<sup>9</sup>, BalticBOOST<sup>10</sup>, le CSTEP<sup>11</sup>, le CCEOS<sup>12</sup> et l'EUMOFA<sup>13</sup>.

Les conclusions et recommandations présentées ci-dessous sont regroupées en deux catégories : par intervention (« thématiques ») et par critères d'évaluation obligatoires (« horizontales »).

### **Conclusions et recommandations thématiques**

Les actions du FEAMP sous gestion déléguée ont contribué au développement de la **politique maritime intégrée de l'UE**, ainsi qu'au niveau national en soutenant une gouvernance plus intégrée des affaires maritimes et côtières dans des domaines tels que la coopération intersectorielle maritime à l'échelle des bassins, qui a renforcé les relations entre parties prenantes des États membres, et des pays et régions non membres de l'UE. Les appels à l'innovation, à l'éducation et au développement des technologies liés à l'économie bleue, et les actions spécifiques telles que le plan d'action pour l'Atlantique, ont permis de définir une vision commune de l'économie bleue dans les bassins maritimes et de sensibiliser les investisseurs potentiels (BEI<sup>14</sup>, etc.), et de soutenir les initiatives 'économie bleue' du secteur privé. La mise en œuvre de la DCSMM<sup>15</sup> devrait soutenir la cohérence et le développement d'une économie bleue durable dans chaque bassin maritime, conformément à l'approche écosystémique et aux objectifs de ladite directive pour les États membres de l'UE dans les régions marines ou sous-marines.

En ce qui concerne la **gouvernance intégrée des affaires maritimes et côtières**, il est recommandé d'améliorer le suivi des projets, la définition des indicateurs et les comptes-rendus à toutes les étapes. Cela permettrait d'accroître la traçabilité des objectifs spécifiques au sein des projets financés par le FEAMP, et de renforcer les exigences relatives aux plans d'action (sous-)régionaux afin de démontrer la complémentarité avec la planification de l'espace maritime (PEM) de manière claire, non seulement pour la rédaction des plans (avec la participation des parties prenantes) mais aussi pour leur mise en œuvre (y compris leur révision/adaptation), et donc de soutenir une gouvernance plus intégrée des prochains cycles/plans des stratégies spécifiques aux bassins maritimes.

Dans le domaine de la **croissance économique durable**, de l'**emploi**, de l'**innovation** et des **nouvelles technologies**, il est recommandé d'améliorer la traçabilité des objectifs du FEAMP dans les projets qu'il finance, et ce, à toutes les étapes, en améliorant leur

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<sup>8</sup> Règlement (UE) N° 508/2014 du Parlement Européen et du Conseil du 15 mai 2014 relatif au Fonds européen pour les affaires maritimes et la pêche

<sup>9</sup> Soutien de la mise en œuvre de la planification de l'espace maritime dans la mer Celtique

<sup>10</sup> Projet pour la mer Baltique visant à renforcer la cohérence régionale des stratégies marines à travers l'amélioration des flux de données, les évaluations et une base de connaissances pour l'élaboration des mesures

<sup>11</sup> Comité scientifique, technique et économique de la Pêche

<sup>12</sup> Conseil Consultatif pour les Eaux Occidentales Septentrionales

<sup>13</sup> Observatoire Européen des Marchés des Produits de la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture

<sup>14</sup> Banque européenne d'investissement

<sup>15</sup> Directive-cadre « Stratégie pour le Milieu Marin »

suivi par exemple (avec des indicateurs clairement liés aux objectifs de l'instrument de la politique ou du règlement, et des comptes-rendus). L'innovation stratégique et les investissements dans les secteurs ou zones géographiques à fort potentiel de croissance bleue devraient (continuer à) être soutenus. Ce soutien doit ouvrir la voie à des investissements privés.

En ce qui concerne la **promotion de la protection du milieu marin**, il est recommandé de veiller à ce que le FEAMP puisse être mis à disposition des États membres pour soutenir les stratégies marines concernées, et pour améliorer la contribution des actions transversales et intersectorielles aux objectifs environnementaux, en introduisant des indicateurs significatifs sur les dépenses environnementales par exemple. Un répertoire ou un entrepôt centralisant d'anciens projets liés à la PMI devrait être créé au niveau de la Commission Européenne. Il serait accessible par le biais de portails et d'outils de recherche.

En ce qui concerne la **surveillance maritime**, le partage d'informations civils et militaires parmi les autorités maritimes des États membres a été bénéfique, notamment par sa contribution aux systèmes d'enregistrement et de détection des activités illégales aux niveaux national, européen et international. Il est recommandé que l'AECP<sup>16</sup>, l'AESM<sup>17</sup> et Frontex<sup>18</sup> continuent d'explorer les potentiels domaines de coopération, et d'accroître le niveau de coopération entre les États membres. Le processus de mise en place d'un environnement commun de partage de l'information (CISE) doit prendre en compte leur mandat, leurs activités et leur travail opérationnel, pour éviter le dédoublement des tâches et fournir un cadre pour le partage des informations. Il est recommandé d'inviter les États membres impliqués dans les projets de développement du CISE à partager leurs expériences et leurs connaissances avec d'autres, à travers le sous-groupe d'experts des États membres sur l'intégration de la surveillance maritime, ou d'autres forums spécialisés.

Les activités de **connaissances sur le milieu marin** ont engendré une meilleure compréhension de ce milieu, et ce de manière significative. EMODnet<sup>19</sup> a joué un rôle central dans le développement d'une nouvelle plateforme transnationale de données marines, contribuant ainsi à la création d'une culture commune de partage des données dans le secteur maritime européen. Le développement d'une plateforme commune intégrée se poursuit, notamment pour les données concernant la répartition et la diversité de la vie marine. Il est recommandé d'étendre la portée des activités de collecte de données d'EMODnet, qui contribueront à la coordination et à la mise en œuvre du nouveau cadre, en vue d'un système européen d'observation des océans. Il est également recommandé d'exiger qu'EMODnet développe de nouveaux outils pour suivre ses utilisateurs et la façon dont ils référencent les données du réseau dans les publications scientifiques afin d'améliorer la quantification de leur impact en mer et sur la côte.

En ce qui concerne la progression générale de la **planification de l'espace maritime** en termes de respect du délai imparti pour l'établissement de plans complets d'ici 2021, le financement en gestion déléguée du FEAMP a à ce jour catalysé les actions des États membres, permis l'élaboration de structures et de cadres pour la mise en œuvre de la PEM, et facilité l'avancée de la PEM au niveau national. Le financement direct de la planification transfrontalière de l'espace maritime par le FEAMP a également encouragé les discussions intersectorielles et l'engagement proactif de la PEM au-delà des frontières maritimes. Il est recommandé d'inclure des évaluations ex-post dans les futurs projets de PEM afin de permettre la formalisation des besoins sur le long terme et la mise en place des structures de mise en œuvre, le cas échéant. Dans certains cas, cela pourrait inclure un deuxième projet complémentaire. Il est également recommandé de cibler davantage le soutien à la PEM sur les praticiens nationaux et sous-nationaux, afin

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<sup>16</sup> Agence européenne de contrôle des pêches

<sup>17</sup> Agence européenne pour la sécurité maritime

<sup>18</sup> L'agence européenne de garde-frontières et de garde-côtes

<sup>19</sup> Réseau européen d'observation et de données du milieu marin

d'accroître leur engagement, et de développer des échéances génériques pour les progrès à réaliser dans ce domaine. Ces échéances constitueraient une orientation plutôt qu'une obligation, et viseraient à aider les États membres à atteindre l'objectif de la DCPEM<sup>20</sup> d'ici 2021. Il est recommandé de soutenir la convergence entre la PEM et la gestion intégrée des zones côtières (GIZC), afin de mieux prendre en compte l'espace maritime dans les projets/politiques de GIZC grâce à une gouvernance partagée (incluant parties prenantes et mécanismes).

En ce qui concerne **la collecte, la gestion et la diffusion des avis scientifiques** dans le cadre de la politique commune de la pêche (PCP), les facteurs contribuant à l'efficacité du soutien du FEAMP aux avis du CIEM<sup>21</sup> et du CSTEP incluent : des arrangements bien établis pour les demandes pérennes et *ad hoc* ; l'indépendance des prestataires de conseil de la DG MARE et des États membres ; la participation d'experts indépendants de nombreux États membres différents ; des procédures rigoureuses d'examen interne par les pairs ; et la large diffusion des résultats avec les débouchés disponibles en ligne. Il est recommandé d'améliorer la coordination entre les travaux du CSTEP sur les stocks de la Méditerranée et de la mer Noire et les activités de la CGPM<sup>22</sup> grâce à une planification conjointe du travail et à une éventuelle mise en service conjointe pour éviter le double emploi des emplois et assurer une acceptation plus large des avis.

En ce qui concerne les **mesures spécifiques de contrôle et d'exécution**, l'achat et/ou l'affrètement conjoint de moyens de contrôle pendant la deuxième partie de la période de programmation du FEAMP est peu probable. La mesure a été abandonnée par la DG MARE, qui, à partir de 2017, a retiré les mesures de ses programmes de financement au titre de l'article 87 du FEAMP. Il est recommandé d'envisager le lancement d'un appel à manifestation d'intérêt pour des projets au titre de l'article 87.3 du Règlement sur la mise en œuvre de projets transnationaux pour les systèmes de contrôle. Compte tenu des problèmes liés à la finalisation et à la mise en œuvre des outils informatiques envisagés dans la législation de l'UE, il convient de considérer une augmentation de l'enveloppe financière correspondante. Il est recommandé d'évaluer l'admissibilité de l'AACP à la gestion déléguée du FEAMP, compte tenu de son mandat et de son éventuelle implication dans l'échange de données et la coopération transnationale. Il conviendrait d'envisager le lancement d'un appel à manifestation d'intérêt pour les projets relevant de l'article 87.3 du Règlement FEAMP sur les projets transnationaux dans le domaine du contrôle et de l'exécution.

Les **contributions volontaires de l'UE à des organisations internationales** sont conformes aux objectifs de la PCP et ont contribué aux activités des organisations internationales (art. 29.1 de la PCP), en améliorant les avis scientifiques disponibles sur les mesures de conservation et de gestion concernées (article 29.2 de la PCP) ; en soutenant l'examen des performances des OI et en modernisant leur base juridique, les aidant à renforcer leurs performances en matière de conservation et de gestion des stocks de poissons (article 29.2 de la PCP) ; et en contribuant à une cohérence accrue entre les cadres réglementaires. Il est recommandé de poursuivre ce soutien volontaire aux organisations internationales, en tenant compte de l'engagement pris dans le cadre de la PCP de le rétablir et maintenir à des niveaux pouvant atteindre le Rendement équilibré maximal. Il est également recommandé de continuer à travailler avec la FAO<sup>23</sup> pour améliorer le fonctionnement des organisations régionales de pêche créées en vertu de l'article VI de la Constitution de la FAO présentant un intérêt pour l'Union, en particulier pour réduire la dépendance de ces organisations au financement de l'UE. Enfin, dans la mesure du possible, des accords de subvention avec les organisations internationales devraient être négociés afin de minimiser les coûts de transaction et demander aux organisations internationales d'établir des plans de travail pluriannuels mettant en évidence les besoins de financement extrabudgétaire.

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<sup>20</sup> Directive établissant un cadre pour la planification de l'espace maritime

<sup>21</sup> Conseil International pour l'Exploration de la Mer

<sup>22</sup> Commission générale des pêches pour la Méditerranée

<sup>23</sup> Organisation des Nations unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture

Les **conseils consultatifs** s'appuient sur le soutien du FEAMP sous gestion déléguée. Ils fournissent, pour la plupart, des recommandations sur les mesures de gestion de la pêche à la Commission et aux États membres. Il peut cependant leur être difficile de produire des conseils acceptés par différents groupes d'intérêt. Les États membres accordent souvent aux CC un temps insuffisant pour s'engager et répondent rarement à leurs recommandations. En conséquence, les CC pensent que leur contribution est moins pertinente pour les États membres que pour la Commission. Il est recommandé d'entreprendre une consultation complète des conseils consultatifs et des autres parties prenantes sur les changements potentiels, tels que : la définition/catégorisation des membres des CC pour améliorer leur représentativité et réduire les conflits ; l'orientation et la formation des secrétariats ; et la participation et le rôle de la Commission dans les conseils consultatifs. Cela pourrait être fait par le biais d'une consultation publique ouverte.

L'EUMOFA tient la plupart des engagements relatif aux **informations sur le marché** définis à l'article 42 du règlement OCM<sup>24</sup>. Aucune mesure spécifique n'a été prise jusqu'à présent pour fournir un soutien pratique aux organisations de producteurs ou interprofessionnelles, conformément à l'article 42.1 b) du règlement OCM. L'EUMOFA n'était toutefois pas la seule action pertinente. L'EUMOFA contribue à la plupart des engagements de l'UE en matière de transparence des marchés et se compare favorablement aux autres observatoires menés par la Commission sur l'accessibilité et le contenu. Il est recommandé de développer des initiatives pour mettre en œuvre l'article 42.1 b) de l'OCM concernant l'engagement de pourvoir un soutien pratique aux organisations interprofessionnelles et de producteurs, éventuellement en marge de l'EUMOFA ; et de continuer à apporter un soutien financier équivalent à celui de l'EUMOFA pour maintenir et accroître la qualité et la flexibilité des services aux parties prenantes dans les États membres et les institutions européennes chargées de l'élaboration des politiques.

Le réseau FARNET et l'Unité de Soutien du FAME<sup>25</sup> sont tous deux des instruments pertinents, efficaces et efficients pour apporter une **assistance technique** en soutien au DLAL<sup>26</sup> et renforcer la capacité de suivi et d'évaluation des États membres et de l'UE. Etant donné qu'il n'y a pas de structures en place pour effectuer les tâches accomplies par les deux organes d'assistance technique, il n'aurait pas été possible d'obtenir des résultats comparables au niveau national, régional ou local. Cela est dû à plusieurs facteurs, notamment au haut niveau de spécialisation de leur expertise et à leur valeur ajoutée et leur soutien à l'apprentissage du fait de leur nature transnationale. En ce qui concerne le réseau FARNET, il est recommandé de renforcer le soutien à la coopération transfrontalière entre les GALP<sup>27</sup> ; d'encourager la simplification des procédures administratives nationales pour éviter les retards dans la mise en œuvre du DLAL au niveau local ; et de laisser une plus grande autonomie à l'autorité de gestion dans la mise en œuvre du DLAL, tout en soutenant également les mécanismes de partage des meilleures pratiques au niveau de l'UE. Il faudrait songer à renforcer le nombre d'équivalent temps plein au sein de l'équipe principale de l'Unité de Soutien et à simplifier les procédures de gestion du site Web du réseau. En ce qui concerne le FAME, il est recommandé de développer une identité visuelle comparable à celle du réseau FARNET (logo, site Web) pour sensibiliser les parties prenantes et étendre la diffusion des outils.

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<sup>24</sup> Règlement (UE) n° 1379/2013 portant sur l'organisation commune des marchés dans le secteur des produits de la pêche et de l'aquaculture

<sup>25</sup> Suivi et évaluation de la pêche et de l'aquaculture

<sup>26</sup> Développement Local Mené par les Acteurs Locaux

<sup>27</sup> Groupes d'action locale de la pêche

## **Conclusions et recommandations horizontales**

### **Pertinence**

Les besoins identifiés dans la logique d'intervention de la composante du FEAMP sous gestion déléguée continuent d'exister. Le soutien du FEAMP apporte une solution appropriée à la plupart de ces besoins, notamment :

- Permettre la coopération dans le cadre de la **PEM** au-delà des frontières nationales et infranationales ;
- Les besoins en matière de processus de conseil structuré aux parties prenantes et de régionalisation accrue, notamment en ce qui concerne les obligations de débarquement, qui sont actuellement examinées par les conseils consultatifs, qui contribuent à trouver des solutions viables ;
- Les besoins liés aux règles concernant les informations sur le marché pour les produits de la pêche et de l'aquaculture, en particulier les engagements au titre des articles 42.1 a), c) et d), et 42.2 de la directive OCM. Au début de 2018, l'UEMOFA n'était pas l'instrument le plus pertinent pour apporter une aide ciblée aux organisations de producteurs, conformément à l'article 42.1 b) de la directive OCM. Il est recommandé de développer des initiatives pour donner suite à l'engagement pour un soutien pratique aux organisations interprofessionnelles et de producteurs, conformément à l'article 42.1 b) de la directive OCM, éventuellement en dehors de l'UEMOFA.

En dépit des efforts déployés par la DG MARE pour promouvoir les opportunités de financement en vue de l'**affrètement et/ou de l'achat conjoint de moyens de contrôle**, la mesure n'a pas été utilisée. Il semble peu probable que cette mesure soit actualisée au cours de la deuxième partie de la période de programmation du FEAMP.

### **Efficacité**

La composante du FEAMP sous gestion déléguée a contribué à une gouvernance plus intégrée des **affaires maritimes et côtières** et à la mise en œuvre de la directive établissant un cadre pour la PEM en améliorant la compréhension du milieu marin européen et l'efficacité des entreprises maritimes grâce à EMODnet ; et en abordant la nature non prospective des projets de PEM, ce qui a permis aux États membres d'adopter des systèmes répondant le mieux à leurs besoins.

L'efficacité des **avis scientifiques** a augmenté, en ce qui concerne : les domaines de travail et le format des avis du CIEM en matière d'information des gestionnaires des pêches sur la réalisation des objectifs de la PCP ; l'apport par le CSTEP d'avis scientifiques concernant la PCP à la demande de la DG MARE ; la provision d'avis scientifiques lorsque des flottes de l'UE opèrent au-delà des eaux de l'UE ; et la coopération régionale conforme à la collecte de données des États membres dans le cadre de la collecte des données.

En ce qui concerne **le contrôle et l'exécution**, les États membres se sont montrés réticents à postuler pour un affrètement et/ou achat conjoint de moyens de contrôle, malgré les efforts de la DG MARE. Cela ne devrait pas évoluer pendant le reste de la période de programmation du FEAMP.

Les **contributions volontaires à des organisations internationales** ont renforcé leur capacité de conservation et de gestion des stocks de poissons grâce à : des programmes de recherche ; des examens externes indépendants des ORGP<sup>28</sup> ; et des interventions pour moderniser les conventions de financement.

Le fait de réunir les principales parties prenantes de la pêche au sein des conseils consultatifs a soutenu la gestion de la pêche par la Commission. Certaines améliorations proposées ont été adoptées (les recommandations du CCEOS sur la gestion de la sole en

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<sup>28</sup> Organisations régionales de gestion de la pêche

VIIId par exemple). Cependant, comme souligné précédemment, les conseils consultatifs ont parfois du mal à obtenir un consensus, limitant ainsi leur contribution.

**Règles concernant les informations sur le marché :** L'EUMOFA a contribué à la transparence sur les marchés des produits de la pêche et de l'aquaculture. Les parties prenantes des secteurs public et privé utilisent les règles concernant les informations sur le marché de l'EUMOFA et les comparent favorablement aux autres observatoires dirigés par la Commission.

**Assistance technique :** Le réseau FARNET répond avec succès aux besoins des communautés locales. L'Unité de Soutien FAME a contribué à une mise en œuvre plus efficiente et efficace du système de suivi et d'évaluation de la gestion partagée du FEAMP en publiant des documents de travail, qui ont aidé à opérationnaliser les concepts de suivi et d'évaluation au niveau de l'UE et des États membres.

Il est recommandé d'envisager l'affectation de fonds supplémentaires du FEAMP au développement de la capacité des États membres pour la PEM (sans se focaliser sur l'aspect transfrontalier par exemple) ou d'introduire un financement (par le mécanisme de financement partagé du FEAMP ou son successeur) pour aborder les besoins spécifiques des États membres en termes de PEM là où il y a un avantage à l'échelle de l'UE. Enfin, il est suggéré de développer des projets régionaux de collecte de données biologiques des ORGP sur des périodes plus longues et avec des mécanismes de financement et des infrastructures organisationnelles appropriés pour exploiter tous les avantages potentiels de la coopération régionale.

## Efficiences

**Tableau 1 : Taux de mise en œuvre (montants annuels engagés par rapport à la proportion du budget programmé)**

Année	Avis scientifiques	Contrôle et exécution	Contributions volontaires	Conseils consultatifs	Informations sur le marché
2014	93 %	26 %	99 %	100 %	82 %
2015	75 %	42 %	96 %	64 %	82 %
2016	97 %	80 %	98 %	82 %	95 %
2017		87 %	62 %		

Source : données fournies par la DG MARE, été 2018.

De nombreux projets transfrontaliers de PEM ont eu du mal à développer les relations de travail transfrontalières nécessaires, à concevoir et à mettre en œuvre des activités dans les délais impartis. Il est recommandé d'approuver l'introduction d'une deuxième phase dans les projets de PEM, d'examiner les résultats, de mettre à jour les analyses, et d'utiliser les nouveaux flux de financement de développement de PEM, en particulier si les évaluations ex post et ex ante sont prises en compte dans les projets pour assurer la pertinence de ceux qui suivront.

Les principaux bénéficiaires de la programmation budgétaire sont les deux principaux fournisseurs d'**avis scientifiques** : le CIEM et le CSTEP. L'efficacité du CSTEP dépend de l'équilibre établi entre la rentabilité et la qualité et le niveau d'acceptation des avis fournis à la DG MARE. Cela est influencé par le nombre d'experts requis pour faire face aux perceptions de parti pris.

En ce qui concerne **le contrôle et l'exécution**, le développement de services et de fournitures informatiques pour harmoniser les normes et les systèmes de messagerie afin de prendre en charge l'échange des données relatives à la pêche a été onéreux pour la Commission. Les engagements initiaux pour la publication des outils informatiques n'ont pas été respectés. Il est recommandé d'augmenter l'enveloppe financière concernée pour soutenir le développement informatique et procéder à une évaluation détaillée des problèmes, y compris non financiers, en matière de développement informatique.

Pour les **conseils consultatifs**, l'augmentation récente du budget général serait suffisante pour accomplir les tâches requises. Cependant, plus de flexibilité est souhaitée pour utiliser les sous-dépenses en autorisant des demandes de financement supplémentaires pour la recherche scientifique. Si un soutien pluriannuel est possible, les conseils consultatifs disposeraient d'une plus grande flexibilité pour mieux gérer leurs ressources par rapport aux demandes de conseils.

La décision de sous-traiter presque entièrement la mise en œuvre de l'**EUMOFA** à un seul contractant a accru son efficacité en réduisant les coûts de transaction et les charges administratives liées aux achats multiples de données, aux développements informatiques, aux analyses, etc.

En ce qui concerne le réseau **FARNET**, la capacité de l'Unité de Soutien à faire face aux urgences est entravée par le nombre d'employés à temps plein. En outre, la publication du magazine FARNET uniquement sur une base annuelle ne suffit pas à étayer l'image du réseau et la relation entre l'UE et les GALP. Il est recommandé d'accroître la couverture linguistique des débouchés du réseau FARNET afin d'accroître l'adoption par les GALP des outils thématiques et méthodologiques disponibles. Cela implique un budget supplémentaire.

### **Cohérence**

Les travaux du **CSTEP** sont cohérents avec (et dépendent de) la collecte et la mise à disposition des données cadre de la collecte des données par les États membres. La mise en œuvre de l'obligation de débarquement par les États membres est cohérente avec les travaux du CSTEP, qui examine les recommandations conjointes présentées par les groupes des États membres. La cohérence du **CIEM** avec la PCP et les objectifs plus larges de l'UE a été assurée par le biais de son protocole d'entente avec la DG MARE.

L'**EUMOFA** est le principal outil de mise en œuvre de l'article 42 de la directive OCM. L'Observatoire est conçu pour tenir les engagements de l'OMC en matière d'informations sur le marché, confirmant la cohérence interne de l'EUMOFA. L'EUMOFA est également cohérent avec d'autres initiatives de la Commission visant à améliorer la transparence des marchés, telles que les observatoires européens du marché des produits agricoles ou des marchés de l'énergie.

Étant donné que les **conseils consultatifs** sont établis dans le cadre de la PCP, leur cohérence avec les objectifs de la PCP est inhérente.

Il est recommandé de lier la protection du milieu marin à une vision commune pour une économie bleue durable, et de veiller à ce que les efforts en cours visant à développer davantage de synergies entre H2020 et les Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens, y compris le FEAMP, et mettre l'accent sur la cohérence à l'avenir. Le manque de cohérence entre les activités d'évaluation du CSTEP et de la CGPM devrait continuer à être pris en compte par la DG MARE, la CGPM et le CSTEP afin d'éviter les doubles emplois et les divergences. Les parties prenantes considèrent que le focus sur l'intégration de la surveillance maritime à la PMI contribue au développement d'une approche cohérente et coordonnée des questions maritimes, appelant à une coopération plus étroite au-delà des frontières sectorielles impliquant les autorités maritimes nationales et européennes. Cela conduit à une collaboration plus structurée et systématique pour partager des informations grâce au développement d'un environnement commun de partage de l'information (CISE) établi aux niveaux national et européen.

### **Valeur ajoutée européenne**

Les interventions soutenues par la composante du FEAMP sous gestion déléguée présentent des avantages au-delà de ce qui aurait pu être réalisé par les dépenses nationales et/ou régionales. L'EUMOFA, le CSTEP, les conseils consultatifs et le réseau FARNET, ainsi que les interventions en matière de politique maritime telles qu'EMODnet et les mécanismes et projets visant à promouvoir la planification transfrontalière de l'espace maritime n'auraient pas existé sans le soutien du FEAMP.

La participation de la Commission à l'**EUMOFA** peut être considérée comme bénéfique car les organismes publics sont parfois perçus comme plus objectifs et plus crédibles que les organismes privés dans ce domaine. La participation de la Commission garantit également la prise en compte des besoins de tous les États membres.

Le soutien aux **conseils consultatifs** devrait être maintenu, car la valeur ajoutée européenne est évidente : un groupe de parties prenantes dépourvu de financement de l'UE risquerait ne pas avoir autant de ressources si les organisations membres ou les États membres devaient payer la note. Le soutien de l'UE assure également la participation de certains groupes sectoriels plus petits.

Augmenter la proportion du financement dédié au groupe de données biologiques d'**EMODnet** contribuera à développer les outils appropriés pour rendre plus facilement accessibles les données agrégées de biodiversité et biologiques de haute qualité (qui existent dans différents systèmes de données et organisations non connectés) par le biais d'EMODnet.

Le transfert des tâches du réseau **FARNET** à de plus petits niveaux d'intervention crée un risque élevé de localisation. Les contraintes budgétaires nationales empêchent certains États membres d'investir dans la création de réseaux nationaux. Même les États membres capables d'investir ne peuvent pas déployer de ressources financières comparables à celles supportant les opérations du réseau FARNET. En outre, les réseaux nationaux ne sont pas aussi spécialisés que FARNET et ne peuvent tirer parti du potentiel d'apprentissage généré par un réseau transnational tel que FARNET.



## INTRODUCTION

Coffey International Development Ltd (Coffey), together with Poseidon (project partner), and F&S, Eurofish and C-P Engineering (Subcontractors) were contracted by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) to conduct the **Interim evaluation study of the implementation of the direct management component of the EMFF Regulation (Articles 15 and 125)** under the call for tenders MARE/2016/05.

This document is the final report submitted to DG MARE as part of this evaluation study. It is structured as follows:

- **Section 1** includes the overview of the context and subject of the evaluation study as well as its caveats;
- **Section 2** outlines the methodological approach: work packages and case studies carried out to obtain the evaluation results;
- **Section 3** presents the evaluation results, structured around the theme-specific issues, and separately, the mandatory evaluation criteria.

The report is accompanied by a separate document containing the **Annexes** which include:

- the Evaluation Questions Matrix for this study
- the detailed reports for each of the **ten thematic work packages** carried out as part of the evaluation,
- the five full **case study reports**
- report on the **Open Public Consultation** responses, which were received in the timeframe of this study.

## 1. SUBJECT AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION STUDY

### 1.1. Direct management component of the EMFF Regulation

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is one of the five European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds which complement each other and seek to promote a growth and job-based recovery in Europe along the lines promoted by the Europe 2020 strategy.

The establishment and objectives of the EMFF are set out in Regulation (EU) No 508/2014<sup>29</sup> (henceforth: EMFF Regulation). According to the Regulation, the EMFF funds measures under **direct management** by the EU and measures under **shared management** for which implementation responsibilities are transferred to Member States, according to the orientations and modalities set out in their respective Operational Programmes.

The direct management component described in Title VI of the EMFF Regulation falls in the following **intervention categories**:

1. the Integrated Maritime Policy
  - a. integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs
  - b. development of cross-sectoral initiatives
  - c. sustainable economic growth, employment, innovation and new technologies
  - d. protection of the marine environment<sup>30</sup>,
2. the collection, management and dissemination of scientific advice under the Common Fisheries Policy
3. specific control and enforcement measures under the Common Fisheries Policy;
4. voluntary contributions to international organisations;
5. Advisory Councils;
6. market intelligence;
7. technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission<sup>31</sup>.

Based on a review of the legislation and focusing on the EMFF direct management component only (which is the sole focus of this assignment), the evaluators developed an intervention logic (IL) as presented in a tabular form overleaf. The IL details:

- inputs and impacts (at the level of the direct management component of the EMFF), and
- activities, outputs, outcomes, results (at the level of the different interventions under the direct management component of the EMFF)

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<sup>29</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

<sup>30</sup> Article 82 of the Regulation (EU) No 508/2014

<sup>31</sup> Articles 85-92 of the Regulation (EU) No 508/2014

**Table 2: Detailed elements of intervention logic for direct management component of the EMFF Regulation (2014-2016)**

Inputs	Activities (Eligible operations)	Outputs	Outcomes (Operational objectives)	Results (Specific objectives)	Impacts
<p><b>EMFF Regulation</b> (No. 508/2014) and implementing decisions and regulations</p> <p>Commission staff</p> <p>€ 6,400M</p>	<p><b>Research activities</b></p> <p><b>Projects</b> (test/pilot and cooperation)</p> <p><b>Knowledge related activities:</b> best practice, public information, awareness raising</p> <p><b>Policy and practice activities:</b> conferences, seminars, fora and workshops, bilateral dialogues</p> <p><b>Coordination activities:</b> including information-sharing networks</p>	<p>Reports and studies published</p> <p>Campaigns, events, websites, stakeholder platforms</p> <p>IT systems and networks Interconnected cross-sectoral data exchange systems</p> <p>Trained and professionally qualified maritime sector stakeholders</p> <p>Improved spatial plans and coastal zone management plans</p>	<p>Integrated maritime governance capacity among Members States and regions (art 82 a.i.)</p> <p>Increased co-operation and dialogue among MS and stakeholders with regards to sea-basin strategies (art 82 a.ii)</p> <p>Cross-sectoral cooperation platforms and networks (art 82 a.iii)</p> <p>Exchange of information and best practices at national and international level, especially in relation to UNCLOS (art 82 a.iv- v)</p> <p>Enhanced visibility of an integrated approach to maritime affairs</p>	<p><b>Foster the development and implementation of integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs</b> (art 82.a)</p>	<p>Economically, socially and environmentally sustainable fisheries and aquaculture (art. 5a EMFF reg.)</p> <p>Implementation of the CFP (art. 5b EMFF reg.)</p> <p>Balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas (art. 5c EMFF reg.)</p>
<p>€ 704M<sup>32</sup> programmed to the direct management by Commission from 2014-2020</p>	<p><b>IT network activities:</b> development of IT systems, networks and data exchange</p> <p><b>Training activities:</b> projects promoting professional development in the maritime sector</p>	<p>Marine knowledge</p> <p>Maritime spatial planning</p> <p>Integrated maritime surveillance</p> <p>Sea basin strategies (Adriatic and Ionian Seas; Arctic Ocean; Atlantic Ocean; Baltic Sea; Black Sea; Mediterranean Sea; North Sea)</p>	<p>Development of sectors that have a high potential for sustainable jobs and growth (aquaculture, coastal tourism, marine biotechnology, ocean energy, seabed mining)</p> <p>Components to provide knowledge, legal certainty and security in the blue economy: access to information about the sea, efficient and sustainable management of activities at sea, giving authorities a better picture of what is happening at sea</p> <p>Ensuring tailor-made measures and to foster cooperation between countries</p>	<p><b>Support for sustainable economic growth, employment, innovation and new technologies in emerging and prospective sectors</b> (art. 82c of EMFF) – Blue Growth</p>	<p>Development and implementation of the Union's IMP in a manner complementary to cohesion policy and to the CFP (art. 5d EMFF reg.)</p> <p>In the framework of union priorities sustainable development of fisheries, aquaculture and related activities (art. 6, EMFF reg.)</p>

<sup>32</sup> Based on DG MARE information available at [https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/docs/body/2015-cfp-funding\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/docs/body/2015-cfp-funding_en.pdf) . Calculated as 11% out of € 6400 M allocated in total between 2014 and 2020.

Interim evaluation study of the implementation of the direct management component of the EMFF Regulation (Articles 15 and 125) – Final Report

Inputs	Activities (Eligible operations)	Outputs	Outcomes (Operational objectives)	Results (Specific objectives)	Impacts
		Reports and support in relation to the obligations under the Habitats Directive	MS take a more consistent approach to protecting the environment.  Member States better equipped to report the state of the marine environment as part of their obligations under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive	<b>Improvements to the quality of the EU's marine environment in accordance with Directive 2008/56/EC</b> (art. 82d of EMFF)	
<i>(inputs repeated from the previous page)</i>	Development /implementation of technical tools for the IMS that promote <b>cross-sectoral and cross-border surveillance information exchanges interlinking</b> (art 83.2.a) Improvement of Member States or regions <b>maritime spatial planning</b> and <b>integrated coastal zone management</b> (art 83.2.b) Financing and support for European <b>marine observation and data network system</b> (art 83.2.c)	Technical tools (CISE, cross-border surveillance exchanges)  Programmes for capacity building of MS's in maritime spatial planning Monitoring and evaluation reports Systems for data sharing Networks of experts Operational European marine observation and data network systems	Integrated Maritime Surveillance to reinforce the use of maritime space by facilitating information exchange (art 82b.i) Development of maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management processes (art 82b.ii) Development of high quality marine data and knowledge base to avoid duplication (art 82b.iii)	<b>Development of cross-sectoral initiatives</b> (art. 82b of EMFF)	<i>(impacts repeated from the previous page)</i>  Economically, socially and environmentally sustainable fisheries and aquaculture (art. 5a EMFF reg.)  Implementation of the CFP (art. 5b EMFF reg.)
Commission staff  € 6,400M  € 704M programmed to the direct management by Commission from 2014-2020	<b>Research activities:</b>  Provision of scientific and socio-economic opinions and advice  Participation of experts in the meetings of working groups on scientific and technical issues related to fisheries  Cooperation and management activities (regional, national) aimed at data collection	Studies, pilot and applied-research projects  Reports on scientific opinions and advice by scientific bodies  Working groups on scientific and technical issues  Research surveys at sea under Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements  Data sets, regionalised databases	Implementation of data collection framework at national level.  Improvement in overall effectiveness and relevance of scientific advice to policy-making and fisheries management  Strengthening of regional cooperation  Opportunities for research synergies identified & reduction in duplication of research efforts.	<b>Collection, management and dissemination of scientific advice under the CFP</b> (art 85a of EMFF) Policy-making at EU and national level makes greater use of scientific evidence for the purpose of sound and efficient fisheries management decisions under the CFP	Balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas (art. 5c EMFF reg.)  Development and implementation of the Union's IMP in a manner complementary to cohesion policy and to the CFP (art. 5d EMFF reg.)
	<b>Joint purchase and/or chartering</b> by several MS Assessment and development of new control technologies Transnational projects that develop and test the inter-State control, inspection and enforcement systems	Joint MS vessels, aircrafts and helicopters  New control technologies  Operational expenditure related to control and evaluation covered	Support of the implementation of a Union control, inspection and enforcement system	<b>Specific control and enforcement measures under the CFP are met</b> (art 85b of EMFF) Unmet obligations are consistently identified and addressed.	In the framework of union priorities sustainable development of fisheries, aquaculture and related activities (art. 6, EMFF reg.)

Interim evaluation study of the implementation of the direct management component  
of the EMFF Regulation (Articles 15 and 125) – Final Report

Inputs	Activities (Eligible operations)	Outputs	Outcomes (Operational objectives)	Results (Specific objectives)	Impacts
	International training programmes Initiatives, including seminars and media tools for standardisation	Tools for standardising the interpretation of regulations and controls  Trained personnel responsible for monitoring, control and surveillance			
<i>(inputs repeated from the previous page)</i>	Financial support / contribution to the operations to UN and <b>international organisations</b> which are of special interest to the Union	Partnership agreements in line with the objective of the CFP	Improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of the international organisations and treaties in line with the interest of the Union	<b>Voluntary financial contributions to support the operations of international organisations</b> (art 85c of EMFF)	<i>(impacts repeated from the previous page)</i>  Economically, socially and environmentally sustainable fisheries and aquaculture (art. 5a EMFF reg.)
<b>EMFF Regulation</b> (No. 508/2014) and implementing decisions and regulations	Financial support / contribution to <b>Advisory Councils</b>	Advisory Councils provide substantial and timely recommendations on fisheries management matters and on simplification of rules	Advisory Councils' recommendations taken up by policy makers at EU and/or national level	<b>Financial support for the operating costs of Advisory Councils</b> (art 85d of EMFF)	Implementation of the CFP (art. 5b EMFF reg.)
Commission staff	Establishment of EUMOFA, a common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products (CMO)  Dissemination and facilitation of economic knowledge and available data on fisheries and aquaculture	Studies and surveys on supply chains, economic knowledge, price formation and markets	EUMOFA delivers on Commission commitments on market intelligence (Article 42 of the CMO regulation (1379/2013))	<b>Financial support for the development and dissemination of market intelligence for fishery and aquaculture products</b> (art 85e of EMFF)	Balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas (art. 5c EMFF reg.)
€ 6,400M	Provision of <b>technical assistance</b> measures from the list common to ESI Funds  Assistance in the <b>monitoring and evaluation</b> of sustainable fisheries agreements and the Union participation in regional fisheries management organisations. Setting-up of a European network of Fisheries local action groups (FLAGS) and supporting cooperation between the FLAGS.	Monitoring and evaluation reporting  Network of FLAGS established, involving action groups from each Member State.	Greater tracking and understanding of achievement of goals set for sustainable fisheries, and EU participation in management organisations.  Greater sharing of information and local experiences across the EU Increased capacity building in fisheries management at local level.	<b>Provision of technical assistance measures from the list common to ESI Funds</b> (art. 92 of EMFF)	Development and implementation of the Union's IMP in a manner complementary to cohesion policy and to the CFP (art. 5d EMFF reg.)  In the framework of union priorities sustainable development of fisheries, aquaculture and related activities (art. 6, EMFF reg.)
€ 704M programmed to the direct management by Commission from 2014-2020					

## 1.2. The interim evaluation study

This interim evaluation study of the implementation of the direct management component of the EMFF Regulation is required under **Articles 15 and 125 of the Regulation**. The period under consideration for this evaluation study covers the years 2014-2016.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations stemming from this study will feed into implementation of subsequent direct management spending by the EMFF and possibly an adjustment of the indicative distribution of funds<sup>33</sup>, by which they will facilitate the implementation of the 2021-2028 EMFF.

### 1.2.1. Evaluation questions

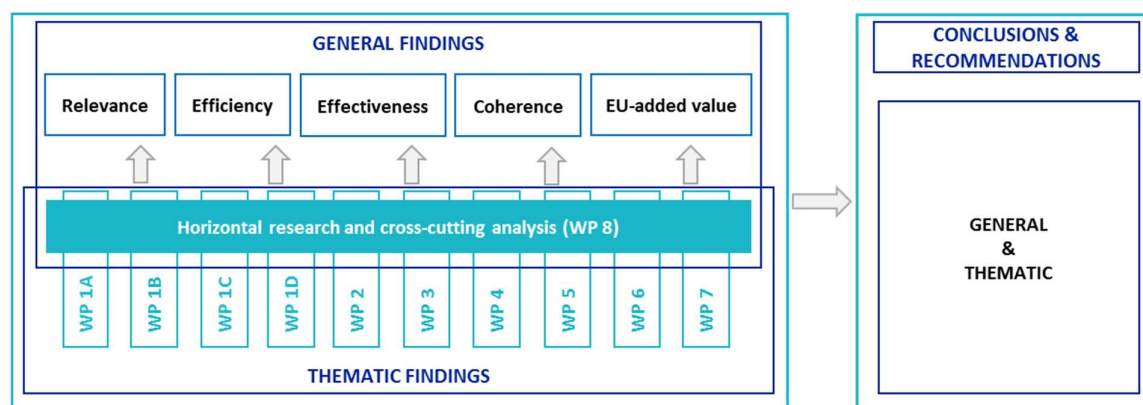
The tendering specifications provided an illustrative list of questions to be answered through this evaluation study, which corresponded to the EMFF direct management component intervention categories. The questions were reviewed in the inception stage and were linked to individual Work Packages, as presented in Table 3.

### 1.2.2. Two layered approach to evaluation

The evaluation approach was driven by data collection on specific thematic interventions (i.e. **thematic level**) complemented by cross-cutting research that supported the overall analysis (i.e. **horizontal level**). These two elements of our approach are presented below and summarised in Figure 2.

- **Thematic approach to research and analysis (Work Packages 1-7):** This aspect focused on the specific questions relating to the thematic interventions covered by Title VI of the EMFF Regulation and presented in the previous section.
- **Horizontal research and cross-cutting analysis (Work Package 8):** To reach judgements regarding the mandatory evaluation criteria as described in the Better Regulation Guidelines<sup>34</sup> (namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence and EU added value), the evaluation study needed to consider how the interventions relate and correspond to one another. This began with the development of an intervention logic and a two-layered analytical framework (Evaluation Questions Matrix – EQM) to refine evaluation questions, judgement criteria, indicators and data sources both at the level of thematic and cross-cutting analysis. The EQM is presented in the Annexes (a separate document).

Figure 1: Illustration of two layered approach to evaluation



<sup>33</sup> as laid down in Annex III of the EMFF Regulation

<sup>34</sup> SWD (2017) 350 of 7 July 2017 Commission Staff Working Document *Better Regulation Guidelines*

**Table 3: Evaluation Questions**

WP #	Evaluation Questions
WP 1A	Have the actions contributed to a more integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs?
WP 1B	Are the marine knowledge activities contributing to reducing costs of offshore or coastal activities, promoting innovation and reducing uncertainty in knowledge of the sea?
	Have the marine spatial planning activities helped Member States set up spatial plans?
WP 1C	Will the maritime surveillance activities lead to an operational system for exchanging information between maritime authorities?
	Have 'Blue Growth' initiatives funded by the EMFF facilitated the development of marine economic activities (MEAs) and the jobs they generate?
WP 1D	Will the actions taken help MS report the state of the marine environment as part of their obligations under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive?
WP 2	To what extent have the studies, pilots and scientific advice funded under direct management contributed to improving the overall effectiveness and relevance of scientific advice to policy-making?
	To what extent have the studies, pilots and scientific advice funded under direct management been coherent with Horizon 2020?
	How have data collection related actions strengthened regional cooperation?
WP 3	Which measures are most /least frequently implemented and why?
	Why is there a reluctance from MS to apply for joint chartering and/or purchase of control means? Should this measure be abandoned? If not, under which conditions that measure would be relevant in the next programming period?
WP 4	Are the partnership agreements in line with the objective of the CFP? Do the contributions help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the international organisations?
WP 5	Have the Advisory Councils been able to provide recommendations on fisheries management matters, including advice on conservation and socio-economic aspects of fisheries, and simplification of rules?
WP 6	To what extent has EUMOFA delivered on the Commission commitments on market intelligence as defined in art. 42 of the CMO regulation (1379/2013)?
WP 7	Are the tasks that FARNET implements meeting a need of the local community? If so what structures are in place to hand over these tasks after 14 years of implementation?
	What has FAME's contribution been to a more efficient and effective implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system of the shared management of the EMFF both at MS and EU level?
WP8	<b>Relevance:</b> To what extent is the intervention still relevant?
	<b>Effectiveness:</b> To what extent have the objectives been achieved?
	<b>Efficiency:</b> To what extent has the intervention been cost-effective?
	Is the indicative distribution of funding reasonable (are the funds being used, if not why not, are more funds needed, why)?
	<b>Coherence:</b> To what extent is the intervention coherent internally (with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy and integrated maritime policy) and externally (with wider EU policy objectives)?
	<b>EU added value:</b> What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention compared to what could be achieved by Member States at national and/or regional levels?

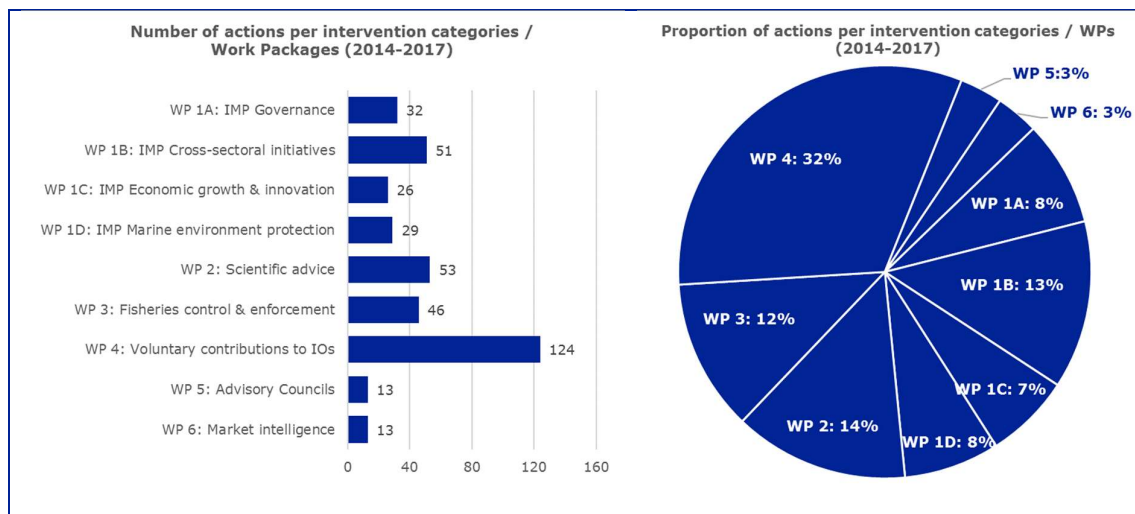
### 1.2.3. Study caveats

The scope, duration and timing of this evaluation study yield certain caveats that need to be taken into account when considering the conclusions and recommendations included in this report.

1. The **period covered by this evaluation study** (2014-2016) implies that Actions supported by EMFF direct management component in the later years were out of temporal scope and as such were not evaluated. At the same time the evaluators acknowledge the change of emphasis in the integrated maritime policy since 2017. The more recent developments have been taken into account as markers for future development trends.

This is of particular relevance to the theme of Blue Growth. Although the policy foundations for the Blue Growth policy have been laid early on (Commission Communication on Blue Growth from 2012, on Blue Innovation from 2014, and overall the Juncker Commission's priorities as of 2014), much of the spending from the EMFF directly managed funds to support Blue Growth occurred as of 2016. The expenditure profile evolved from procurement towards grants, and from funding networks towards funding innovation pilots. Because this evolved as of 2016, it is natural that the evaluation can cover only certain aspects, but not all, of the Blue Growth expenditure.

2. In implementation of the data collection efforts for each Work Package, the evaluators needed to consider **proportionality** in terms of the amount and financial volume of Actions supported by the EMFF direct management component under each intervention category.



3. The **timing of the evaluation study** was such that the Open Public Consultation implemented as part of the evaluation process has not been closed before the submission on the final report. Therefore, the replies received can be treated as an indication of the overall sentiment, they are, however, not the finite set of replies.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Work Packages

The evaluation was structured around **ten thematic Work Packages (WPs)** to address the seven intervention categories (including four for the sub-categories relating to Integrated Maritime Policy). The evaluation also included a **separate horizontal WP** to support the requirements for general mandatory evaluation criteria.

The table overleaf illustrates this division. It is followed by succinct descriptions of the scope of each WP.

**Table 4: Summary of Work Packages**

	WP #	Intervention category	Sub-category
Thematic	WP 1A	Integrated Maritime Policy	Development and implementation of an integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs
	WP 1B		Development of cross-sectorial initiatives
	WP 1C		Support for sustainable economic growth, employment, innovation and new technologies
	WP 1D		Promotion of the protection of the marine environment
	WP 2	Scientific advice	
	WP 3	Fisheries control and enforcement	
	WP 4	Voluntary contributions to international organisations	
	WP 5	Advisory Councils	
	WP 6	Market intelligence	
	WP 7	Technical assistance	
Horizontal	WP 8	Requirements for general mandatory evaluation criteria	

#### 2.1.1. WP 1A: Integrated Maritime Policy - Development and implementation of an integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs

Article 82 of the EMFF Regulation proposes support that “should contribute to the development and implementation of the Union’s Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP)”. It specifies that this support is in relation to four main areas. These are reflected in the first four WPs related to IMP support under direct management.

The first work package (WP1A) requires directly financed support to foster the development and implementation of integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs, in particular by:

- promoting actions which encourage Member States and their regions to develop, introduce or implement integrated maritime governance;
- promoting dialogue and cooperation with and among competent authorities of the Member States and stakeholders on marine and maritime issues, including by developing and implementing integrated sea-basin strategies;

- promoting cross-sectoral cooperation platforms and networks, including representatives of public authorities at national, regional and local level, industry including tourism, research stakeholders, citizens, civil society organisations and the social partners;
- improving cooperation between Member States through the exchange of information and best practices among their competent authorities;
- promoting the exchange of best practices and dialogue at international level, including bilateral dialogue with third countries. Such dialogue shall include, as appropriate, effective discussion on the ratification and implementation of UNCLOS;
- enhancing the visibility of, and raising the awareness of public authorities, the private sector and the general public to an integrated approach to, maritime affairs.

### **2.1.2. WP 1B: Integrated Maritime Policy - Development of cross-sectorial initiatives**

The second thematic work package (WP 1B), focused on the requirement for the development of cross-sectorial initiatives; the second main area for Integrated Maritime Policy. As per Article 82(b) of the EMFF regulations, measures financed under direct management are expected to contribute to the development of cross-sectorial initiatives that are mutually beneficial to different maritime sectors and/or sectoral policies, taking into account and building upon existing tools and initiatives, such as:

- the Integrated Maritime Surveillance (IMS) so as to reinforce the safe, secure and sustainable use of maritime space in particular by enhancing effectiveness and efficiency through information exchange across sectors and borders, while taking due account of existing and future cooperation mechanisms and systems;
- maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management processes;
- the progressive development of a comprehensive and publicly accessible high quality marine data knowledge base, which shall facilitate the sharing, re-use and dissemination of those data and knowledge among various user groups, thus avoiding a duplication of efforts; for that purpose, the best use shall be made of existing Union and Member States' programmes.

### **2.1.3. WP 1C: Integrated Maritime Policy - Support for sustainable economic growth, employment, innovation and new technologies**

The third thematic Work Package corresponded to the third main area for Integrated Maritime Policy. Namely, Article 82 (c) of the EMFF regulations proposes support to "sustainable economic growth, employment, innovation and new technologies within emerging and prospective maritime sectors, as well as in coastal, insular and outermost regions of the Union, in a way that complements established sectoral and national activities".

Projects under this theme include various EU-wide and sea-basin-focused initiatives such as MEDINBLUE, which supports the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean for promoting the Blue Economy in that sea basin.

#### **2.1.4. WP 1D: Integrated Maritime Policy - Promotion of the protection of the marine environment**

The fourth thematic work package corresponded to the final main area for Integrated Maritime Policy Article. Article 82(d) of the EMFF Regulation provides support to promote the protection of the marine environment, in particular its biodiversity and marine protected areas such as Natura 2000 sites. It also aims to support the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources, and to further define the boundaries of the sustainability of human activities that have an impact on the marine environment, in accordance with the objectives of achieving and maintaining a good environmental status as required by Directive 2008/56/EC.

#### **2.1.5. WP 2: Scientific advice**

This thematic work package considered the projects that support scientific advice across European sea basins. Scientific advice also extends beyond EU waters with general support to Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and specific contracts on improving scientific knowledge.

Article 86 of the EMFF regulation states that, the following types of operations shall be eligible:

- (a) studies and pilot projects needed for the implementation and development of the CFP, including those on alternative types of sustainable fishing and aquaculture management techniques, including within Advisory Councils;
- (b) the preparation and provision of scientific opinions and advice by scientific bodies, including international advisory bodies in charge of stock assessments, by independent experts and by research institutions;
- (c) the participation of experts in the meetings of working groups on scientific and technical issues related to fisheries, such as Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), as well as in international advisory bodies and in meetings where the contribution of fishery and aquaculture experts is required;
- (d) research surveys at sea in areas under sustainable fisheries partnership agreements;
- (e) expenditure related to the collection, management and use of data, to the organisation and management of fisheries expert meetings and the management of annual work programmes related to fisheries scientific and technical expertise;
- (f) cooperation activities between Member States in data collection, the setting-up and running of regionalised databases, as well as improving scientific expertise in support of fisheries management.

The evaluation identified how this information has contributed to fisheries management (e.g. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) advice), policy-making (e.g. implementation of the Landing Obligation, contribution to the functioning of the STECF) and to regional co-operation (e.g. RFMO research surveys). It also explored the linkage (and coherence) with other scientific funding programmes such as Horizon 2020 (H2020).

### **2.1.6.WP 3: Fisheries control and enforcement**

This thematic work package relates to fisheries control and the enforcement rules applicable to all Member States enacted through Council Regulation (EU) 1224/2009<sup>35</sup> and further detailed in Commission Implementation Regulation (EC) 404/2011<sup>36</sup>.

Council Regulation (EC) 1224/2009 aims at ensuring that control of fishing activities is implemented on a similar basis in all Member States, hence supporting a level playing field across EU fisheries. The Regulation introduces several innovations compared to its predecessor, including the use of modern technologies to increase the efficiency of control, traceability from net to plate, and definition of common standards for inspections. The Control framework also encourages international cooperation.

The EMFF Regulation considers two categories of financial support for control:

- measures under shared management (Article 76) and
- measures under direct management (Article 87) which are the measures to be evaluated under this assignment.

In broad terms, while measures considered under Article 76 (shared management) aim at supporting the development of Member States own control systems along the lines set out by their EMFF operational plans, measures under Article 87 (direct management) address actions of transnational nature, supporting operational cooperation between Member States (including joint purchasing or joint chartering of patrol vessels), IT developments, innovation or the Commission's involvement in control including in the fight against Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

### **2.1.7. WP 4: Voluntary contributions to international organisations**

Article 29 of the CFP states that the Union shall actively support and contribute to the activities of international organisations dealing with fisheries, including Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). As outlined in the same Article, the positions of the Union in international organisations dealing with fisheries and in RFMOs shall be based on the best available scientific advice so as to ensure that fisheries resources are managed in accordance with the CFP objectives. The Union shall seek to lead the process of strengthening the performance of RFMOs to enhance their conservation and management of marine living resources under their purview.

As a Coastal State, a Flag State and a Market State, the EU contracts tuna RFMOs (ICCAT<sup>37</sup>, IOTC<sup>38</sup>, WCPFC<sup>39</sup>, IATTC<sup>40</sup>) and non-tuna RFMOs (NEAFC<sup>41</sup>, NAFO<sup>42</sup>, NASCO<sup>43</sup>, SEAFO<sup>44</sup>,

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<sup>35</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, p. 1–50

<sup>36</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 404/2011 of 8 April 2011 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy. OJ L 112, 30.4.2011, p. 1–153

<sup>37</sup> International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

<sup>38</sup> Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

<sup>39</sup> Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

<sup>40</sup> Inter-American-Tropical-Tuna-Commission

<sup>41</sup> North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

<sup>42</sup> Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization

<sup>43</sup> The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

<sup>44</sup> South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation

SPRFMO<sup>45</sup>, CCAMLR<sup>46</sup> and GFCM<sup>47</sup>). The EU is also involved in a number of international organisations like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

As the contractor, the EU pays the mandatory membership fees that contribute to the RFMOs' core budgets. Article 88 of the EMFF Regulation provides that the EU may pay additional voluntary contributions to an International Organisation (IO) under the overarching objective of improving the international governance framework. This includes:

- financial contributions provided to the United Nations organisations, as well as voluntary funding provided to any international organisation active in the field of the Law of the Sea;
- financial contributions to preparations for new international organisations or the preparation of new international treaties, which are of interest to the Union;
- financial contributions for work or programmes carried out by international organisations, which are of special interest to the Union;
- financial contributions to any activity, which upholds the interests of the Union in international organisations and strengthens cooperation with its partners in those organisations.

#### **2.1.8. WP 5: Advisory Councils**

The Advisory Councils (ACs) are stakeholder-led organisations that provide the Commission and EU countries with recommendations on fisheries management matters. Increased regionalization is a key priority in the reformed CFP. In addition to the seven existing Advisory Councils associated with European sea areas, pelagic and long-distance fleets, the new CFP proposes the creation of four new Advisory Councils for the Black Sea, Aquaculture, Markets and Outermost Regions. The EMFF Regulation 508/2014 states that *"In order to improve governance within the CFP and to ensure the effective functioning of the Advisory Councils, it is essential for Advisory Councils to be provided with sufficient and permanent funding in order to pursue effectively their advisory role within the CFP."*

#### **2.1.9. WP 6: Market intelligence**

Market intelligence is one of the key innovations of the reformed Common Market Organisation (CMO) that came into effect in 2014<sup>48</sup>. Under the overarching objective of improving the gathering, processing and dissemination of economic information on the markets in fisheries and aquaculture products in the Union, Article 42 of the CMO Regulation requires that the Commission shall:

- gather, analyse and disseminate economic knowledge and understanding of the Union market for fishery and aquaculture products along the supply chain, taking into account the international context;
- provide practical support to producer organisations and inter-branch organisations to better coordinate information between operators and processors;
- regularly survey prices for fishery and aquaculture products in the Union market along the supply chain and conduct analyses on market trends;

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<sup>45</sup> South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

<sup>46</sup> Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources

<sup>47</sup> General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

<sup>48</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1184/2006 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000. OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 1–21

- conduct ad-hoc market studies and provide a methodology for price formation surveys.

Article 90 of the EMFF Regulation provides funding opportunities for the development and dissemination of market intelligence. Financial commitments earmarked are in the region of EUR 4 million per year.

The main instrument developed to respond to CMO Article 42 requirements is the European Union Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products (EUMOFA). Developed on a pilot basis as from 2009 and fully operational as from 2014, EUMOFA<sup>49</sup> aims at i) increasing market transparency and efficiency; ii) analysing EU market dynamics and iii) supporting business decisions and policy-making through a number of tools including a web based database on prices and flows, and a series of regular publications about the status of the EU market in its international environment. EUMOFA implementation is outsourced to specialised companies.

#### **2.1.10.WP 7: Technical Assistance**

Article 92(c) of the EMFF Regulation allows for the “setting-up of a European network of FLAGs aimed at capacity building, disseminating information, exchanging experiences and best practices and supporting cooperation between the FLAGs. That network shall cooperate with the networking and technical support bodies for local development set up by the ERDF, the ESF and the EAFRD<sup>50</sup> as regards their local development activities and transnational cooperation”.

FARNET is the network connecting groups that are implementing Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) under EMFF. It is the continuation of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF)-supported initiative to facilitate links and share experiences between Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs). FLAGs were established to deliver Axis 4 under EFF and have become the chosen delivery method for CLLD in most Member States.

#### **2.1.11.WP 8: Horizontal**

The overall approach to this evaluation was based on the need to answer both specific and general evaluation questions. The horizontal WP was a crucial means by which to identify theme specific findings (WP 1-7) necessary to answer the general mandatory evaluation criteria for the assignment (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence and EU added value).

The work under this work package included:

- Mapping of findings from theme-specific questions and identification of data gaps

The evaluation questions / indicators / judgement criteria and sources of evidence sequence (confirmed during the Steering Group meetings) are the same across all of the WP. It was, therefore, essential that a common methodology is used across all thematic interventions. The findings per intervention category were drawn from the detailed results of WPs 1 to 7 (as presented in the Annex) and constituted the evidence base to answer each theme-specific evaluation question.

- Framing data collection to answer general questions

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.eumofa.eu/>

<sup>50</sup> European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Based on the refined methodology for the thematic WP, a comprehensive Evaluation Questions Matrix (EQM) structured data collection for this horizontal WP. This EQM was discussed with DG MARE at the inception stage and has been refined throughout the data collection phase to take into consideration the available evidence and data generated by the thematic WPs.

- Final analysis

Overall, the findings of the horizontal WP complement the research outcomes from the thematic work packages. The evaluators integrated all of the findings to provide answers to the general evaluation questions under the five mandatory evaluation criteria, as presented in the next Chapter, section 3.2.

## **2.2. Case studies**

**Five case studies** were originally suggested in the proposal for this evaluation which had been prepared more than a year before the start of the project. Since then, more insights from the activities supported by EMFF direct management component have been gained. Final selection of these case studies was defined in close cooperation with the Steering Group.

The case studies carried out and their relevance to the Work Packages are presented in the table below. A short summary of each case study is presented below and the detailed case study reports are included in the Annex (separate document).

**Table 5: Case studies carried out**

<b>Case study theme</b>	<b>Case study</b>	<b>WP relevance</b>
IMP: Marine Spatial Planning	SIMCelt	WP 1B
IMP: Sea basin initiatives	BalticBOOST	WP 1D
Scientific advice	STECF	WP 2
Advisory Councils	NWWAC	WP 5
Market intelligence	EUMOFA	WP 6

The structure of the case study outputs was common to all five case study areas. It combines both the mandatory evaluation criteria, as well as the evaluation questions specific to the given Work Package theme / themes being covered by the case study. This ensures that all relevant information was captured and presented in a way, which allowed for consistent and robust analysis of the findings.

### **Case Study 1: Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Celtic Seas (SIMCelt)**

SIMCelt is a cross-border project involving partners from the UK, Ireland and France and aims to support cooperation on the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive in the Celtic Seas. The project has various outputs, including case studies (e.g. on cross-border marine and coastal planning), a data portal<sup>51</sup> (showing physical features, human uses and management areas – is also integrated with EMODnet) and various events to promote MSP in the Celtic sea area.

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<sup>51</sup> See <http://data.simcelt.eu/>

Key contacted stakeholders included the outgoing SIMCelt Coordinator, EASME's Maritime Policy and MSP specialists as well as MSP practitioners from Scotland and England (via the Solway Firth Forum) and Ireland.

### **Case study 2: BalticBOOST**

The *Baltic Sea project to boost regional coherence of marine strategies through improved data flow, assessments, and knowledge base for development of measures (2015-2016)* ("BalticBOOST") aimed to develop assessment tools and set up data arrangements to support indicator-based assessments of the state of and pressures on the Baltic Sea and thus support implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). It was intended that the broader knowledge base would help the project to propose principles for joint environmental targets for pressures affecting seabed habitats. The project also aimed to support the development of a joint report that documents regional coordination of actions agreed in HELCOM and MSFD Programmes of Measures for those Contracting Parties to HELCOM that are EU Member States.

The BalticBOOST case study complemented WP 1D (Sea basin initiatives). It involved desk research reviewing the project documentation structured around the project themes. In each theme these involve extensive background documentation and outcome documents from thematic workshops. The desk review was accompanied by series of in-depth interviews with the project secretariat and the lead partners for each BalticBOOST work packages.

### **Case Study 3: Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)**

This case study contributed to WP 2, scientific advice. Using the common case study reporting format developed at the inception stage of the evaluation, the evaluators generated a detailed questionnaire incorporating the EQM questions specific to Scientific Advice (WP 2) to evaluate the success of the STECF in contributing to scientific knowledge.

Key stakeholders contacted as part of this case study included the JRC as STECF Secretariat; contacts within the Commission DG MARE liaising with STECF and using their outputs; four STECF members (including plenary & expert group members); Industry and other potential users of STECF outputs. A list of consultees is presented in Table 50 in the section on case study 3 of the Annexes.

### **Case Study 4: North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC)**

NWWAC is one of 11 Advisory Councils currently established as required by the CFP regulation to support a more regionalised approach to CFP implementation. It is one of seven related to specific sea basins. It was one of the first to be established, originally as a Regional Advisory Council 2005. The principal aim of the NWWAC is to bring together stakeholders from across Europe, to advise the Commission on matters of fisheries management in respect of the North Western Waters - ICES areas V (excluding Va and only Union waters of Vb),.

This case study contributed to WP 5 related to Advisory Councils. The first stage of conducting the case study was a review of background material, most being available on the AC website. This included all recommendations made by the AC to the Commission. We then used the finalised detailed interview structure to consult with the Commission (unit D3), the NWWAC secretariat, chair and a further six AC members in a proportionate 60/40 split of industry/other stakeholders (see section 2.4.2 of case study 4 in the Annexes for a list of consultees). This allowed us to explore all evaluation areas and the specific EQs relating to WP5, including the contribution of EMFF direct management component to the NWWAC and its objectives.



### ***Case study 5: The European Union Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture products (EUMOFA)***

EUMOFA officially started in 2014 after adoption of EMFF but pilot phases of the project have been launched as early as 2009 to satisfy an European Parliament request on improved transparency under the form of a Preparatory Action. These pilot phases have been useful to validate the principles and functions of the observatory, to establish all data sources that EUMOFA would centralise and harmonise before dissemination, and to assess the level of financial resources that would be necessary to run it. This explains why EUMOFA could satisfy most of the requirements of art. 42 of the CMO (market intelligence) as soon as 2014.

The most visible part of EUMOFA is the publicly accessible website which provides information of fish prices along the value chain (from the net to the plate), monthly reports including analysis and the yearly report on the EU fish market. However, EUMOFA has also a role in providing information to other Commission units to inform policy making with recent examples of information transmitted to inform Mediterranean management plans and SFPAs monitoring and negotiations. In addition, EUMOFA provides specific assistance and training to stakeholders in the Member States. The case took due consideration of these “invisible” actions for the broader public which are fully part of the observatory mechanisms.

The key consulted stakeholders included DG MARE agents in charge of EUMOFA, DG MARE agents, users of EUMOFA data and the members of the Market Advisory Council created under Annex II of the CFP Regulation. However, for the latter category, only two representatives of the private sector responded. Nevertheless, the evaluation could use the results of an extensive EUMOFA user survey carried out in 2017<sup>52</sup> shared by the Commission with the evaluation team.

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<sup>52</sup> EUMOFA – 2017. Structure Survey 1 General assessment of user’s satisfaction, 21th April 2017

### 3. EVALUATION STUDY RESULTS

The evaluation study results presented in this chapter have been elaborated based on the cross-cutting analysis and synthesis of individual findings from the Work Packages and the case studies which enriched them.

The findings are presented according to the two-layered approach to the evaluation study, as outlined in section 1.2.2. The **theme-specific results**, corresponding to the seven intervention categories (including four for the sub-categories relating to Integrated Maritime Policy) are presented first, followed by the **horizontal results**, which correspond to the five mandatory evaluation criteria.

Each of the sections consists of answers to the evaluation questions falling within a given intervention theme<sup>53</sup>, followed by concise conclusions and recommendations.

#### 3.1. Theme-specific issues

##### 3.1.1. Integrated maritime policy

###### **Have the actions contributed to a more integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs?**

Actions falling under EMFF direct management component had efficiently contributed to a more integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs in some fields, such as the enhancement of visibility of Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) or maritime intersectoral cooperation at basin-level scale. It has also supported coastguard cooperation (forum organisation) and cross-border implementation of the MSP Directive.

The annual budget allocated to support the development of integrated governance doubled between 2014 and 2016. Over the period 2014-2016, the average of associated funded actions was 12% of the part allocated to IMP within the direct management budget of EMFF. For the development and implementation of integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs and visibility of the IMP, substantial resources were programmed for the development communication: EUR 4.1 million on the assessed period (2014-2016). This budget is up to 35 % of the triannual budget. Sharing information and communicating on IMP was a pivot objective in the actions carried out within the work package WP1a "governance". For instance, the 2016-2018 study "economic benefits of MPAs" funded by direct management EMFF identified the need of good governance for multi-stakeholder participation, awareness raising and sharing knowledge and data to create more benefits from MPAs (online presentation of the results of the study by the contractor).<sup>54</sup>

One of its most significant action is the annual European Maritime Day (EMD) that provides an annual opportunity to network, discuss and forge joint action for the Europe's maritime community. The EMD is held in a different region with a different theme each year. This platform attracts Europe's growing maritime community, with industry professionals from across the EU joining policymaker to discuss, debate and exchange best practices. with the participation of high level and key-experts. Each year, European Commission reports that the EMD conference attracts more than 1,000 maritime stakeholders.

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<sup>53</sup> cf. Table 2 and Table 3 on pages 9 and 10 of this Report.

<sup>54</sup> The final report of this study is expected to be published in September 2018 and was thus not available for review by the evaluation team.

Another significant action is the Ocean Energy Forum (both a Governance and Blue Growth action). Set up in 2014, this event brings together stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of the problems faced by the Ocean Energy sector and to collectively devise workable solutions. Its Secretariat published the Ocean Energy Forum Strategic Roadmap which was formally delivered to the European Commission on 08 November 2016. It is considered as a strategic tool for EU decision-making on marine renewable energies. Built on exchanges between public and private sectors, this roadmap is a tangible outcome from improved and more integrated governance. The experience is to be replicated for marine biotechnologies.

Other funded actions, including assistance mechanisms (e.g. the Atlantic Action Plan) helped in developing good governance, for example with the provision of logistics. Assistance mechanisms are funded as projects. Between successive projects supporting the same mechanism, there is a risk of loss of dynamics such as decreased level of interest and involvement of stakeholders. Continuity in assistance mechanism supply is therefore needed between successive related contracts.

Nevertheless, the linkage between the assistance mechanism (EMFF direct management component) and a political steering group including EU and countries<sup>55</sup> was a lever to meet the goals of the Atlantic Action plan project (efficiency and effectiveness) in line with national needs and with already launched actions in particular those supported by indirect EMFF management. Also, the lessons learnt from the Atlantic Action Plan mechanism (ongoing since August 2014) should be taken into account for the assistance mechanism launched in the Black Sea (commenced in October 2017) and in the Western Mediterranean Sea Basin (to be set up in October 2018). It is acknowledged by regional organisations (UfM or 5+5) in Mediterranean Sea that the direct EMFF support was and is essential for supporting the development of governance at regional scale with stakeholders' conference as in Barcelona (2017) with panels on coastguard functions or advancement of governance in the Western Mediterranean basin.

More integrated governance is based on shared information; in this regard, communication and dissemination play an essential role, as shown by the development of Virtual Knowledge Centres (VKC) or sea basin platforms. The Virtual Knowledge Centre for the Mediterranean was developed by DG MARE and handed over to the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat in 2017. It is the principal networking platform for public and private Blue Economy stakeholders of the Mediterranean and is regularly being adapted and upgraded to match their needs as well as the objectives of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Forum on Blue Economy. No indicators such number of visits, or number of projects reported on the VKC, or number or registered users are available on the website. It should be added that continuity is needed between successive assistance contracts to avoid any disruption in service delivery.

In 2017, EMFF funded a study under direct management component (funds committed in 2016) to assess the need for strengthening scientific support in third countries to further evaluate options and policy for the EU and its MS of international oceans governance. The study demonstrated the need of performance indicators and a baseline to assess progress against the UN sustainable development goals in the partner countries, and of applying a regional approach to developing concrete capacity development.

If actions contributed to the enhancement of the governance in particular in network development and raising awareness on maritime issues, the complementarity of actions

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<sup>55</sup> The contribution of the Atlantic Action Plan mechanism to more integrated governance was real (e.g. economic stakeholders, research institutions) thanks to the set-up of a network of national hubs in charge of mobilising stakeholders for the implementation of the Plan and of supporting its Assistance Steering Group (ASG)<sup>55</sup>. Nevertheless, the Mid-term review of the Atlantic Action Plan (EC, 2018) pointed the following facts: (i) 'the action plan did not explicitly set out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in its governance and that of the Atlantic strategy', (ii) the Assistance Steering Group 'has fostered alliances among its members and steered the work of the assistance mechanism, but done little to agree on and coordinate projects of benefit to the Atlantic area as a whole, and even less to mobilise additional public or private investment in the plan.'

for the setup of marine spatial planning should be clarified not only for drafting plans (stakeholder involvement) but also for their implementation (including revision/adaptation). Regional/Sub-regional action plans are potentially powerful instruments to develop more integrated governance at these scales, and this aspect should be reinforced in the next cycles/plans.

**Are the marine knowledge activities contributing to reducing costs of offshore or coastal activities, promoting innovation and reducing uncertainty in knowledge of the sea?**

Although marine knowledge is still at an early implementation phase (half way through its seven-year planning period) projects like EMODnet are contributing largely to breaking the existing barriers across the European marine data sector. The EU Integrated Maritime Policy has defined Blue Growth as its battle horse, whose aim to foster growth and job creation around the maritime sector. In this frame, Marine Knowledge 2020 was envisioned as a cross-European hub where all marine data and knowledge come together to drive innovation across all sectors of the Blue Economy. This challenge was even accentuated by the overwhelming number of different organisations holding marine knowledge across Europe, all of them with a very different backgrounds, culture, and agendas. Hence, the EMFF support to marine knowledge has been pivotal to bring the marine knowledge sector together under a shared culture and objective that were unthinkable before.

With EUR 27.2 million committed to date, the three main projects defining the core of EMODnet (EMODnet platform, sea-basin checkpoints, and data ingestion facility) have brought together a network of more than 150 organisations to share their data products across seven thematic data portals (i.e., bathymetry, geology, seabed habitats, chemistry, biology, physics, and human activities); defined the tools and mechanisms to evaluate the quality of data provided and how these create new added value to the society, and made available a novel facility to facilitate industry and academia to share valuable data that otherwise would have been lost. To date, the development of EMODnet has been the main priority of the marine knowledge objective.

EMFF-funded projects such as EMODNet have allowed researchers and maritime governance practitioners a much understanding of the European marine environment that would have been impossible without EMFF support under direct management.

This includes:

- High resolution seabed map (a new digital terrain model with 80 metres resolution has been released recently);
- The Seabed habitats map that is widely used and represents a reference worldwide, where most of its visitors have declared their interest of using the data for research purposes (59%);

EMODnet is increasingly global: EMODnet physics provides near-real time access to physical data from platforms all over the world, being the 80% of the data request mainly from three countries> Italy, Portugal and Belgium, followed by China;

EMODnet is the only system worldwide that provides access to such a broad range of environmental data and human activities data. Most of its users come from three well identified sectors: environment (20%), energy (17%) and research (14%). The Human Activities portal represents one of the resources with greatest added value (e.g., Oil and Gas industry used to have a good knowledge of its assets at individual company level but it was lacking a wide view showing the interactions across the sector, something that has been possible only thanks to EMODnet as was highlighted by the European representatives from the International Oil and Gas Producers Association IOGP).

Without EMODnet, many resources which are now consider essential and obvious, would not exist. For example, there would be no pan-European digital seabed map nor a broad scale seabed habitat map.

EMODnet is being used by private companies (e.g., the UK Met Office is using EMODnet digital bathymetric data portal to improve the reliability of their storm surge forecasting models<sup>56</sup>; International Marine and Dredging Consultants (IMDC) are using EMODnet digital bathymetric data portal as their prime source of bathymetry data for their water related numerical models on European waters<sup>57</sup>; and PM\_TEN is using radar data from the EMODnet Physics data portal to validate their oil spill models as part of their environmental impact assessment services<sup>58</sup>) and it is reasonable to suppose that they would not do so if it were not the most appropriate source of marine data. Nevertheless, the evaluation of its direct impact on the Blue Economy is hard to quantify as we have little information on what they are using it for; however, it is worthy to remark that a separate interim evaluation of EMODnet will cover in detail its performance and impact in the 2014-2017 period.

### **Have the marine spatial planning activities helped Member States (MS) set up spatial plans?**

In terms of overall progress in moving towards meeting the deadline for having complete Maritime Spatial Plans (MSP) by 2021, there is no doubt that EMFF support under direct management to date has catalysed Member States actions, allowed the development of MSP implementation structures and frameworks, and facilitated a progress towards pilot national maritime spatial planning in certain sea bodies. Direct EMFF funding into transboundary MSP has had the added benefit of encouraging inter-sectoral discussions and their engagement with counterparts in neighbouring waters. It has also encouraged pro-active MSP engagement across maritime boundaries, building confidence in MSP at both national levels and allaying fears over political uncertainties in geo-political issues such as Brexit.

The European MSP Platform has provided an internet facility for depositing MSP project documents, best practice documents and other relevant material in a public space. Over the first year (14 June – 10 June 2017 there were 19,082 visits and 3,665 document downloads, and this increased to 50,096 visits and 12,500 downloads over 14 June 2017 and 4 June 2018<sup>59</sup>. It also proactively promoted the gathering of MSP material from across both the EU and elsewhere in order to avoid 're-inventing the wheel'. The project team also conducted sea basin level and individual MS level workshops throughout the EU, prepared policy briefs and distributed synthesis material, as well as preparing technical reports on critical MSP issues.

Although it is relatively early to evaluate the success of MSP preparedness resulting from EMFF funding, discussions with MSP practitioners suggest that the initiatives to date have been effective in increasing the capability of Competent Authorities (CAs)<sup>60</sup> to progress MSP development, especially in transboundary issues where direct EMFF funding on MSP has been focused. Transboundary issues have the potential to delay or downgrade maritime spatial planning, and thus exercises to address technical and jurisdictional harmonisation, accounting for the cumulative effects of multiple national marine development in a common sea area and ensuring an ecosystem approach (all elements demanded by the MSP Directive) are all considered useful exercises. Furthermore, transboundary or sea basin level initiatives encourage the often inward-looking CA's to engage with their littoral neighbours, leading to better working relationships and opportunities for sharing of experience and best practise.

This said, the lack of agreed indicators and progress monitoring makes this difficult to assess. Furthermore, much of the work done so far has been a part of the relatively easy

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<sup>56</sup> – <http://www.emodnet.eu/improving-storm-surge-modelling-north-sea>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.emodnet.eu/emodnet-bathymetry-data-supporting-imdc-consultants-tackling-water-related-issues>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.emodnet.eu/capitalising-emodnet-radar-data-water-dispersion-studies>

<sup>59</sup> Angela Schultz-Zehden, pers. comm., 8 June 2018

<sup>60</sup> This refers to the competent authorities in the sense of Article 1 of Directive 2014/89EU (MSP Directive) and should not be confused with the competent (management) authorities of the EMFF.

processes of framework development and methodology harmonisation, with the more challenging aspects of addressing pressing sea area use competition in contested waters yet to be tackled. It is suggested that a set of generic MSP progress milestones be developed e.g. from creation of dedicated MSP institutional structures at MS level, through to the development of robust spatial plans for all maritime waters, which could be used to indicate the progress of different MS' in reaching the MSP Directive goal by 2021. This would also allow further, more targeted EMFF (or other) support to Member States that are falling behind. Furthermore, future EMFF support under direct management to MSP should consider identifying and addressing potential implementation issues as they start to appear. However, it is accepted that the monitoring of MSP progress at Member State levels is not within the remit of the Commission, so an alternative monitoring approach needs to be considered. In order to avoid these milestones being too prescriptive, they could be provided as guidance rather than an obligation.

### **Will the maritime surveillance activities lead to an operational system for exchanging information between maritime authorities?**

The EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) and the EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) identified maritime awareness, surveillance and information sharing as a requisite foundation towards a coherent and co-ordinated approach to maritime issues, and which involved closer cross sectoral co-operation. The Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) is a voluntary collaborative process at EU and national levels seeking to further enhance and promote relevant information sharing, in particular civil-military (navy) amongst and within EU and MS maritime authorities, agencies and bodies. The value of EMFF for the CISE process can be seen foremost in that it has brought together people from different sectors which have not previously worked together helping them to identify new areas of co-operation and information exchange, particularly in respect of MS exercising responsibilities in coast guard functions. Between 2014 and 2017 EUR 9.7 million of EMFF funding was committed to cross sectoral projects, which included almost EUR 6.0 million for research and development of CISE, including projects aimed at collaborative and interoperability improvements between MS maritime authorities carrying out Coast Guard functions.

At MS level, as an example, Portugal coordinated two interoperability CISE projects<sup>61</sup> aimed at improving interoperability and information sharing of maritime surveillance data, particularly between civil and military maritime authorities, outcomes achieved included adoption of a national CISE node for sharing information on maritime surveillance, leading to:

- Increased interconnectivity between maritime surveillance information systems;
- Increased motivation for the sharing of maritime surveillance information;
- Improvement of the legal framework applicable to the sharing of maritime surveillance information;
- Improved availability of fisheries control information;
- Improved early detection of illegal activities;
- Improved search and rescue processes;
- Improved provision of information on pollution;
- Improved information on coastal and maritime risks.

Sharing of marine knowledge has effectively reduced the cost of many of Portugal's maritime activities.

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<sup>61</sup> Project 501 Yin and Project 602 Sinker

Elsewhere, other MS, notably France, have recognised that although cross sectoral initiatives whilst relying on organisation, human factors and good will, nevertheless there remains a need for data connections in a cross sectoral approach. NCC EUROSUR is a first step in this approach to collect and share data at any external border, and the white picture delivered by EMSA through IMS, is shared amongst seven administrations connected with coastguard functions. Perpetuating a CISE approach is dependent on the interoperability of its data model, making possible data exchange between systems without the need for human intervention, and thus avoiding duplication of effort and human interface.

The identified added values resulting from cross sectoral collaboration have included:

- Reductions in duplication of effort;
- The promotion of cross sectoral exchange and interoperability of the data model;
- Development of national interoperability project such as data mining and CISE.

The contribution of shared marine knowledge activities permits more effective planning and deployment of assets (sea and air). French Maritime Authorities are better placed to co-ordinate naval assets within their areas of jurisdiction, particularly for maritime surveillance and search and rescue. This is important considering that French maritime authorities dealing with coast guard functions operate 231 naval assets, 120 aerial assets and operate over several maritime areas comprising 11 million km<sup>2</sup> and 19000 km of coast line. The cost of such functions both seagoing and aerial is 300 million Euros. Direct management is considered the most effective solution as opposed to shared management, since the latter relies on the will of MS Maritime Authorities to sustain motivation beyond the life span of any project in order to build long term capacities.

Successful inter EU agency co-operation between EFCA, EBCGA and EMSA,<sup>62</sup> in accordance with their mandates, has also enhanced co-ordination of multipurpose and cross sectoral operations between MS, bringing positive benefits to those MS authorities carrying out Coast Guard functions. Existing systems have benefitted from capacity building, improved risk assessment, and interoperability. Sharing of data has also enhanced the overall awareness of the maritime situational picture at MS level, contributing to increasing effectiveness and efficiencies, in turn leading to the prevention, detection and reporting of illegal activities. Cross sectoral co-operation and data sharing, by those administrations identified as Maritime CISE User Communities,<sup>63</sup> enabled cost effective planning, as well as resulting in more cost-effective use of resources by those MS. Added value of cross sectoral initiatives can be linked to improvements in the processes of interoperability between the many MS maritime authorities involved with co-ordinated and multi-purpose operations.

The three Agencies have developed guidelines, recommendations and best practice on coast guard functions in addition to capacity building events. Added value of the collaboration and co-operation between the three Agencies in cross sectoral initiatives is highlighted by the involvement of more than 360 national maritime authorities carrying out coast guard functions within the EU.

The accrued benefits are, in turn, passed on to MS Maritime Authorities, with knowledge enhanced and the maritime situational picture awareness considerably improved. The sphere of multi-purpose operations has extended across sector borders, the enhancements positively contributing to the planning and decision-making processes, bringing improvements to the processes of interoperability between sectors.

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<sup>62</sup> COM (2014) 451 final

<sup>63</sup> COM (2009) 538 final and COM (2010) 584 final

## Have 'Blue Growth' initiatives funded by the EMFF facilitated the development of marine economic activities (MEAs) and the jobs they generate?

The process of development of marine economic activities (MEAs) and of job creation is a slow process, and it is hard to try and assess the impact of short-term projects launched in recent years. Another issue is the complexity of the links between various actions carried out by many stakeholders, some public, some private. Finally, transfer from innovation to the market can take time, depending upon the technical readiness level of the targeted projects.

Most actions carried out in the scope of EMFF direct management are mainly public-funded (Blue calls 2015 and 2016 envisage private co-financing as well) in order to pave the way to attract private investments that will support the future development of activities. These actions aim to define and share a vision of Blue Economy which is needed to raise awareness on the potentials of Blue Economy among donors and investors (such as EIB), but also private investors. The average of programmed funding supporting Blue Economy (in accordance with EMFF categories annex III) on the period is 5% of the annual programmed budget (1.7M€).

Most of 'Blue Growth' initiatives funded by EMFF fall within these three categories (1) studies to underpin knowledge and support decision, (2) assistance mechanisms to harness existing funding mechanisms (3) grants to pilot and bottom-up projects that involve stakeholders and trigger innovation.

The assessment was limited on the topics and the performance of the actions to support innovation and upgrade skills as EMFF impacts on MEAs and jobs.

**1) Studies** are a prerequisite for any development, but do not directly and quickly contribute to activities development and jobs creation. As an example, EMFF funded a study in 2015 to assess the potential of Outermost Regions for Blue Growth, and in 2016 another study on the market ocean energy<sup>64</sup> published in June 2018 that is in the continuation of the Ocean Energy Forum Strategic Roadmap formally delivered to the European Commission on 08 November 2016. The outcomes of such studies indeed support decision for new actions (e.g. grants calls), and the EMFF direct management component was instrumental to carry them out, but they have no direct short-term measurable impact on MEAs or jobs creation. Such actions seem very relevant for the objective of supporting Blue Growth and should be continued.

**2) Assistance mechanisms.** The EUR 1.2 million Atlantic Action Plan mechanism (see earlier sections for the main discussion) was the main dedicated sea basin action for the development and funding facilitation of stakeholder projects. In the case of the AAP mechanism, the set up was mainly by channelling EU funds (ERDF, H2020) to meet the priorities of the Plan. The AAP midterm review (SWD(2018) 49 final) pointed out that "*the assistance mechanism should have been used more active, in alliance with established regional networks and sectoral representation groups, especially if this focused on maritime issues in science and innovation, surveillance, ocean energy and maritime investments (as suggested by the Committee of the Regions)*" to support MEAs. The AAP midterm review also pointed that "*the Services designed to support project promoters, such as guidance and advice through the assistance mechanism, were of limited use or relevance to users, who sought funding directly rather than advice on how to get it.*" As a consequence, even if the high number of projects (about 1 200 according to the mid-term review) can be considered under the umbrella of the AAP, it is not possible to say that the assistance mechanism has brought about or triggered all of those projects. This said, it did provide a "soft framework" where projects were able to justify their eligibility for other EU funding and is highly likely to have catalysed further stakeholder-based initiatives that will have an impact in the longer term. It can be only stated that it mainly contributed in setting a "soft

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<sup>64</sup> <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e38ea9ce-74ff-11e8-9483-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-72120518>



framework” where projects were able to justify their eligibility for other EU funding. No piece of evidence of the assistance mechanism direct contribution in the setting up of projects has been found, whatever the funding mechanism.

Interviewees contacted as part of this evaluation study recognised that assistance mechanisms could be relevant tools to support projects setup with financial engineering (mainly EU financial mechanisms) to meet sea basin objectives and create added value in each sea basin. It is yet not fully the case for the Atlantic Action Plan.

EC decided to set up an Assistance mechanism using the direct management component of EMFF to support Blue Growth in Atlantic, Black Sea (2017) and West Med (2018) by promoting funding EU opportunities (EMFF calls, H2020, COSME, ERDF...) and providing support in project definition to support job creation and innovation.

EMFF<sup>65</sup> and H2020 funds have focused on the 'Blue Growth' Pillar 1 of EU Strategy in the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). Nevertheless, the majority of funding of the EUSAIR has been through the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for 2014-2020 and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) for non-EU countries. It is recommended for the future assistance mechanisms to monitor the number of projects supported based on an adequate typology related to the level of involvement of the assistance mechanism (e.g. – created – registered- supported – financed).

### 3) Grants to support pilot and bottom-up projects

On the period 2014 – 2016, several calls for proposals on **EU grants** were launched, for example the “IMP projects Med and Black Sea” action (WP 2015), the “Thematic Routes Underwater Cultural Heritage” (WP2015) and the 'Nautical Routes' action (WP2016), as the forerunners of the Blue Economy calls for grant proposals. In 2017, EU grants under EMFF to support for instance aquaculture (Invertebrate IT) and multi-use of offshore platforms (ENTROPI) were included in AAP. Both actions are being implemented<sup>66</sup> according to the work and communication plans, the technical goals and their general objectives at the end of the first implementation year (mid-term reports). However, it is too early to draw any conclusions from these recent projects.

More generally, projects funded through grants aimed at promoting knowledge-sharing or enhancing competitiveness and innovation capacities. Some projects are aimed at adapting and diversifying economic activities; these generally target specific sectors (i) to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of fishery industries, mainly by exploring new markets or technologies and (ii) to support aquaculture (including the cultivation of algae). As these actions are based on propositions from active sectors, it can be expected that they will result in activity development and jobs creation, but no indicator is available to support this hypothesis”.

The Commission also launched specific initiatives to promote and support the development of career opportunities in the Blue Economy: “blue careers in Europe” call in 2016 under WP1C (cross sectoral 82b), to fill existing skills' gaps by supporting activities that will increase the employability of various target groups in Blue Economy sectors. It is however too early to evaluate the impacts of such initiatives on MEAs development and jobs creation.

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<sup>65</sup> In the Adriatic and Ionian Sea, two projects appear to have been funded through the direct EMFF funding mechanism: a) **Fishery and aquaculture integrated management model along the Adriatic coasts** FAIMMAC (01/09/2016 – 31/08/2018). EASME/EMFF/2015/1.2.1.7 - Projects in the context of the Integrated Maritime Policy in the Black Sea and/or Mediterranean Sea regions (EU contribution EUR 138,800); and b) **Ancient Traps of the Adriatic Sea** ATAS (01/01/2017 – 30/06/2018). EASME/EMFF/2015/1.2.1.8 - Thematic Routes on Underwater Cultural Heritage (EU contribution: EUR 107,305).

<sup>66</sup> Some non-critical delivery delays were noticed, yet corrective actions are expected and seem achievable.

Subsequent Blue calls aimed for instance at promoting innovative 'laboratories' (called Blue Labs) to pilot new and viable solutions addressing selected maritime and marine challenges and opportunities in the Blue Economy.<sup>67</sup>

The level of response and programmed grants was used as a set of first indicators. These calls had a large success regarding the number of proposals but the budget programme was limited to contract all of them.

	Contracted budget	Contracted Budget /Requested Budget [%]	Number of Proposals Financed/Number of Proposals received
IMP projects Med and Black Sea	529 557€	11,8%	12%
Thematic Routes Underwater Cultural Heritage	323 452€	9%	10%
Nautical routes for Europe	1 421 983€	9,6%	9,2%
Blue careers in Europe	3 763 646€	1%	9,2%
Blue Labs	1 960 592€	9,6%	10%
Blue technology	1 912 377€	26%	23%

The lessons learnt from the first set of call are considered in the following and coming calls: stronger involvement of the private sector in funding innovation; and Supports and tools were made available to assist applicants to provide proposals answering to needs with increased accuracy: customised EU support to respond to calls (assistance mechanism), platform of exchange between investors and the private sector to respond to calls, targeted sectors and narrowed conditions to answer to calls, blue tech calls focusing on funding demonstration projects , that is close to market technology to scale up technologies and to leveraging private sector funding.

Given the very wide range of candidate sectors and the limited resources available under EMFF direct management, the following recommendations can be made from this preliminary evaluation:

- To enhance effectiveness of EMFF funding programming and type of actions, the areas of greatest added value (jobs, innovation, GVA) should be prioritised.
- This could include closer cooperation between decision-makers, funding authorities and business operators in the coastal regions, who to a large extent formulate and carry out maritime development projects and initiatives, and/or make funding decisions (including under the EU structural funds).
- Actions could be more focused towards emerging and developing activities, and on adaptation of existing ones towards more sustainability (economic, social and environmental); as this is the core of Blue Growth and future Blue Economy
- Actions could be focused on attracting private investors, which will provide the bulk of financing for the development of MEAs and jobs creation.

Most of these recommendations have been taken into account since 2017 where EC has decided to mobilize more EMFF to support Blue Economy /Blue Growth in the Black Sea (EUR 909,200 committed at the end of 2017) as well as the Western Mediterranean via WestMED (2018) to boost innovation and education, key elements for the maritime economic activities.

<sup>67</sup> This project is only one topic out of several under Blue Labs in 2016 and Blue Labs is only one of three Blue Growth calls that year (the others being Blue Skills and Blue Tech).

### **Will the actions taken help MS report the state of the marine environment as part of their obligations under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive?**

EMFF is expected to support consistency and the development of a sustainable Blue Economy in each sea basin in accordance with the Ecosystem Approach and MSFD objectives for EU MS in the marine or submarine regions (cf. MSFD areas, Art.5 of Directive 2008/56/EC) rather than environment policy implementation. The EMFF supports marine protection actions but a further, multi-funded approach is required to meet the goals which are essentially environment driven. It is more the fact when the sea basin is shared with non-EU MS. No specific EMFF actions to meet environmental cross border objectives with non-EU MS in the same marine region have been identified.

The actions and projects funded under direct management are mainly dedicated to support MSs for the implementation cycle of MSFD at national level (for example technical and administrative support for Bulgaria and Romania or Mediterranean EU Member States) as well as to share best practices between the different marine regions to move towards the good environmental status. The EMFF efficiently supported implementation of MSFD in the Black Sea (RO, BG) to meet the first step of MSFD (initial assessment of marine status) and to define the programmes of measures to reduce the impacts of MEAs in particular fisheries with adaptation of fishing techniques. The sustainability of this support is an issue for these countries.

The EMFF supported specific actions (biodiversity, marine litter, turtles, noise (QUIETMED ongoing project "Joint programme on Noise (D11) for the implementation of the Second Cycle of the MSFD in the Mediterranean Sea") and cross-cutting actions (regional monitoring programme, coordinated programmes for data and knowledge Mediterranean Sea or the development of Methodological Aspects in Relation to Good Environmental Status of the Sea). It will then help EU MS in the reduction and management of human impacts on marine ecosystem or species but also to tackle major issue (Marine Litter). It must be pointed out that no actions were supported under EMFF to reduce terrestrial pollution (following the Water Framework Directive - WFD) which are the major source of pollutions in the sea.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

Direct management EMFF actions had contributed to the development of EU Integrated Maritime Policy and at national level:

- By supporting a more integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs in some fields, such as maritime intersectoral cooperation at basin-level scale (e.g. Atlantic Action Plan), the enhancement of the relationships between stakeholders not only in EU MS but also non-EU countries and regions (e.g. Mediterranean and Black Sea), improving cooperation within developing sectors (e.g. Ocean Energy Forum) and raising awareness and interest at high level (e.g. European Maritime Days).
- By supporting the development of Blue Economy. The effectiveness of assistance mechanisms such as the Atlantic Action Plan (AAP) in connecting stakeholders needs to be underlined. Its actions helped in defining and sharing a vision of Blue Economy in sea-basins, where actions can then be launched to raise awareness on the potential of Blue Economy initiatives of donors, investors (EIB, etc.) and the private sector. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the assistance mechanism in the set-up of projects is not yet proven. Based on the lessons learnt from the AAP mechanism (governance (link to decision makers), project definition and monitoring of actions), similar mechanisms have been decided for the Western Mediterranean and Black Sea following feasibility studies funded by EMFF direct management component.
- By launching dedicated calls for innovation and education, to support the Blue Economy/ Blue Growth (maritime economic activities) on focusing funding to demonstration projects, that is close to market technology to scale up technologies and to leveraging private sector funding.

- By providing support for MSFD implementation, EMFF direct management actions are expected to support the consistency and development of a sustainable Blue Economy in each sea basin in accordance with the Ecosystem Approach and MSFD objectives for MS in the marine or submarine regions (than in environment policy implementation). Its actions were conducted in close liaison with respective sea regional convention organisations (e.g. OSPAR, HELCOM). The efficiency of those funded actions is difficult to assess as similar or complementary actions are also funded by other EU funds coordinated by other DGs (e.g. DG ENV).

The liaison between DGs was/is essential to meet the goals to recover the good environmental status of seas and oceans.

The actions launched under direct management component of EMFF are relevant, as they support coordinated actions at the level of sea-basins, cross-sectoral projects. However, they could be made more relevant by (i) making the funding strategy more visible; (ii) focusing actions on the fields where direct management is the most efficient instrument (coordination rather than sector, strategies rather than projects), (iii) better monitoring their contribution to the EMFF regulation objectives, (iv) reduce "scattering" into many actions loosely connected.

The direct management component of EMFF provides an essential support to the development of IMP within the EU and beyond, in shared sea basins. As the resources are limited, it is important to use and focus them the most efficient way, in particular:

1) To set up seamless support with successive mechanisms to avoid losing momentum and to keep the level of interest and involvement of stakeholders high (continuity, sustainability);

2) To keep a strong link between the assistance mechanism and a political steering group including EU and countries as a lever to meet the goals of the project (efficiency and effectiveness) in accordance with actions carried out at national level in the field of Blue Growth, national needs and already launched actions in particular those supported by indirect EMFF (integration of Blue Growth governance at all levels);

3) To develop initiatives to attract private investors whatever the funding mechanism (H2020, EMFF, etc.), with assistance mechanism but also to co-invest (financing Blue Growth).

4) To continue, where appropriate, supporting strategic studies related to sectors with strong potential, which may contribute to mobilise research and innovation, attract investors, create synergies and develop cooperation with and between sectors (looking forward). However, it is acknowledged that the need for such studies is limited, and the forward-looking focus should be more on identifying pilot actions that can be funded by the EMFF (such as EU funding to leverage private or national public investment).

### **Maritime Surveillance**

- Sharing of civil-military information amongst MS maritime authorities can bring enhanced benefits to effectiveness and efficiencies, including more effective use of resources;
- Enhancing the maritime situational picture with such information may be regarded as positively contributing to the reporting and detection systems applied against illegal activities;
- Successful joint operations concerning the maritime domain and the associated authorities and agencies enhance the deterrent effect of such operations at MS, EU and International levels.

### **Marine knowledge**

Marine Knowledge activities carried out so far, under the EMFF direct management support, had contributed to a significant leap forward toward understanding of the marine environment. EMFF funded projects, such as EMODnet, have played a pivotal role in developing a new transnational platform to access marine data, but overall contributed to the development of a new common culture of data sharing among the European maritime sector. Despite the great progress made to date, there are still areas that require EMFF support to fully develop, as for example the marine biological data or the full integration of the different Marine Knowledge activities under a common platform.

### **Maritime Spatial Planning**

In terms of overall progress in moving towards meeting the deadline for having complete maritime spatial plans by 2021, there is no doubt that direct EMFF support to date has catalysed Member States actions, allowed the development of MSP implementation structures and frameworks, and facilitated a progress towards pilot national maritime spatial planning in certain sea bodies. Direct EMFF funding into transboundary MSP has had the added benefit of encouraging inter-sectoral discussions and their engagement with counterparts in neighbouring waters. It has also encouraged pro-active MSP engagement across maritime boundaries, building confidence in MSP at both national levels and allaying fears over political uncertainties in geo-political issues such as Brexit.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Development and implementation of an integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs***

- Although improved in later calls, there is a need to improve the traceability of the specific objectives in EMFF-funded projects, at all stages, e.g. by improving the monitoring of these projects (indicators clearly related to policy/regulation instrument objectives, reporting from projects). The linkage with existing sea basin/regional/national objectives is essential for any project. The liaison with sea basin / regional / national governance structure is therefore essential with any assisting mechanism the role of which is not only to promote and develop projects but also to make the liaison with the governance structure (steering group) to meet the objectives of a shared vision.
- Regional/Sub-regional action plans are potentially powerful instruments to develop more integrated governance at these scales, and this aspect should be reinforced in the next cycles/plans for sea basin strategies.
- The linkage with existing sea basin/regional/national objectives is essential for any project. The liaison with sea basin/regional/national governance structure is therefore essential with any assistance mechanism; the role of which is not only to promote and develop project but also to make the liaison with the governance structure (steering group) to meet the objectives of a shared vision.

### **Marine Knowledge**

- Additional actions that use the existing data to develop new tools and information products are critical to increase visibility and the perception that the general public has on EMODnet. This would contribute to improving marine knowledge among the society and drive a change in culture towards data sharing (e.g., European Atlas of the Seas).
- In order for EMODnet to fully reach its potential to create a viable business ecosystem around the Marine Knowledge Value Chain, it will need to further expand its scope upstream towards data collection activities, i.e. supporting the

coordination and implementation of the emerging framework towards a European Ocean Observing System.

- The lack of a contractual obligation to work together and exchange resources for EMODnet and the other marine knowledge initiatives (Copernicus, data collection framework, WISE-Marine), hampers their full implementation. Now that EMODnet has acquired a certain level of maturity, it is the moment to accelerate this process.
- In order for EMODnet to better quantify its impact on the offshore and coastal activities, new tools are to be developed that would allow EMODnet to track its users and how these use the marine data (e.g. by requesting scientist using EMODnet data for scientific publications not only to reference/acknowledge EMODnet in their publications but also to link back their publications in EMODnet as an outcome of the data).

### ***Maritime Spatial Planning***

- The short-term of most MSP projects (2 years) allows highly targeted activities and the identification of long-term needs but is often insufficiently long to allow the implementation of project recommendations. Future projects in MSP should include ex-post evaluation points that allow these long-term needs to be formalised and structured. In some cases, this might include a second, follow up project, where justified. An example of a follow-up project is the Pan Baltic Scope as a follow up to Baltic Scope.
- Many of the MSP projects are transboundary in nature. They have catalysed cooperation and coordination between MSP practitioners in the riparian states. In some cases, there is a need to establish a permanent sea basin level forum to continue dialogue and information exchange after the project ends. Experience from SIMCelt suggests that direct EMFF support for MSP should better target national and sub-national MSP practitioners from all riparian nations to ensure they are fully engaged in the initiative.
- A set of generic MSP progress milestones could be developed e.g. from creation of dedicated MSP institutional structures at MS level, through to the development of robust spatial plans for all maritime waters, which could be used to indicate the progress of different MS' in reaching the MSP Directive goal by 2021. This would also allow further, more targeted EMFF (or other) support to Member States that are falling behind. In order to avoid these milestones being too prescriptive, they could be provided as guidance rather than an obligation.
- MSP is a powerful instrument to support MSFD (e.g. though control of cumulated impacts – e.g. SIMCELT); this contribution should be specifically monitored in actions related to MSP.

### ***Maritime surveillance***

- The enhanced cooperation among EFCA, EMSA and EBCGA (Frontex) following the adoption of the new mandate and the Tripartite Working Agreement has produced very positive results in terms of increased information sharing and operational coordination at EU and MS level. It is recommended that the agencies continue to explore further areas for interagency cooperation and to raise the level of cooperation with and among Member States. It is also recommended that their mandate, activities and operational work is fully taken into account for the CISE process, in order to avoid duplication and to establish an overall coherent framework for maritime information sharing.

- EMFF funding for CISE development projects has been restricted to four Member States, Finland, Spain, Portugal and Greece. These have delivered positive outcomes involving the development of information services at the national nodes for use by the respective national maritime user communities, specifically between the civil and military authorities. It is recommended that the experiences and knowledge gained be shared amongst other Member States for mutual benefit. This may be achieved through the Member States Expert Sub-Group on the Integrated Maritime Surveillance, or other specialised fora.

***Support for sustainable economic growth, employment, innovation and new technologies***

- Improve traceability of EMFF objectives in projects funded by EMFF direct management component, at all stages, e.g. by improving the monitoring of these projects (indicators clearly related to policy/regulation instrument objectives, reporting from projects).
- Support (or continue to support) strategic innovation and investment in sectors/geographic areas with strong potential for Blue Growth, which can act as catalysts for the development of innovative industries and help raise investors' interest. As done for marine renewable energies (e.g. the Ocean Energy Forum Roadmap), the level of support could be defined through strategic studies to assess the potential of development of the sector (GVA and job creation), regarding the technological readiness level (TRL), the technological gap to overcome (R&I efforts) and the availability of resources for a sustainable exploitation. This support is to pave the way for private investments.

***Promotion of the protection of the marine environment***

- Improve contribution of cross-cutting and cross-policy actions to environmental objectives.
- Ensure the availability of EMFF funding to support Member State marine strategies for the protection of the marine environment
- Introduce meaningful indicators on environmental spending
- Create and maintain at EC level a central repository or warehouse of past IMP projects, accessible through portal and search tools.

### **3.1.2. Collection, management and dissemination of scientific advice under the CFP**

The full framework of scientific advice and data collection supported under the EMFF direct management has an annual budget of around EUR 9 million, which is broadly split 50/50 between scientific advisory work (provided by ICES and STECF) and other contracts.

Unit C3 (Scientific Advice and data collection) was created in DG MARE in 2017 to establish a bridge between the science commissioned and the management, by liaising with other DG MARE units to identify and coordinate scientific advice needs. This results in an annual work plan consisting of recurring and non-recurring advice from ICES and STECF and other contracts. These other contracts may be framework contracts on certain areas, such as advice for beyond EU waters or specific projects (such as sea lice modelling in Atlantic salmon).

#### ***To what extent have the studies, pilots and scientific advice funded under direct management contributed to improving the overall effectiveness and relevance of scientific advice to policy-making?***

The provision of scientific advice is fundamental to delivery of the CFP, which commits to decision-making based on the 'best available scientific advice'. EMFF direct management support is required to ensure delivery of that advice to EU policy-makers. To be effective that advice must be consistent, comprehensive and of sufficient quality, which is best assured through EMFF direct management (rather than for example a reliance on individual MS research).

The two main delivery agents for scientific advice are ICES and STECF. For STECF, Annual Activity reports (2014-2016) that are required from JRC by DG MARE describe the activities undertaken and the outputs provided. The plenary meetings of the STECF Executive Committee (ExCom) review Expert Group outputs to see if they adequately respond to the ToRs that are agreed with DG MARE. In responding to DG MARE requests directly, including *ad hoc* requests (totalling 30 in 2015 and 45 in 2016), the STECF advice is highly relevant to policy-making. The working procedures and the participation of a wide range of MS experts help to ensure the effectiveness of the work by STECF.

The annual STECF work programme ensures that essential advice for policy-making is timely. A 2015 evaluation on financial measures states that "Although establishing clear causal links is difficult, it is likely that STECF advice was effective in influencing many areas of management decision making under the CFP. For instance, STECF advice on discards may have directly informed the preparation of Article 15 of the new CFP (the landing obligation)." (EC, 2015<sup>68</sup>) The involvement and influence of STECF has continued in the implementation of the CFP, including the landing obligation through STECF evaluation of the Landing Obligation Joint Recommendations (e.g. STECF 17-08<sup>69</sup>).

The annual reporting on key biological and economic aspects of EU fisheries provides a time-series that allows trends to be identified and monitored, which can be reflected in the advice. This makes for more effective policy-making as it is not only 'snapshots' of situations, but longer-term trends that allow better assessment of the impact of policy. An example of this is STECF's Monitoring the performance of the CFP (e.g. STECF 17-04), which is widely reviewed and cited by DG MARE.

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<sup>68</sup> EC DG MARE, 2015: Ex post evaluation on Union financial measures for the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and in the area of the Law of the Sea 2007-2013.

<sup>69</sup> Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of the landing obligation joint recommendations (STECF-17-08). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017, ISBN 978-92-79-67480-8, doi:10.2760/149272, JRC107574



There are some instances where the scientific advice provided by STECF is less effective. Two specific examples are the advice on Capacity and Fishing Opportunities<sup>70</sup> and the Mediterranean Stock Assessments<sup>71</sup>. These expert groups respectively report constraints in terms of indicators used and time available that reduce the effectiveness of the advice provided. The latest STECF report on Med and Black Sea stocks (STECF 17-15<sup>72</sup>) indicates that increased time (2 additional days) has helped, but the co-ordination between this work and that of the GFCM continue to limit the overall effectiveness of the advice provided.

The overall effectiveness of the scientific advice provided by STECF and ICES with the support of EMFF direct management funding is further improved with the availability of all final outputs online. Therefore, it is not only the policy-making of DG MARE that is better informed, but individual MS and other stakeholders can benefit from the work.

The relevance of the work undertaken by STECF is ensured through the management of meetings and outputs in line with available capacities and budgets as this requires discussion with DG MARE to determine priorities. DG MARE has recently established Unit C3 to better co-ordinate the commissioning of scientific advice by DG MARE and ensure that research requests are prioritised and duplication is minimised.

In relation to ICES, the EU is the largest of several ICES 'customers' that include coastal states such as Norway and Iceland and RFMOs. While the bulk of ICES work continues to revolve around stock assessment and advice, the format of that advice has evolved to make it more relevant to CFP objectives, e.g. in relation to MSY and by providing total catch advice with the implementation of the Landing Obligation. In so doing the advice provided can be considered to be more effective in informing fisheries managers that are tasked with delivering CFP objectives.

ICES has also developed ecosystem overviews and assessments to help inform sea basin management and marine planning involving all marine users, including through its 'Strategic Initiative on the Human Dimension' (SIHD). In 2012 an external panel reported on its review of ICES Advisory Services, which informed its future strategy and a revision of ICES processes. These developments have helped to improve both the relevance and effectiveness of the work undertaken by ICES, including improved peer review and benchmarking exercises to ensure the advice provided remains the 'best available'.

Other than ICES and STECF, EMFF funding through direct management has made an important contribution to scientific advice in fisheries management, particularly in areas beyond EU waters where EU fleets are operating (e.g. Framework for scientific advice beyond EU waters). As a major funder of research projects and programmes delivered by RFMOs, to some extent, the effectiveness and relevance of these research projects is external to the Commission. However, the monitoring and evaluation required of Commission funding has contributed to improving effectiveness and relevance of the work undertaken. EMFF funding under direct management has also provided financial support for EU scientists to participate in RFMO meetings, helping the resulting advice to be more effective.

Overall the scientific advice and data collection funded through EMFF direct management is delivered through well-established processes to ensure that advice and data are effective in informing CFP objectives. There is now improved coordination of the work commissioned to see that it responds to key needs and to prioritise work streams, along with some flexibility in the funding for *ad hoc* projects to respond to emerging needs. This dual approach in EMFF direct management helps to maintain the effectiveness and relevance of scientific advice for policy-makers.

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<sup>70</sup> Balance, <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/balance>

<sup>71</sup> <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/medbs>

<sup>72</sup> <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/1674828/STECF+17-15+-+Med+stock+assessments+2017-p2.pdf>

### ***To what extent have the studies, pilots and scientific advice funded under direct management been coherent with Horizon 2020?***

As the largest EU research programme with an average annual budget of EUR 11 billion over seven years, Horizon 2020 is extensive in its scope. The aquatic resources sub-programme aims for 'competitive and environmentally-friendly fisheries' and has similar aims for aquaculture and bio-technology; these are coherent with CFP objectives.

There is expected to be very little duplication between H2020, with a focus on innovation, and EMFF-funded science, which tends to use tried and tested scientific approaches to deliver scientific advice. For example, **STECF** may not use many Horizon 2020 outputs directly as H2020 research is focussed on innovation, while a strength of STECF is establishing a comprehensive baseline of information and building a time series to illustrate trends. The dissemination of outputs from H2020 projects to the EU scientific community would include STECF participants and so has the potential to inform STECF work, but no specific examples are identified

**ICES** is a partner in some H2020 projects, such as ClimeFish, which is exploring climate change impacts in fisheries. There are also examples of collaboration between ICES and H2020 projects to better ensure the learning from H2020 projects filters into the development of new approaches. For example, the workshop on 'Co-existence and Synergies in Marine Spatial Planning' was a collaboration between ICES and the Multi-Use in European Seas (MUSES) project<sup>73</sup>.

H2020 projects certainly use ICES and STECF outputs in their research, for example: Myfish used the data and reporting on fleet capacity and fishing opportunities; MINOUW and DISCARDLESS used the data and STECF reporting on the Landing Obligation. In this regard the two are complementary as both are necessary for the improved management of fisheries under the CFP.

There is recognition that improved synergy between Horizon 2020 and the ESIFs, including the EMFF, would be beneficial. One example of Horizon 2020's attempt to generate synergies with the ESIFs is the Seal of Excellence (SoE), a quality label awarded to proposals that can then be used to approach alternative available funding sources such as ESIFs (JIIP, 2017)<sup>74</sup>. There may still be barriers to ESIFs accepting SoE proposals and it is acknowledged by most stakeholders that developing synergies with ESIFs is in its infancy. Ongoing efforts to develop more synergies between H2020 and the ESIFs should see coherence being explicitly considered in the future.

Overall, without evidence of explicit consideration of EMFF direct management and H2020 synergies, coherence between the two funding programmes is evident as they both support the delivery of Europe 2020 objectives and each contribute to development and use of scientific knowledge.

### ***How have data collection related actions strengthened regional cooperation?***

The EMFF direct management component has made a significant contribution to regional co-operation within and beyond EU waters. One key provider of scientific advice through EMFF direct management, ICES, plays a major role in regional data collection. ICES strengthens regional cooperation by bringing together scientists across the NE Atlantic both through both the Regional Co-ordination Meetings/Groups (explicitly tasked with regional co-ordination and co-operation) and through its assessment and advice procedures. ICES

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/WKCSMP.aspx>

<sup>74</sup> JIIP, 2017 Synergies between Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation and European Structural and Investment Funds. Contributing to the Interim Evaluation of Horizon 2020 Final Report.

also has a lead role in the Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance Coordination and Support Action (AORAC-SA), supporting the transatlantic research cooperation agreement signed by the European Union, the United States, and Canada in the Galway Statement.” (ICES, 2017<sup>75</sup>) This regional co-operation initiative includes seabed mapping and an ecosystem approach to ocean health and stressors. The initiative therefore contributes to a wider regional understanding of marine environmental issues, which reflects the work of ICES beyond just fisheries assessment and advice (e.g. the ICES expert groups on ecosystem observation & processes and the Human activities, pressures and impacts Steering Group).

The Case study on the STECF (included in the Annexes to this report – a separate document) illustrates its important role in regional cooperation within the EU. The structure of the STECF (bringing together experts from throughout the EU) along with its work to combine and report MS data at a regional scale informs regional management have undoubtedly contributed to regional cooperation.

In parallel with the development of MS data collection under the DCF to inform STECF work, EMFF direct management has supported the ongoing strengthening of regional cooperation in data collection. This included the Regional Co-ordination Meetings (RCM) to ensure consistency and harmonisation on formats, categorisations and stratification. The plan under the current funding programme (2014-2020) is to identify additional areas for MS data collection bodies to work together.

One area of where duplication has occurred on occasion (which leads to confusion and undermines the robustness of the resulting management) is in the scientific advice Mediterranean. The EU has requested STECF to assess and advise on Mediterranean stocks as well as funding RFMO-led activities in this area. This has some overlap with and divergence from the assessment and advice produced through the RFMO, the General Fisheries Council of the Mediterranean (GFCM).

There were also two specific EMFF calls for proposals “Strengthening regional cooperation in the area of fisheries data collection” in 2014 and 2017 with the latest having a EUR 2 million budget to assist regional collection of biological data or EU-wide collection of socio-economic data. The calls were open to consortia from various scientific or research bodies (academic or public authorities) covering several MS.

## CONCLUSIONS

The factors contributing to the effectiveness of EMFF support to ICES and STECF advice include:

- Well-established arrangements that include perennial and *ad hoc* requests;
- Independence of the providers from DG MARE and the MS;
- Robust internal peer review procedures; and
- Wide dissemination of results with all outputs available online.

Some constraints to STECF delivery of scientific advice include:

- The budget programming is adequate for agreed deliverables, but inevitably limit STECF’s ability to respond to *ad hoc* requests, which vary in terms of both the number and complexity of requests.

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<sup>75</sup> ICES, 2017 ICES Annual Report 2016.  
<http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/ICES%20Annual%20Report/Annual%20Report%202016.pdf>

- Difficulty in applying scientific, objective approaches to advise on subjectively worded policy (e.g. “high survival”, “very difficult to achieve” or “disproportionate costs” in relation to the Landing Obligation).
- Timing constraints and consistency with GFCM assessment activities for advice on Mediterranean stocks.

The monitoring, evaluation and dissemination that is required of research supported by EU funding has contributed to improving the effectiveness and relevance of the scientific advice beyond EU waters that is provided under a framework contract.

There is some coherence between the EMFF-supported scientific advice and Horizon 2020 projects as both support Europe 2020 objectives, but better coherence between H2020 and ESIFs is now explicitly being considered and should improve further.

The EMFF direct management component has made a significant contribution to regional co-operation within and beyond EU waters. ICES and STECF bring together scientists from throughout the EU and contribute to improved data collection under the DCF.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Improve the co-ordination between STECF work on Mediterranean and Black Sea stocks and GFCM activities through joint work planning and potentially joint commissioning to avoid assessment duplication and ensure greater acceptance of resulting advice.

### 3.1.3. Specific control and enforcement measures under the CFP

The CFP<sup>76</sup> objectives are to ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term and are managed in a way that is consistent to achieve economic, social and employment benefits. Its success depends very much on the implementation of an effective control and enforcement system to ensure uniform application of rules by Member States. The measures establishing a Union fisheries control system for ensuring compliance with rules of the CFP are provided for in the Regulation establishing a control system<sup>77</sup> (the Control Regulation), in the Regulation establishing a European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)<sup>78</sup>, and in the Regulation establishing a system to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU Regulation)<sup>79</sup>. They are complemented by the Regulation on the sustainable management of the external fleet (SMEF)<sup>80</sup>. The main objective of the Union control system is to ensure uniform application of CFP rules by Member States.

#### ***Which measures are most /least frequently implemented and why?***

The measure which are the most frequently implemented under EMFF article 87 include the **development of IT services and supplies supporting the development of harmonised standards and messaging systems for exchange of fisheries data** (VMS, ERS, catches, landings, fleet, fishing authorisations). The main reason is that the Union control system promotes electronic recording and exchange of real-time data to develop effective and efficient control resources. In order to ensure full interoperability of Member States systems for data exchange, a common messaging system utilising harmonised standards was obviously needed and it was somewhat logical that the Commission could take a central role in its development instead of Member States or other third parties. The messaging system known as FLUX based on international standards (UN/CEFACT P1000 based on FLUX standards) is now operational and its utilisation by Member States is now mandatory since the adoption of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1962 concerning exchanges of information included in article 111 of the control regulation (*inter alia* VMS, logbook information, landing declaration, sales notes) and in article 116 of the same regulation (*inter alia* fishing licences and fishing authorisations), as well as in article 33 of the control regulation (uptake of catch and effort quota). Utilisation of FLUX transportation layer is also mandated for exchange of data on fishing fleet through Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/218.

Development of IT services and supplies supporting the development of harmonised standards and messaging systems for exchange of fisheries data in support of control and enforcement entail considerable effort by the Commission for software preparation and maintenance. Initial Commission's commitments for releases of IT tools could not be delivered. According to the DG MARE data, the development of FLUX standards, tools and transportation layer mobilise considerable human and financial resources.

Other measures frequently used under EMFF article 83 include **funding of inspection missions by Commission's agents to verify the implementation of the CFP by Member States and to verify the level of cooperation of third countries in the fight against IUU fishing**. The need for inspections will remain and similar budget commitments will be needed over the second part of the EMFF programming period (≈ EUR 700 000 per year). The same reasoning applies to resources used for funding of the meetings of the control expert group over the next few years as these meetings are an essential platform of exchanges between the Commission and the Member States to

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<sup>76</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy, OJ L 354 28.12.2013 p.22.

<sup>77</sup> Council Regulation N° 1224/2009, OJ L 343, 22.12.2009 p.1

<sup>78</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 768/2005, OJ L 128, 21.5.2005, p.1.

<sup>79</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008, OJ L 268, 29.10.2005, p.1.

<sup>80</sup> Regulation (EU) 2017/2403 of the European Parliament and of the Council. OJ L 347 28.12.2017 p. 81

coordinate actions and develop a common understanding in relation to control and enforcement ( $\approx$  EUR 350 000 per year).

The least implemented measures concern joint chartering and/or purchase of control means (not used at all) under article 87.2 a) and implementation of transnational projects subject to article 87.3. The reasons for not implementing joint chartering and/or purchase of patrol vessels are discussed extensively under the next evaluation question. Concerning transnational projects, some Member States consulted indicated that EFCA is already providing a lot of support to Member States for strengthening and harmonising controls. Other Member States reported that legal systems being fairly different, transnational projects that suit all are potentially very difficult. Lack of resources available to engage in translational projects has also been raised by Member States but also by DG MARE (insufficient staff in the unit in charge). Since no specific budget has been programmed for transnational projects, the question of maintaining a financial envelope is not relevant.

***Why is there a reluctance from MS to apply for joint chartering and/or purchase of control means? Should this measure be abandoned? If not, under which conditions that measure would be relevant in the next programming period?***

According to DG MARE, the joint chartering and/or purchase of control means has been proposed by the Commission during preparation of the EMFF. The European Parliament requested an increase of the initial budget proposed during trilogue discussions.

Despite efforts deployed by DG MARE to promote this funding opportunity, the joint chartering and/or purchase of control means has not been utilised. According to Member States consulted, the measure is not relevant for **several reasons**:

- Control means are **sufficient and adequately adapted** to the maritime environment Member States are required to control.
- There is a general **lack of human resources for manning own patrol vessels**. Manning additional chartered vessels adequately without impacts on manning own vessels would not be possible
- Joint charter involving two or more Member States may underpin specific **administrative rules that prevent flexible deployment**. In the case of joint purchase, there would be a legal uncertainty
- There is **uncertainty over availability over time of national budgets to cover expenses not covered by EC for joint chartering/purchasing**. Covering additional costs or MS co-financed parts from national budgets could be an issue due to national contract procedures. Spain explains its withdrawal from the joint chartering operation approved in 2015 on these grounds.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- In view of past experience and of Member States explanations, any uptake of the joint chartering and/or purchase of control means measure appears highly unlikely over the second part of the EMFF programming period.
- The measure has de facto been abandoned by DG MARE which withdrew the measures from its EMFF article 87 funding programmes as from 2017.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- DG MARE may consider launching an expression of interest for projects falling under article 87.3 of the EMFF Regulation concerning implementation of transnational control projects in the Member States
- In view of the problems encountered by the Commission to finalise and implement the IT tools envisaged in the EU legislation, an increase of the relevant financial envelope should be considered. However, budget availability may not be the only factor hindering progresses and the Commission should make a detailed assessment of the problems in relation to IT development.
- The Commission may assess the opportunity to have the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) eligible to manage EMFF direct management funding in view of its mandate and its possible involvement in data exchange and transnational cooperation.

### 3.1.4. Voluntary contributions to international organisations

***Are the partnership agreements in line with the objective of the CFP? Do the contributions help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the international organisations?***

Fisheries international organisations are formed by countries with fishing interests in an area for joint management of relevant fish stocks according to the principles set out by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Some of them manage all the fish stocks found in a specific area, while others focus on highly-migratory species, notably tuna, throughout vast geographical areas.

As highlighted by the External Dimension of the CFP Commission Communication<sup>81</sup>, RFMOs are the key for a for the conservation and management of shared and migratory stocks. Under UNCLOS, as well as under the UN Fish Stock Agreement, the EU has committed itself to participate in the work of the various international organisations provided it has a real interest in the fisheries managed by these organisations as flag state, coastal state or market state. The Communication follows on an earlier RFMO communication<sup>82</sup> in which the Commission promoted increased participation in RFMOs for framing measures for the conservation and management of stocks, promoting EU interests and ensure coherence amongst RFMOs and with the CFP.

These principles have been enshrined in Article 28 and Article 29 of the CFP adopted at the end of 2013 with specific orientations on the need to base positions on best available scientific advice, on an EU leading role in the process of strengthening the performance of RFMOs so as to better enable them to conserve and manage resources under their management mandate and to enable them to fight IUU fishing. These principles should underpin all EU actions with international organisations. Strengthened and well-functioning international organisations benefit EU interests, but also the interests of ACP developing countries for which sustainable fisheries are pivotal for their development (small islands developing States in particular).

Under EMFF article 88, voluntary support to international organisations may include:

- Financial contributions provided to United Nations organisations (i.e. FAO) active in the field of the Law of the Sea
- Financial contributions to preparations for new international organisations
- Financial contribution to work or programme carried out by international organisations and which are of special interest to the Union
- Financial contributions to any activity which upholds the interests of the EU and strengthen cooperation with its partners in the third countries.

The table overleaf shows the amounts programmed, committed and paid under EMFF article 88 voluntary contributions to international organisations. It can be noted that the amounts programmed more than doubled between 2014 and 2018. Voluntary contributions to IO's are substantially higher than EU compulsory contributions (i.e. IOs membership fees) that are in the region of EUR 5.4 million per year.

Voluntary contributions to international organisations are allocated to beneficiary institutions through specific action grants with a maximum level of 80% co-financing. Action grants are programmed to respond to needs identified by international organisations that cannot be funded with their core budgets to support actions which are of interest for the EU.

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<sup>81</sup> COM (2011) 424 final of 13.07.2011

<sup>82</sup> COM (1999) 613 final of 8.12.1999



**Table 6: Amounts programmed, committed and paid under EMFF article 88 "voluntary contributions to international organisations"**

(EUR)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<i>Programmed</i>	6 137 369	7 977 720	10 675 000	12 670 000	12 292 000
<i>Committed</i>	6 053 998	7 691 350	10 650 211	7 891 521	
<i>Paid</i>	5 305 279	6 959 004	8 116 579	1 588 067	

Source: DG MARE. Note: situation early 2018.

Depending on the needs, the EU can mobilise other sources of funding to support international organisations, including research funds, the European Development Funds and sectoral support envelopes under Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) concluded with third countries.

The following table lists the main international organisations to which the EU is a contracting party, with identification of EU interest as coastal state and/or as flag state. Additionally, it should be mentioned that the EU has an interest as market state in all organisations listed, being one of the main global market outlet for fisheries products with the USA and Japan. As a market state, the main interest of the EU is to ensure that all products placed on the market have been caught in compliance with applicable rules and this underpinned adoption of the IUU Regulation.

**Table 7: International organisations to which the EU is party or cooperating party with identification of interest as flag State and/or coastal State**

Name	Area of competence	Flag State	Coastal State
<b>Tuna RFMOs</b>			
ICCAT	Atlantic Ocean	X	X
IOTC*	Indian Ocean	X	X
CCSBT	Southern hemisphere	X	
IATTC	Eastern Pacific	X	
AIDCP	Eastern Pacific		
WCPFC	Western Central Pacific	X	
<b>Non-tuna RFMOs</b>			
NEAFC	North-East Atlantic	X	
NAFO	North-West Atlantic	X	
NASCO	North-East Atlantic	X	
SEAFO	South-East Atlantic	X	
SIOFA	High Seas Southern Indian Ocean	X	
SPRFMO	South Pacific	X	
CCAMLR	Antarctic	X	
GFCM*	Mediterranean and Black Sea	X	X
NPFC***	North Pacific	X	
<b>Advisory only RFBs</b>			
WECAF**	Western Central Atlantic	X	X
CECAF**	Eastern Central Atlantic	X	X
<b>Other</b>			
FAO	Global	X	X

Note: \* established under Article XIV of FAO constitution  
 \*\* established under Article VI of FAO constitution  
 \*\*\* Accession considered

Grants supported different types of actions.

- **Research:** grants provided funding for the implementation of research programmes. Since 2014, EMFF supported research on major species managed by the international organisations such as bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean and yellowfin and bigeye in the different oceans. The main objective of these

interventions is to contribute to the improvement of scientific advice on which management decisions should be based according the principles of good governance enshrined in the CFP (recital 14) and recalled in CFP article 29.4 on Union activities in international fisheries organisations.

- **Functioning:** grants covered different types of support to the functioning of international organisations including i) preparation and organisation of statutory or extraordinary meetings, intersessional meetings and workshops, ii) funding of performance reviews of international organisations and of interventions aiming at strengthening the legal framework of international organisations. The main objectives of these interventions are to strengthen the performance of the international organisations so as to better enable them to conserve and manage fish resources under their mandates according to CFP article 29.2.
- **Enforcement:** grants provided funding for developing control mechanisms and to assist developing countries to better comply with international organisations rules concerning submission of data and monitoring of fishing vessels under their responsibility. The main objective of these intervention is to contribute to increased compliance with international organisation rules for the benefit of their performances.
- **Development funds:** a central preoccupation of international organisations is to take into account the needs of developing States with regards to capacity building. To this end, specific development funds have been set up by international organisations to assist developing States through payments of expenditures for meeting attendance and through mobilisation of technical assistance. The development funds are managed by international organisations. As a developed entity, EU contributes with other developed States (e.g. USA, Japan, Taiwan etc.) to development funds. An increased participation of developing States in the work of international organisations contribute to their strengthening by improving data collection and by ensuring involvement of all parties concerned in the decision-making process. Increased participation underpins better adherence to international organisations rules and better compliance.

According to IO's scientific committee reports available from IOs websites, EMFF supported research programmes contributed to the improvement of scientific advices. Notable examples included the FAO-implemented projects (Adriamed, CopeMed, MedSudMed, and EastMed) which served to harmonise many data collection activities and improved engagement of relevant Mediterranean countries in regional data collection activities , and the ICCAT-implemented Atlantic-wide bluefin tuna research programme (GBYP) with improved data collection and science contributing to improvement management decision-making which can be assumed to have contributed to the spectacular recovery of the stocks over the last three years. The mid-term review of the GBYP, for example, concluded that the project has "produced an impressive increase in scientific investigations into Atlantic bluefin tuna delivering much of the background scientific evidence crucial to conducting and improving stock assessments and ultimately management advice" (ICCAT, 2015). In the NAFO area, the Nereida project which started in 2009 provided important information on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) in the NAFO regulatory area which underpinned adoption of protection measures. The success of the initial research programme supported its extension to increase its coverage to other yet unexplored areas where VMEs may be present.

However, the objectives as stated in evaluations and progress reports of research projects are not always measurable through objective, verifiable indicators, and a number of funded projects (e.g. some of the FAO-implemented projects in the Mediterranean) were not subject to independent review. This was mainly due to their budgets falling under the thresholds required by beneficiaries for evaluation, making it hard for third parties to monitor on an on-going basis the effectiveness of these projects apart from progress reports drafted by the project-implementers themselves.

Other research programmes funded through EMFF are ongoing and their results will be available only be the end of the EMFF programming period. This includes for example a

research programme on population structure of IOTC species using modern technology (DNA sequencing and otolith micro-chemistry) which will give important information on the structure of stocks of tuna species in the Indian Ocean with possible impacts on the definition of management units for the different species (at present, Indian Ocean tuna species are considered as forming a unique stock).

The EMFF also supported independent external review of the performances of some RFMOs (i.e. CCAMLR, IATTC, ICCAT) which are important to support enhancement of the performances of the IOs. It also supported structural changes of some IOs through discussions or interventions aiming at changing / modernising the IOs funding conventions. As an example, the EMFF funding of General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) task force supported the strengthening of GFCM mandate along the lines proposed by the 2011 performance review with inter alia clearer overall objective of biological, social, economic and environmental sustainability of living marine resources, provisions for the establishment of measures/sanctions to address non-compliance by Members/non-Members and establishment of a dispute settlement mechanism between Contracting Parties. The amended GFCM convention was approved by the end of 2014. According to FAO (2016), the adaptation of GFCM has been effective with GFCM now considered as a modern RFMO with the capability and expertise to take appropriate decisions based on the best available scientific advice and ensure their implementation. The modernisation of GFCM convention is an ongoing process. Further adaptations are being considered under the stewardship of the GFCM task force supported by EMFF, in particular in relation to the IOs mandate in relation to aquaculture. For other international organisations, EMFF supports evaluations to strengthen the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) and Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) mandates, two FAO organisations that need considerable strengthening according to the conclusions of their respective performance reviews (2011 for CECAF and 2013 for WECAFC). For these two FAO organisations, substantial reforms will materialise only in the medium term making it impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of current EMFF support.

## CONCLUSIONS

- EU voluntary contributions are in line with the objectives of the CFP. With other EU sources of funding, EMFF article 88 contributions provide financial resources to the EU to actively support and contribute to the activities of international organisations (CFP article 29.1). With 62% of EMFF funding invested in research, EMFF contributions contribute to improve available scientific advice that underpin preparation and adoption of relevant conservation and management measures (CFP article 29.2). EMFF support to IOs performance reviews and modernisation of their legal basis contribute to strengthen the performances of IOs so as to better enable them to conserve and manage fish stocks under their purview (CFP article 29.2) while contributing to improved consistency between the respective regulatory frameworks. Considering this, EU voluntary contributions help to improve the effectiveness of international organisations in managing and conserving fish stocks.
- Improving the efficiency of the international organisations was not a main focus for EU voluntary contributions since this is mostly addressed through IO's internal arrangements based on IOs own internal procedures. However, the programming of EU grants under EMFF article 88 covering different possible types of intervention (ex. the 2016 EU grant to IOTC to support the IOTC scientific committee program of work with EUR 600 000 funding) minimises transaction costs for both sides, and therefore contributes to improve the IOs efficiency.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The Commission should continue to provide voluntary support to International Organisations based on its interests as coastal state, flag state and market state, taking into account specific needs arising from the CFP commitment to maintain and restore above the levels that can produce the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY).
- The Commission should continue work with FAO to improve the functioning of the regional fisheries organisations created under Article VI of the FAO Constitution of interest for the Union (e.g. Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAF), or Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC)), in particular to decrease the dependence of these organisations on EU funding.
- As far as possible, the Commission should negotiate grant agreements with IOs covering different actions to minimise transactions costs for both sides. This implies that IOs should be encouraged to establish clear multiannual work plans highlighting needs for extra-budgetary funding.

### 3.1.5. Advisory Councils

The Advisory Councils (ACs) are stakeholder-led organisations that provide the Commission and the Member States with recommendations on fisheries management matters. Increased regionalization is a key priority in the reformed CFP.

In addition to the seven existing Advisory Councils, the new CFP (1380/2013) proposed the creation of four new Advisory Councils for the Black Sea, Aquaculture, Markets and Outermost Regions. The Black Sea, Aquaculture and Markets have recently been established and the Outermost Regions is still to be set up.

The funding for Advisory Councils is based on a set, equal budget per AC. In 2016 the annual budget per AC increased by 20% from EUR 250,000 to EUR 300,000. The budget is irrespective of membership size, translation demands or travel requirements. The Commission contributes 90% of the budget and ACs are expected to show the remaining 10% is received from its members and/or Member States associated with the AC.

The ACs are established with a mandatory 60/40 membership of fishing industry/other interest groups (OIGs). OIGs may comprise of NGOs (environmental or labour-related), recreational fishers and 'women in fishing' groups. A regulation in 2015 (242) gives the detailed rules on how ACs should function. This regulation was amended in 2017 (1575) to clarify the election of members in order to maintain the 60/40 representation between industry and OIGs.

***Have the Advisory Councils been able to provide recommendations on fisheries management matters, including advice on conservation and socio-economic aspects of fisheries, and simplification of rules?***

The key strength of the ACs is for the Commission to hear (where possible) a unified voice, which is extremely valuable in refining fisheries management measures. AC industry members (accounting for 60% of membership) are often achieving consensus with what can be competing commercial fishing interests and the members now recognise that the advice should be based on evidence rather than opinion. However, some OIG members consider ACs to be industry groups in which OIGs participate to keep the industry in check and provide a veneer of multi-stakeholder participation: the 60% industry majority means that the industry view inevitably dominates.

AC advice has mainly responded to fisheries management proposals that are proposed by the Commission or Member State groups for comment. Proposals have also been proactively developed by the AC themselves, which is less common than the responsive recommendations, but are generally much appreciated by the Commission (e.g. sole VIIId management proposals by the NWWAC).

It is also felt by some consultees that the ACs may too often point to the problems of implementation rather than work together constructively as a group to find solutions. The Choke Mitigation Tool is cited by members of both groups in several ACs as a constructive output achieved by the NWWAC.

OIG members feel that wider marine ecosystem issues should be given more consideration and environmental NGOs appreciate the efforts of the North Sea AC in this regard with the establishment of an Ecosystem Focus Group. The Baltic AC has recently followed suit with establishment of an ecosystem-based management group.

ACs tend to comment indirectly on the socio-economic impacts of certain measures such as the Landing Obligation. There is little comment on economic matters and advice on market matters are now devolved to the Market AC. This is considered by members to be a welcome development as the AC workload is high without the addition of market issues and many members feel they do not have the knowledge to provide an adequate response.

There is no evidence of ACs providing advice that directly results in the simplification of rules. However, AC advice is provided on proposed measures that have the overall intent

of simplification (e.g. Technical Conservation Measures and the EU Fisheries Control System) and the first-hand experience of some members in fishing has helped to identify where rules are causing problems and/or proposals may not be workable.

The integration of environmental objectives within the CFP, makes their consideration a requirement of effective implementation of the CFP and this is helped by the requirement for 40% OIGs. However, the '40% rule' has also perpetuated a binary 'them and us' culture that many ACs struggle to overcome. This can result in tension, a lack of trust and advice that can be either general (as general text is what all parties can agree on), or advice that reports two divergent viewpoints, which is less valuable as it could be more readily ignored by decision-makers.

The Pelagic AC is notable in its ability to achieve consensus, which is in part due to the agreed focus of the AC being on multi-annual plans for pelagic stocks, which both industry and OIGs support in principle and are therefore generally able to agree measures within these.

The secretariats spend considerable time and effort trying to keep all parties participating constructively in a process that some can feel is either excessively onerous in trying to appease the few or ultimately unfair in just reporting the majority view. In general, the (recently increased) budget is considered sufficient for the tasks of the ACs, but some would appreciate increased flexibility to carry over underspend or access additional funds to support scientific work.

There is concern from some OIG members that the broad range of organisations within the OIG categorisation means that consensus within the OIGs is less likely and some organisations could be considered to be closely aligned with catching sector interests. It can be difficult to adequately define certain groups as either sector or other, and to ensure the AC is consistent with the need for small-scale fleet representation. Many industry umbrella organisations will include small scale fishing interests within their membership, making it difficult to determine whether SSF are adequately represented or whether additional specific SSF representation is necessary.

Requiring representation from three or more groupings would remove the polarisation of viewpoints into 'industry' and 'others' and may better reflect the diversity in the commercial industry as well as within the OIGs. There may also be procedural methods to help the ACs to engage more freely and constructively on issues based on the evidence rather than assuming how the representative's membership would want them to respond.

Overall the chairs are reported to work well in ensuring all member voices are heard, but they are invariably industry representatives and independence would minimise the likelihood or perception of bias. It can be very difficult for ACs to appoint a new chair by consensus as required.

The secretariats are sensitive to potential bias and apply a lot of resources to maintain dialogue within the AC membership. Their considerable efforts could be further aided with training in facilitation techniques and sharing best practice examples. Addressing the membership categories and the procedures of the ACs could make the secretariats work a lot more straightforward.

Suggestions made by AC members to improve the functioning of ACs include:

- Alternatives to the binary definition of membership;
- Independent chairs to better ensure unbiased approaches;
- Provide Best practice examples in AC tasks;
- Secretariats trained in facilitation & conciliation to help groups work towards consensus;
- More active participation by COM in meetings to inform discussions; and
- Clear, agreed voting and drafting procedures for all AC groups at every level.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Most ACs are generally able to provide recommendations on fisheries management measures to both the Commission and the Member States.
- A number of ACs find it very difficult to produce advice that both fishing and other interest groups can give sign-off to.
- The recently established ACs more frequently fail to respond in time or at all, perhaps as procedures are less bedded-in and members are less aware of expected inputs outside of meetings.
- The more sub-sector specific ACs (Pelagic, Long Distance, Market and Aquaculture) would not be expected to respond to all issues in comparison to the sea-basin ACs.
- The Member States give a short time frame for ACs to engage and rarely respond to AC recommendations, which leads to ACs perceiving their input is less relevant to MS than to the Commission.
- Some management proposals were proactively developed by the ACs and these have generally been welcomed by the Commission.
- The budget is generally sufficient for the tasks expected of ACs, but some would like increased flexibility and access to commission scientific studies.
- The 60/40 industry/OIG membership requirement can perpetuate a polarised environment that is not conducive to finding consensus.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The UK leaving the EU has prompted some ACs to debate the future structure and role of ACs. It is therefore timely to consult more widely on these aspects and the suggested changes to ACs proposed above.

It is recommended that DG MARE undertakes a full consultation of AC members and other stakeholders (not only the ACs themselves) to consider:

- The definition/categorisation of AC members to improve representativeness and reduce conflict;
- Guidance & training for secretariats (in administration, voting, drafting responses and arbitration procedures);
- Participation and role of the Commission in ACs

Recognising the sensitivities to AC consultation, this could be through an Open Public Consultation (OPC).

### 3.1.6. Market intelligence

#### ***To what extent has EUMOFA delivered on the Commission commitments on market intelligence as defined in art. 42 of the CMO regulation (1379/2013)?***

The answer to this evaluation question is presented in a tabular format below, where CMO article 42 commitments are compared with EUMOFA achievements to date.

<b>CMO article 42 commitments</b>	<b>Status (as of early 2018)</b>
<p>Art.42.1 a) <i>gathering and disseminate economic knowledge and understanding of the Union market for fisheries and aquaculture products along the supply chain</i></p>	<p><b>DELIVERED</b> EUMOFA publications disseminate knowledge and understanding of the Union market through monthly highlights and the yearly publication on the EU market.</p>
<p>Art.42.1 b) <i>providing practical support to producer organisations and inter-branch organisations to better coordinate information between operators and processors</i></p>	<p><b>PARTIALLY CONTRIBUTED</b> Price information and market analysis published by EUMOFA can be considered as of interest to producer organisations (POs). EUMOFA is not the relevant information system to deliver targeted support to be provided to POs as per CMO article 42.1 b) as it is designed to address the needs of a wide range of stakeholders with a single tool.</p>
<p>Art.42.1 c) <i>regularly survey prices along the supply chain and conduct analysis on market trends</i></p>	<p><b>DELIVERED</b> EUMOFA database provide price information regularly updated. Analysis of market trends is provided in monthly highlights and yearly publication. EUMOFA cannot encompass all the supply chain due to the sensitive nature of information at processing stage. This is compensated for by regular publication of case studies on price transmission.</p>
<p>Art.42.1 d) <i>conducting ad-hoc market studies and provide a methodology for price formation surveys</i></p>	<p><b>DELIVERED</b> Ad-hoc market studies are published in Monthly Highlights series. A methodology for price formation surveys has been defined and published on EUMOFA website</p>
<p>Art.42.2 a) <i>facilitate access to available data on fishery and aquaculture products collected pursuant to Union law</i></p>	<p><b>DELIVERED</b> Through EUMOFA, the Commission could concentrate available data on fisheries and aquaculture and add value to the process through harmonisation and standardisation of information. Sensitive commercial information (prices at processing stage) is protected.</p>
<p>Art.42.2 b) <i>make market information, such as price surveys, market analyses and studies, available to all the stakeholders and to the general public in an accessible and understandable manner</i></p>	<p><b>DELIVERED</b> All EUMOFA information is published on a dedicated website open to the general public. Accessibility is improved by publication of the database in all EU language and by translation of publications into several EU languages.</p>

As evidenced by the table, EUMOFA could deliver most of the commitments on market intelligence as defined in article 42 of the CMO regulation. No specific action has been implemented so far to provide the practical support POs or inter-branch organisations as considered by CMO article 42.1 b), but EUMOFA was not the only relevant action in this respect.



DG MARE is fully aware of this and required EUMOFA to launch in 2018 a survey to better identify producer organisations' needs with regards to information coordination and see to what extent EUMOFA can address them and how EUMOFA could be adapted to better meet these needs. EUMOFA is not the only action of DG MARE which contributes to achieving the objective of CMO article 42.1 b). Therefore, to complement the role of EUMOFA in this regards, among the actions considered, the Commission promoted the exchange of good practices for the preparation and implementation of the Production and Marketing Plans called for by CMO article 28 in collaboration with the MAC (Market Advisory Council). Relevant good practices have been identified by an evaluation of PMPs completed in 2016. In 2018, DG MARE will also carry-out a pilot project aiming at supporting the creation of transnational professional organisations (producer organisations, associations thereof and inter-branch organisations).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- As of early 2018, EUMOFA delivered all of its commitments under Article 42 of the CMO with the exception of Art.42.1 b) which has been delivered only partially.
- Through streamlining and harmonisation of data on market for fisheries and aquaculture products and though detailed analysis of market situations and trends, EUMOFA contributes to deliver most of the EU commitments as regards market transparency.
- According to users, EUMOFA is effective in delivering information on the markets for fisheries and aquaculture products. EUMOFA also compares favourably with other Commission-led observatory in terms of accessibility and of content. EUMOFA users include a large range of stakeholders in public administrations and in the private sector. Satisfying the needs of all stakeholders as appropriate will be one of the main challenge ahead for EUMOFA over the second part of the EMFF programming period.
- A key influencing factor influencing the achievements of EUMOFA as from the date of application of the EMFF Regulation was its earlier developments as a preparatory action beginning in 2010. During the EUMOFA pilot phase, data sources could be identified and streamlined, harmonisation procedures defined, needs for market analysis defined and substantial work for IT development implemented to have an operational dedicated website. The preparatory action also provided an assessment of the necessary financial resources.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Commission should develop initiatives to deliver CMO article 42.1 b) commitment in relation to provision of practical support to producer organisations and inter-branch organisations, possibly aside of EUMOFA.

The Commission should continue to provide equivalent financial support to EUMOFA to maintain and increase the quality and the flexibility of services for both stakeholders in the Members States and Union institutions in charge of policy-making.

### 3.1.7. Technical assistance

The Technical Assistance (TA) intervention category under the direct management component of the EMFF regulation is intended to facilitate the implementation of operational programmes drawn up by the MS and in turn implementing measures under shared management. This is done, inter alia, by promoting innovative approaches and practices that are capable of simple and transparent implementation.

First, TA under the EMFF supports MS in implementing the Community-led Local Development approach (CLLD). In this context, Fishery Local Action Groups (FLAGs, Art. 61 EMFF) are the chosen tool to achieve CLLD at local level through the proposition and implementation of CLLD strategies. Moreover, TA under the EMFF specifically aims at setting-up a European network of FLAGs aimed at capacity building, disseminating information, exchanging experience and supporting cooperation between local partnerships. Such network is intended to cooperate with the networking and technical support bodies for local development set up by the ERDF, the ESF and the EAFRD as regards their local development activities and transnational cooperation.

**FARNET, the European Network of Fisheries Areas**, is the network connecting groups that are implementing CLLD under the EMFF. It is the continuation of the EFF-supported initiative to facilitate links and share experiences between FLAGs. The latter were established to deliver Axis 4 under the EFF and have become the chosen delivery method for CLLD in most MS. Therefore, FARNET supports FLAGs but goes beyond that: it also supports other stakeholders - such as Managing Authorities (MAs), national networks, citizens and experts from across the EU, and the European Commission - to work on the sustainable development of fisheries and coastal areas.

Second, TA under the EMFF supports the MAs of the MS in complying with the monitoring and evaluation requirements in relation to measures under shared management (Art. 97.1(a) EMFF). **FAME, Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring and Evaluation**, aims at fostering the development of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System (CMES) established by Art. 107 of the EMFF Regulation, and at supporting the MAs in relation to Art. 97 reporting.

From a methodology standpoint, the answers to evaluation questions under this theme were based on two elements: a desk review of documental evidence and seven in-depth interviews with members of the core teams of the FARNET and FAME Support Units:

- three interviews with members of the core team of the FARNET SU and one interview with a FARNET thematic (CLLD) expert;
- three interviews with members of the core team of the FAME SU.

***Are the tasks that FARNET implements meeting a need of the local community? If so, what structures are in place to hand over these tasks after 14 years of implementation?***

The FARNET SU was established by the Commission in 2009 to implement Axis 4 of the EMFF. Whilst the contract for FARNET I expired in 2015, FARNET II was established in 2014 and started its operations in 2015. The FARNET SU consists of a core team featuring fifteen members, plus two thematic and eighteen geographic experts.

Based on the objective enshrined in Art. 92 EMFF to technically support CLLD and the stakeholders involved in its achievement, both on the ground and at the regional, national and transnational level, the tasks performed by the FARNET Support Unit (SU) include:

- capacity building;
- dissemination of information;

- exchange of good practices;
- cooperation.

FARNET as such does not perform specific tasks other than connecting stakeholders.

The SU tasks are designed to respond to the needs of the local community broadly construed, i.e. including FLAGS (328), MAs, national networks and other local stakeholders (approximately 30).

FARNET's activities are supported by a 1-year direct service contract, renewable 6 times. The first contract was concluded in 2015, and renewed 3 times to date (2016, 2017, 2018). The **programmed budget** was € 0 in 2014; €2.100.000 in 2015; € 2.000.000 in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

The activities carried out by the FARNET SU respond to the objectives laid down in Art. 92 EMFF, i.e. technically supporting CLLD and the stakeholders involved in its achievement, both on the ground and at the regional, national and transnational level. In this regard, the correct identification of stakeholders is crucial and cannot be limited to local communities and the FLAGS: stakeholders include Managing Authorities (MAs), national networks as well as the EU Commission (DG MARE).

The tasks of the FARNET SU are designed to satisfy needs of the local community that are still unmet and such as emerging from individual CLLD strategies, need assessment exercises conducted by the SU, direct contacts with stakeholders and visits on the ground.

The identified needs range from supporting the setting up of national networks, to facilitating transnational cooperation, to providing technical support to the FLAGS for showing results. FARNET actions designed to meet the above needs include **events, publications and trainings**. Bilateral on-demand support for MA and FLAGS is also a crucial tool to meet the needs of the stakeholders.

The effectiveness of the FARENT SU rests on a number of **strengths**, however **weaknesses** affecting SU's operations have also been identified. These are all presented in the table below.

**Table 8: Identified strengths and weaknesses of FARNET SU**

Identified strengths	Identified weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong <b>technical support team</b> that is able to capitalize on its expertise in order to engage with traditionally conservative and inward looking local fisheries and coastal communities;</li> <li>• a high degree of <b>continuity</b> based on a virtual lack of turnout in the composition of the team;</li> <li>• a strong <b>methodology and procedural approach</b> build over several years of activity</li> <li>• <b>flexibility</b> and availability to the stakeholders;</li> <li>• enjoyment of the <b>trust</b> relation with the client, i.e. DG MARE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FLAGS <b>cooperation across borders</b> appears difficult to manage for the SU and does not seem to take off;</li> <li>• <b>delays</b> have been registered in the implementation of CLLD at local level. Caused by the complexities of the national administrative machineries, such delays seem to be anyway less conspicuous than in the context of EFF Axis 4 interventions and have been managed by the SU and FLAGS at the best of their respective capacities;</li> <li>• a greater <b>degree of autonomy</b> in the implementation of CLLD should be afforded to the MAs, whilst at the same time keeping in place mechanisms for experience sharing at the EU level</li> </ul>

A high degree of coherence has been identified between the CFP and the local community objectives. More specifically, the latter do overlap to the extent that both CFP and CLLD seeks to promote sustainable fishery and aquaculture, sustainable Blue Economy and sustainable international governance of maritime resources.

On the other hand, no duplication between FARNET operations and activities carried out in the framework of other policies has been detected. The reason for this is to be found in the highly technical and specialized nature of the tasks performed – and of the output produced – by the SU.

***What has FAME's contribution been to a more efficient and effective implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system of the shared management of the EMFF both at MS and EU level?***

The FAME Support Unit brings together a network of experts with a wide range of professional experiences relevant to the M&E. It provides support at EU level and in the MSs through working papers, reports, stories presenting good projects, workshops, presentations, needs assessments, peer reviews and trainings. The FAME SU consists of a core team featuring six members, twelve thematic experts (covering topics like fisheries, aquaculture, CFP, processing, local development and evaluation), and geographic experts covering twenty-seven MSs.

FAME Support Unit (FAME SU) pursues two objectives:

- assisting in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the EMFF and providing the Commission with regular updates and analysis of the state of play of the implementation of the EMFF;
- building capacity across the MSs and in the Commission on M&E methodologies, indicators and good practices.

FAME's activities are supported by a 1-year direct service contract, renewable 6 times. The first contract was concluded in 2015, renewed 3 times to date (2016, 2017, 2018). The contract sets out the provision of support services to help the Commission undertake a set of tasks linked to the CMES and fulfil the obligations included in the ESI Funds Regulation.

The **programmed budget** was € 0 in 2014 and €1.000.000 for each following year (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

To the extent that it has been instrumental in closing the gap between the stakeholders' methodology capacities and the M&E requirements under the EMFF, FAME has enabled a more efficient and effective M&E under the EMFF and has contributed to greater consistency and completeness of EMFF reporting by the MS.

The FAME SU has contributed to a more efficient and effective implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system of the shared management of the EMFF through the publication of several working papers available to the public on the FAME webpage. These working papers cover the following fisheries and aquaculture-specific M&E methodology themes:

- definition of common indicators (October 2016);
- EMFF operation timeline (June 2017);
- EMFF evaluations and related toolbox (October 2017);
- EMFF Art. 97(1)(a) reporting data requirements (February 2018).

Through the working paper on definitions of common indicators, for instance, the FAME SU aimed at operationalizing concepts necessary to M&E activities at both the EU and MS level. The CMES for the EMFF comprises context, result and output indicators as well as a reinforced intervention logic, milestones and target values. Three types of common indicators address different levels of objectives and serve different purposes: (a) context

indicators – generally included in the Data Collection Framework (DCF) - are linked to the wider objectives of the EMFF and reflect the situation at the beginning of the programming period; (b) output indicators are the direct products of activities implemented under Operational Programmes (OPs) intended to contribute to results. In most cases they are expressed as number of operations co-financed by the EMFF OP; (c) result indicators are variables that measure the gross effects of the EMFF interventions on specific dimensions targeted by a policy action. The effect to be measured and the target refer to the OP intervention only. They are based on information from beneficiaries and/or MAs and report on changes in absolute or relative terms.

The intervention of the FAME SU resulted in the publication in October 2016 of the working paper “Definition of Common Indicators”. The document was developed in cooperation with DG MARE and in consultation with the MS. It provides a set of operational definitions for all common indicators, as well as a basis for the monitoring and evaluation obligations as part of the implementation of OPs.

The use of definitions provided in the document is strongly recommended for the sake of consistency and comparability across MS. Each indicator is in fact defined through - inter alia - the indication of sub-indicators, a definition, the indication of the measurement unit and data source to be used by the M&E authorities. Indicators therein operationalized include, for example, “changes in unwanted catches”. Prior to FAME intervention, 90% of stakeholders (i.e. MAs) were unable to operationalize the concept and therefore could not deliver this indicator.

Other significant examples of specific FAME SU’s contributions to more effective and efficient M&E under EMFF include the creation of a validation tool for the standard Art. 97(1) database, also known as Infosys. Under the latter provision, the EMFF Regulation requires MS to report fisheries and aquaculture data through individual national databases, which are then used by the Commission for M&E purposes. In the past, such reporting activity was subject to a great deal of inherent errors. The FAME SU developed a tool under Microsoft Office that is able to: (a) perform ex-ante plausibility checks of the input, (b) produce an error report, and thus (c) reduce the margin of error of the standard Infosys by an 80% rate.

On a more social level, the SU has managed to create and “animate” a European community around the theme of fisheries and aquaculture M&E, which gathers for need assessments and peer-review workshops. The latter are two-day events organized every other year (so far one workshop took place, in 2016, and the second one was planned for 2018).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Both FARNET and FAME SU emerged as relevant, effective and efficient instruments to provide TA – respectively - in support of CLLD and for the enhancement of M&E capacities at the MS and EU level. No structures are in place to hand over the tasks performed by the two TA bodies and no comparable results could have been achieved at national, regional or local level.

This is due to several factors, including the high level of specialization of the expertise involved in FARNET and FAME SU operations, as well as the added value enshrined and the high learning potential resulting from the transnational nature of the two networks.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In relation to *FARNET* it is recommended to:

- further strengthen support to FLAGs cooperation across borders;
- encourage the simplification of national administrative procedure so as to prevent delays in the implementation of CLLD at local level;
- afford a greater degree of autonomy in the implementation of CLLD to the MAs, whilst at the same time nurturing mechanisms for best practice-sharing at the EU level.

From the point of view of the resources and budget, consideration should be given to strengthening the full-time staff of the SU core team and to simplifying the procedures for the management of the FARNET website.

In relation to *FAME*, from the point of view of the resources, consideration should be given to endowing FAME of a visual identity comparable to FARNET's (logo, website) so as to foster awareness of FAME actions by the stakeholders and to allow better diffusion of the tools developed by the FAME SU.

### **3.2. Mandatory evaluation criteria**

The horizontal element of the evaluation was based on the five main mandatory evaluation criteria as described in the Better Regulation Guidelines<sup>83</sup>: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence and EU added value.

#### **3.2.1. Relevance**

This mandatory evaluation criterion was addressed by exploring whether the intervention (i.e. the measures implemented under the direct management component of the EMFF according to the Regulation (EU) No 508/2014) remain relevant.

The judgement criteria were:

- Extent to which the needs (as identified in the general intervention logic) continue to exist
- EMFF support under direct management provides an appropriate solution to the needs

#### **To what extent is the intervention still relevant?**

Direct management EMFF actions in the period 2014-2016 contributed to a more integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs in some fields, such as the enhancement of visibility of **Integrated Maritime Policy** (IMP) or maritime intersectoral cooperation at basin-level scale and coastguard cooperation (forum organisation) but also the support to MSP directive implementation. Raising of awareness and interest is still relevant, in particular with regards to involving not only public stakeholders but also private sectors in maritime affairs/ Blue Economy. These involvements could be translated in an enhancement of political will and an increase of investments.

**Innovation and education** are key components of Blue Economy. The calls to support their development are still relevant (the Commission improving the calls based on experience learned from the first calls launched in the period 2014-2016 too<sup>84</sup>) with targeted sectors with the maximum of potential added value creation (e.g. marine renewables energies, marine biotechnologies). Also, the successful ocean energy forum approach applying a bottom-up and stakeholder oriented mechanism to elaborate an ocean energy road map at the EU level is in the process to be replicated to emerging sectors (by the development of a marine biotechnology forum).

In the area of Integrated Maritime Policy, in particular **Maritime Spatial Planning**, discussions with both the Commission and MS MSP practitioners have uniformly indicated that the **need for MSP**, irrespective of the Directive itself, **remains both high and increasing**. Direct EMFF assistance to Member States to harmonise approaches at an early stage in the Directive's life, especially in transboundary areas demonstrates that MSP has remained highly relevant over the programming period, not just because it effectively represents the first part of a seven-year planning period for the establishment of MSPs across the EU. A EU-wide policy focus on **Blue Growth**, combined with a resurgence in

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<sup>83</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/toc\\_tool\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/toc_tool_en.htm)

<sup>84</sup> For calls, the lessons learnt from their first set were/will be taken into account in the following and coming call (more involvement of the private sector in the co-funding, assistance mechanism to guide applicants to respond, targeted sectors more focused, monobeneficiaries and projects in a single country allowed). The diversity and the large number of proposals illustrate the interest of the stakeholders even if the level of contracted projects is low. The definition of more restrictive conditions in the terms of reference of the coming calls (Blue Tech calls for instance) is expected to balance the number of applicants against the selection.

maritime activities since the 2008 financial crisis means that competition for sea space grows ever fiercer. This has been exacerbated by technical developments in offshore wind farming and aquaculture, expanding the spatial boundaries of these two sectoral activities, with potential conflict with navigation and coastal tourism.

EMFF direct management component funding for transboundary MSP has had the added benefit of encouraging inter-sectoral discussions and stakeholders' engagement with their counterparts in neighbouring waters. Well-organised MSP has the potential to reduce coordination and transaction costs and to enhance the investment climate in marine economic activities (Policy Research Corporation, 2010). Equally, with marine conservation initiatives, both with development of Natura 2000 marine protected areas, as well as other regional (i.e. OSPAR) and Member State level initiatives (such as the UK's Marine Conservation Zones), there is a greater need to achieve a balance between development and conservation. MSP has the potential to play a critical role in this.

In terms of the added value that **marine knowledge** brings, interviews carried out during this evaluation have shown that the direct management of the marine knowledge initiative has been **pivotal to driving a large step forward in building up a collective culture across the European marine data and knowledge sector.**

*'Collaborations have developed between experts and professionals from businesses, research organisations, public authorities, and civil society. Bridges have been built between operation and monitoring communities as well as between different observing communities (e.g., hydrographic offices, geological surveys, national oceanographic institutes, etc.) all working together with the same objective, to develop the marine data and knowledge base to underpin the Integrated Maritime Policy. This has led to increase the understanding on the marine environment and breakthrough existing barriers'<sup>85</sup>.*

*'The relevance of EMODnet on transboundary data is even more accentuated as for first time these are comparable and accessible at the same time. This is something critical to the maritime sector, as borders do not limit the sea'<sup>86</sup>.*

With the need to achieve good environmental status by 2020, intervention on **environmental protection** remains highly relevant with an improvement of knowledge of pressures and impacts (e.g. marine litter, noise) on marine ecosystems.

With regards to interventions stipulated in Article 86 of the EMFF Regulation (scientific advice), EMFF support under direct management has made an important **contribution to scientific advice** in areas beyond EU waters where EU fleets are operating. In the case of ICES, this has been provided either through EMFF support under direct management to RFMOs via projects and the framework contract in place. In this regard more than 20 studies and support contracts have been established since 2014. It has to be underlined that through this framework contract, EMFF under direct management has also provided financial support for ensuring the participation of relevant EU scientists in RFMO meetings in support of the EU Delegation.

As the Commission funding stipulates that adequate monitoring and evaluation is carried out, based on its review it can be stated that the **EMFF support under direct management has contributed to improving effectiveness and relevance.** A key strength of EU participation in RFMOs is the scientific expertise that can be accessed. EMFF support under direct management has therefore also provided financial support for scientist participation in RFMO meetings.

Some supported projects are more ad hoc, responding to specific needs and issues identified. Even though these projects do not fit into a pre-determined strategy, the

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<sup>85</sup> Extract from the in-depth interview to the EMODnet Secretariat

<sup>86</sup> Extract from the in-depth interview to the EMODnet Secretariat



relevance of those projects is determined through the commissioning process and coherence with the CFP objectives is clear. Overall the scientific advice and data collection funded through EMFF direct management is delivered through well-established processes to ensure that advice and data are effective in informing CFP objectives. There is coordination of the work commissioned to see that it responds to key needs and to prioritise work streams, along with some flexibility in the funding to respond to emerging needs. This dual approach in EMFF direct management helps to maintain the relevance of scientific advice for policy-makers.

Regarding the **specific control and enforcement measures**, despite efforts deployed by DG MARE to promote this funding opportunity, the joint chartering and/or purchase of control means has **not been utilised**. According to Member States consulted, the **measure is not relevant**, and the detailed reasoning for this is outlined in section 3.1.3 of this report.

EU voluntary **contributions to international organisations** aim at strengthening the decision-making process. However, conservation and management rules adopted by international organisations are the result of negotiations between the different parties concerned which have often different interests. The extent to which conservation and management rules adequately address the needs cannot be considered as direct impact of EU interventions under the EMFF or under other instruments.

Most **Advisory Councils** are generally able to provide recommendations on fisheries management measures to both the Commission, the Member State Groups and individual Member States. The advice has mainly been on fisheries management proposals that are proposed by other parties for comment or proposed by the AC itself. A number of ACs find it very difficult to produce advice that both fishing and other interest groups can sign off on.

An element of the intervention which remains **highly relevant** is **FARNET**. **FARNET** is implemented as an element of **Technical Assistance** with a high degree of specialization that is unlikely to be met at the EU, national, regional or local level. This remains true notwithstanding the **increasing level of competence of stakeholders on the ground**, which is in fact one of the positive features of FARNET's operations. It is also unlikely that the SU tasks will be proficiently performed under other EU funds, if this implies discontinuing FARNET's operations and reassigning its tasks to a different body.

In the Public Open Consultations events to share knowledge between stakeholders were assessed as the most relevant ('essential' or 'very useful' choices) measure financed by the EMFF to the needs of blue economy and marine environment, however, other measures were also assessed as at least very useful by the majority of respondents. As regards the relevance to the economically, environmentally and socially sustainable use of fisheries resources, the measures assessed as the most relevant were: support to regional fisheries management organisations and scientific advice for fisheries.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The needs identified in the Intervention Logic of the direct management component of EMFF continue to exist, and the offered EMFF support provides an appropriate solution to most of those needs.
- As the basic concept of MSP is now clear, with many preliminary harmonisation issues resolved, there is now the need to enable cooperation in MSP across national and sub-national boundaries, suggesting that this transboundary focused direct EMFF assistance is as relevant as ever. This is also evidenced by the number of sea basin plans for sustainable Blue Growth (e.g. the Atlantic Action Plan), sectoral planning at EU and national level (e.g. meeting renewable energy targets such as those set by the 2009 EU Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) and expanding marine conservation under Natura 2000, OSPAR and national initiatives.
- The Advisory Councils are increasingly relevant given the need for stakeholder advice and the objective of regionalisation. This is particularly evident with the

implementation of the Landing Obligation on a regional basis, where the work of ACs is contributing to finding workable solutions.

- EUMOFA is the main initiative implemented by the Commission to deliver EU commitments as regards market intelligence for fisheries and aquaculture products, in particular commitments made under CMO article 42.1 a), c) and d) and CMO article 42.2. The continued relevance of EUMOFA in this respect is therefore evident. At the same time, as of early 2018, EUMOFA is not the most relevant information system to deliver targeted support to be provided to Producers' Organisations as per CMO article 42.1 b<sup>87</sup>). Whilst price information and market analysis published by EUMOFA are of interest to producer organisations, other specific instruments need to be implemented for targeted support to these organisations.
- Despite efforts deployed by DG MARE to promote funding opportunity for joint chartering and/or purchase of control means, the measure has not been utilised.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The actions launched with the support of EMFF direct management EMFF until 2016 could be made more relevant by (i) explicitly linking outcomes with the direct management EMFF funding strategy; (ii) focusing actions on the fields where direct management is the most efficient instrument, in particular global coordination of actions addressing strategic objectives in an integrated approach, as done with the implementation of assistance mechanism (Atlantic strategy) or structured networks (EMODNET), and sector actions where those are coherent and follow a common strategic policy priority and (iii) better monitoring their contribution to the EMFF regulation objectives. It should be noted that much of this has already been implemented from 2017 onwards e.g. after the period covered by this evaluation. The Commission should support convergence of MSP and Integrated Coastal Zones Management (ICZM), both to better take into account maritime space in ICZM projects/policies thanks to a shared governance (stakeholders and mechanisms).
- For the Atlantic Action Plan, a priority would be to involve other relevant actors (in particular local and regional authorities) more in governance, possibly by setting up thematic working groups or consultation forums in the priority areas or through their participation in the Assistance Steering Group (ASG) meetings.
- The Commission may consider launching an expression of interest for projects falling under article 87.3 of the EMFF Regulation concerning of transnational projects in the field of control and enforcement.
- The Commission may assess the opportunity to have European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) eligible to EMFF funding under centralised management in view of its mandate and its possible involvement in data exchange and transnational cooperation.
- The Commission should develop initiatives to deliver on CMO article 42.1 b) commitment in relation to provision of practical support to producer organisations and inter-branch organisations, possibly aside of EUMOFA
- The Commission should continue to provide equivalent financial support to EUMOFA to maintain and increase the quality and the flexibility of services for both stakeholders in the Members States and Union institutions in charge of policy-making

<sup>87</sup> providing practical support to producer organisations and inter-branch organisations to better coordinate information between operators and processors

### 3.2.2. Effectiveness

This section analyses the extent to which the objectives of the thematic interventions of Title VI were addressed and achieved.

#### To what extent have the objectives been achieved?

Many projects aim to achieve objectives related to several priorities of the EMFF Regulation; the initial classification based on Title VI of the Regulation leads to possible oversight of some potential contributions of some projects to achieving the objectives as named in the EMFF Regulation. Some objectives in the EMFF Regulation are achieved mainly by actions not funded by the EMFF (e.g. IMP in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, funded by ENI or other cooperation instruments). The “Project” approach is justified by the nature of funding and the regulation, but can have drawbacks in the long term: lack of sustainability of long term actions, poor memory of projects and results (project websites and libraries disappear when projects end). As such, it is not easy to identify in projects’ ToRs (when they are available) the clear breakdown of project objectives (and project funding) targeted to achieving the objectives as defined by the 2014 Regulation. In the same way, project outcomes are not explicitly related to the funding instrument’s priorities. This was a challenge for the evaluation.

Notwithstanding those limitations, certain observations on the intervention’s effectiveness have been made, and these are presented below, structured around Title VI intervention categories.

#### **Integrated Maritime Policy**

Article 82 of the EMFF Regulation establishes that support “*should contribute to the development and implementation of the Union’s Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP)*”. The IMP should in turn:

- “*foster the development and implementation of **integrated governance** of maritime and coastal affairs*”<sup>88</sup>,
- “*contribute to the development of **cross-sectoral initiatives** that are mutually beneficial to different maritime sectors and/or sectoral policies*”<sup>89</sup>,
- “*support **sustainable economic growth**, employment, innovation and new technologies within emerging and prospective maritime sectors*”<sup>90</sup> and
- “*promote the **protection of the marine environment***”<sup>91</sup>.

The assessment of the contribution of direct management must be done in a global assessment of the direct management actions on IMP. Indeed, governance is the human component of IMP. The direct management component contributed to the definition and implementation of actions relating to MSP, Blue Economy development or marine environmental protection. Therefore, **direct management EMFF actions contributed to a more integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs in some fields, such as maritime intersectoral cooperation at basin-level scale, but also with the support in MSP directive implementation.** The level of integration of the governance was assessed by the definition of stakeholders’ networks or of joint projects.

Cooperation platforms and frameworks contracts use large resources, but their outcomes in the field of governance are difficult to assess. As sea-basin platforms and networks

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<sup>88</sup> EMFF Regulation, Art 82 (a)

<sup>89</sup> EMFF Regulation, Art 82 (b)

<sup>90</sup> EMFF Regulation, Art 82 (c)

<sup>91</sup> EMFF Regulation, Art 82 (d)

effectively connect sectors and actors, their effects are not very visible. What could be improved is to strengthen the monitoring by including not only output indicators, but also outcome indicators.

With regards to cross-sectoral initiatives, the development of EMODnet was the main priority for marine knowledge. Whilst it was not possible, in the framework of this study, to quantify its direct impact on the Blue Economy, EMODnet users have highlighted the positive impacts that the initiative had on them.

Great **progress has been made** in understanding the European marine environment which would not have happened without EMFF support. This included creation of a high-resolution digital seabed map including seabed habitats of all European waters, which is now widely used; EMODnet being only system worldwide that provides access to such a broad range of environmental data and human activities data.

It is relatively early to evaluate the success of **MSP preparedness** resulting from EMFF funding. Discussions with MSP practitioners suggest that the **initiatives to date have been effective in increasing the capability of Competent Authorities (CAs) to progress MSP development**, especially in transboundary issues where direct EMFF funding on MSP has been focused. This includes Member States that share a sea basin with other Member States (as in the Celtic Sea) or non-EU countries (e.g. in the Black Sea and Baltic). This said, there is an argument that the direct EMFF funding focus on cross-border cooperation has meant that some areas of MSP within MS internal sea areas have received insufficient attention and support. The counter-argument is that the largely cross-border support to MSP practitioners has increased their wider capability for maritime spatial planning, which has introduced the broad tools, skills and mechanisms that can be allowed in internal waters. This issue is worthy of further consideration, with the possibly of more direct EMFF funding directed towards developing MS MSP capacity in general (e.g. without a cross-border focus) or even the introduction of funding, via the shared EMFF funding arrangement (or its successor) to address particular MS MSP needs. However, the Commission believed that the funding for Member State MSP is an internal obligation, with direct EMFF support mainly aimed at addressing common, cross-border issues.

The effectiveness of MSP projects has also benefited from their non-prescriptive nature, which reflects an understanding that the technical needs, administrative capacity and spatial complexity for the planning of different MS sea spaces is highly variable. There is no single generic approach, and Member States have the freedom to adopt systems that best suit their own planning needs. This said, given that some MS are well advanced in MSP, such as Germany and the UK, there is a lot of experience that can be shared amongst MSP practitioners. Even where there are historical territorial disputes over sea boundary areas, such as between Denmark and Poland in the Baltic, cross-border MSP support via Baltic SCOPE has encouraged bi-lateral discussion by raising the issue with the ministries of foreign affairs with the two countries, arranging joint meetings and pointing out the critical elements on the constituent's spatial plans for detailed discussion and coordinated planning<sup>92</sup>.

With regards to EMFF-funded "**Blue Growth**" initiatives, it is too early and difficult to assess their contribution to the development of marine economic activities (MEAs). It is a long process, with many actions targeted for innovation and public actors. The transfer from innovation to the market can take time, depending upon a range of issues including the technical readiness level of the targeted projects. For the period 2014-2016, it can be stated that only the Atlantic Action Plan can be taken in account as a dedicated mechanism

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<sup>92</sup> Giacometti, A., J. Moodie, M Kull & A. Morf (2017). Coherent Cross-border Maritime Spatial Planning for the Southwest Baltic Sea, Results from Baltic SCOPE. Stockholm, Espoo and Gothenburg - Baltic SCOPE. Report available online at [www.balticscope.eu](http://www.balticscope.eu)

for the setup of around 1,200 projects. Projects set up was mainly done by channelling EU funds (ERDF, H2020) to meet the priorities of the Plan.

The contribution of the Atlantic Action Plan to more integrated governance was real (e.g. economic stakeholders, research institutions better connected) but limited participation of regional management authorities responsible for disbursing funds. It is unknown whether any projects were initiated as a result of the plan.

The other actions were more focused on socio-economic scoping or feasibility studies to prepare future actions including such launch of assistance mechanisms. The use of H2020 funds has been done in order to address innovation. EMFF can address economic sustainability that is another key aspect for the future development of Blue Economy activities. The EMFF call in 2017 supported innovation to create added-value for maritime economic activities under strand 1 “demonstration projects making blue technologies market and investors ready”. The direct benefits for maritime economic activities are unknown at present. It will be dependent on the take-up of projects by market operators. Therefore, it can be considered that EMFF helped the development of MEAs, but **only in the long term**, with its support for innovation in accordance with its sea basin vision.

EMFF support is expected to have greater impact rather on supporting consistency and the development of a sustainable Blue Economy in each sea basin in accordance with the Ecosystem Approach and MSFD objectives for EU MS in the marine or submarine regions (cf. MSFD areas, Art.5 of Directive 2008/56/EC) than on environment policy implementation. The EMFF supports **marine protection actions**, but a further, multi-funded approach is required to meet the goals, which are essentially environment-driven. This becomes even more salient when the sea basin is shared with non-EU MS. There appear to be **no dedicated EMFF actions to meet environmental cross-border objectives with non-EU MS in the same marine region further than the ones which were launched to support MSFD implementation.**

### **Scientific advice**

The two main delivery agents for scientific advice are ICES and STECF. Overall the STECF has been effective in delivering scientific advice in relation to the CFP and at the request of DG MARE. A 2015 evaluation on financial measures states that “Although establishing clear causal links is difficult, it is likely that STECF advice was effective in influencing many areas of management decision making under the CFP. For instance, STECF advice on discards may have directly informed the preparation of Article 15 of the new CFP (the landing obligation).” (EC, 2015) The involvement and influence of STECF has continued in the implementation of the CFP, including the landing obligation e.g. through STECF evaluation of the Landing Obligation Joint Recommendations (e.g. STECF 17-08 ). The contribution of both ICES advice and STECF reporting is evident in the calculation of quota top-ups under the landing obligation: ICES advises on total catches (including previously discarded fish) and STECF advises on the quota top-ups by taking into account the individual MS fleet contributions to catches and discards.

STECF work using data from the Data Collection Framework (DCF) highlights the inconsistencies found between MS in the extent of data coverage and its quality, which the EC then uses to seek improvements from MS. STECF reporting has also highlighted complexities, difficulties and potential consequences of Commission proposals. For example, STECF has contributed to the development of Multiannual Plans. A 2016 STECF assessment of different management options led to a 2018 Commission proposal such as demersal fisheries in the Western Med.

EMFF funding under direct management has made an important contribution to scientific advice in areas beyond EU waters where EU fleets are operating. This has been provided either through direct support to RFMOs on projects or through a framework contract. EMFF funding under direct management has also provided financial support for participation of scientists in RFMO meetings, enabling RFMOs to benefit from the EU’s strong scientific capacity.

In parallel with supporting MS data collection under the DCF, the EMFF direct management component supported the ongoing strengthening of regional cooperation in data collection. There were two specific calls for proposals “Strengthening regional cooperation in the area of fisheries data collection” in 2014 and 2017 with the latest having a EUR 2 million budget to assist regional collection of biological data or EU-wide collection of socio-economic data. The first call in 2014 resulted in regional projects such as FishPi<sup>93</sup>. FishPi included a review of the historical operation of RCM, which found improvements in regional coordination between MS. In order to gain the full potential benefits from regional cooperation there is a clear need to develop regional work over longer time frames than hitherto, and with appropriate funding mechanisms and organisational infrastructures.

### ***Control and enforcement***

The measure which is the most frequently implemented under EMFF article 87 includes the development of IT services and supplies supporting the development of harmonised standards and messaging systems for the exchange of fisheries data. EMFF supported IT development help the Commission to fulfil its legal obligations concerning exchange of control data and contribute to improve Commission’s management of data submitted by Member States.

Development of IT services and supplies supporting the development of harmonised standards and messaging systems for exchange of fisheries data in support of control and enforcement entail considerable effort by the Commission for software preparation and maintenance. Initial Commission’s commitments for releases of IT tools could not be delivered. According to the DG MARE data, the development of FLUX standards, tools and transportation layer mobilise considerable human and financial resources.

On the other hand, there is strong reluctance from MS to apply for joint chartering and/or purchase of control means. Despite efforts deployed by DG MARE any uptake of the joint chartering and/or purchase of control means, this action **remained ineffective**.

### ***Voluntary contributions to international organisations***

Overall, EU voluntary contributions to international organisations aim at strengthening decision-making processes. However, conservation and management rules adopted by international organisations are the result of negotiations between the different parties concerned, which have often different interests. The extent to which conservation and management rules adequately address the needs **cannot be considered as direct impact of EU interventions under the EMFF** or under other instruments.

According to Better Regulation Guidelines, the evaluation of effectiveness considers how successful EMFF intervention has been in achieving progress towards its objective of **strengthening international organisations capacities to conserve and manage fish stocks under their purview**.

According to IO’s scientific committee reports available from IOs websites, EMFF supported research programmes contributed to the improvement of scientific advice. Notable examples included the FAO-implemented projects (Adriamed, CopeMed, MedSudMed, and EastMed) which served to harmonise many data collection activities and improved engagement of relevant Mediterranean countries in regional data collection activities, and the ICCAT-implemented Atlantic-wide bluefin tuna research programme (GBYP) with improved data collection and science contributing to improvement management decision-making which can be assumed to have contributed to the spectacular recovery of the stocks over the last three years.

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<sup>93</sup> See section 1.6.3 of the Annex to this report for details.

However, the objectives as stated in project evaluation and progress reports of research projects are not always measurable through objective, verifiable indicators, and a number of funded projects (e.g. some of the FAO-implemented projects in the Mediterranean) were not subject to independent review. This was mainly due to their budgets falling under the thresholds required by beneficiaries for evaluation, making it hard for third parties to monitor on an on-going basis the effectiveness of these projects apart from progress reports drafted by the project-implementers themselves.

Other research programmes funded through EMFF are ongoing and their results will be available only by the end of the EMFF programming period. This includes for example a research programme on population structure of IOTC species using modern technology (DNA sequencing and otolith micro-chemistry) which will give important information on the structure of stocks of tuna species in the Indian Ocean with possible impacts on the definition of management units for the different species (at present, Indian Ocean tuna species are considered as forming a unique stock).

The EMFF also supported independent external review of the performances of some RFMOs (i.e. CCAMLR, IATTC, ICCAT) which are important to support enhancement of the performances of the IOs. It also supported structural changes of some IOs through discussions or interventions aiming at changing / modernising the IOs funding conventions. As an example, the EMFF funding of GFCM task force supported the strengthening of GFCM mandate along the lines proposed by the 2011 performance review with inter alia clearer overall objective of biological, social, economic and environmental sustainability of living marine resources, provisions for the establishment of measures/sanctions to address non-compliance by Members/non-Members and establishment of a dispute settlement mechanism between Contracting Parties. The amended GFCM convention was approved by the end of 2014. According to FAO (2016), the adaptation of GFCM has been effective with GFCM now considered as a modern RFMO with the capability and expertise to take appropriate decisions based on the best available scientific advice and ensure their implementation. The modernisation of GFCM convention is an ongoing process.

For other international organisations, EMFF supports evaluations to strengthen the WECAFC and CECAF mandates, two FAO organisations that need considerable strengthening according to the conclusions of their respective performance reviews (2011 for CECAF and 2013 for WECAFC). For these two FAO organisations, substantial reforms, if agreed by contracting parties, will materialise only in the medium term making it impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of current EMFF support.

### ***Advisory councils***

The Advisory Councils (ACs) are stakeholder-led organisations that provide the Commission and EU countries with recommendations on fisheries management matters, which contributes to increased regionalization, a key priority in the reformed CFP.

The 2002 Reform of the CFP introduced the concept of Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) and a common framework for these was set out in Council Decision 2004/585/EC. Seven RACs were established in the following years (2004-2008) that covered the European sea areas (North Sea, Baltic, North Western Waters, South Western Waters, Mediterranean) and two covering other sectors: pelagic and long-distance fleets. Most of these established ACs are generally able to provide recommendations on fisheries management measures to both the Commission and the Member States. However, the newly-established ACs do not yet have the experience and protocols in place to respond in time. A number of ACs find it very difficult to produce advice that both fishing and other interest groups can give sign-off to.

There is no evidence of ACs providing advice that directly results in the simplification of rules. However, AC advice is provided on proposed measures that have the overall intent of simplification (e.g. Technical Conservation Measures and the EU Fisheries Control System). The first-hand experience of some members in fishing has helped to identify where rules are causing problems and/or proposals may not be workable.

These comments and advice could either prevent certain problematic measures being implemented (which could be considered as simplification) or may result in derogations and exemptions (which may in effect complicate rules by addressing specific circumstances).

The focus on relatively technical fishery management issues illustrates the strengths and a weakness Advisory Councils. The membership of the AC consists of 60% industry groups and 40% of Other Groups of Interest (OGI), and some ACs are unable to provide a consensus view. It is unclear to some ACs whether their recommendations are taken into account, particularly by MS groups that see an overlap in AC membership and the stakeholders they consult directly (e.g. when developing the regional discard plans). It is very useful for the Commission to hear a unified voice from industry and OGI, and the extensive knowledge of fisheries management from first-hand industry experience of its effects is extremely valuable in refining fisheries management measures (e.g. NWWAC recommendations on management of sole in VIId were adopted by the Commission). This is a key strength of the ACs, pointing towards effectiveness of this intervention. It is also evident that the AC industry members are often achieving consensus with what can be competing commercial fishing interests and the members now recognise that the advice should be based on evidence rather than opinion.

### **Market intelligence**

Market transparency through the provision of market intelligence has been introduced under CMO regulation article 42. This article gave to the Commission the obligation to i) gather and disseminate economic knowledge and understanding of the Union market for fisheries and aquaculture products along the supply chain, ii) provide practical support to producer organisations and inter-branch organisations to better coordinate information between operators and processors, iii) to regularly survey prices along the supply chain and conduct analysis on market trends and iv) conduct ad-hoc market studies and provide a methodology for price formation surveys. To implement these tasks, the CMO regulation invited the Commission to i) facilitate access to available data as relevant and ii) disseminate market information to the general public in an accessible and understandable manner. Member States were expected to contribute to the achievement of the market intelligence objective.

Almost 96% of EMFF Article 90 funding has been used to support the European Union Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA) over the 2014-2017 period.

As of early 2018, EUMOFA delivered most of the commitments on market intelligence as defined in article 42 of the CMO regulation. EUMOFA is **effective in delivering information on the markets for fisheries and aquaculture products**. By streamlining and harmonisation of data on market for fisheries and aquaculture products and through detailed analysis of market situations and trends, EUMOFA contributes to deliver most of the EU commitments, as regards market transparency.

EUMOFA compares favourably with other Commission-led observatories in terms of accessibility and of content. Satisfying the needs of all stakeholders as appropriate will be one of the main challenges ahead for EUMOFA over the second part of the EMFF programming period.

### **Technical assistance**

The activities carried out by the **FARNET Support Unit (SU)** respond to the objectives laid down in Art. 92 EMFF, i.e. technically supporting Community-Led Local Development (CCLD) and the stakeholders involved in its achievement, both on the ground and at the regional, national and transnational level. The correct identification of stakeholders is crucial and cannot be limited to local communities and the FLAGS: stakeholders include Managing Authorities (MAs), national networks as well as the EU Commission (DG MARE).



The level of satisfaction – or lack thereof - of the local community and the FLAGS, in particular, and the degree to which the SU is capable of meeting the local needs are the focus of a self-assessment process at the SU level. This process was ongoing at the time of drafting of the present report.

Based on the analysis of available documentary evidence (accessed via FARNET website), as well as on the in-depth interviews carried out with the members of the SU, the level of satisfaction of FLAGS (and other stakeholders) with FARNET support is high.

However, occasionally, the SU identifies needs but cannot act upon them, as it does not receive a request for support from either the relevant MA or FLAG. In this regard, the visibility of FARNET through social media, the website and field activities does not always guarantee awareness, especially on the ground, of the SU support operations.

In 2015, the Commission established the **FAME Support Unit (SU)** with two objectives: first, assist in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the EMFF and provide the Commission with regular updates and analysis of the state of play of the implementation of the EMFF; second, building capacity across the MSs and in the Commission on evaluation and monitoring methodologies, indicators and good practices.

The FAME SU has contributed to a more efficient and effective implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system of the shared management of the EMFF through the publication of several working papers available to the public on the FAME webpage:

- definition of common indicators (October 2016);
- EMFF operation timeline (June 2017);
- EMFF evaluations and related toolbox (October 2017);
- EMFF Art. 97(1)(a) reporting data requirements (February 2018).

Through the working paper on definitions of common indicators, for instance, the FAME SU aimed at operationalizing concepts necessary to M&E activities at both the EU and MS level.

Other significant examples of specific FAME SU's contributions to more effective M&E under EMFF include the creation of a validation tool for the standard Art. 97(1) database, also known as **Infosys**. In the past, this reporting activity was subject to a great deal of inherent errors. The FAME SU developed a tool under Microsoft Office that is able to: (a) perform ex-ante plausibility checks of the input, (b) produce an error report, and thus (c) reduce the margin of error of the standard Infosys by an 80% rate.

Several factors appear to be the drivers of FAME's successful contribution to the development of the EMFF M&E. Those include: a permanent structure, whose expertise is complemented by the inputs from thematic and geographical experts; the continuity of the FAME SU operations; the focus on the harmonization of twenty-seven potentially divergent M&E systems in the form of a single CMES; and cross-fertilization between MAs thanks to the transnational nature of FAME. These elements account for the EU added value of FAME and support the formulation of a judgment whereby, the same level of development of M&E under the EMFF could not have been achieved without FAME and the FAME SU; and comparable results could not have been achieved at the national or regional level.

Still, other management elements have hampered the effectiveness of the FAME SU to a certain extent. First, the lack of a visual identity comparable to the one supporting FARNET's operations: the lack of a dedicated website in particular does not allow for an efficient dissemination of best practices. Second, the timeline for the setting-up of the FAME SU caused operations (and related output production) to be considerably delayed. This is proved by the fact that, despite having been established in 2015, the first methodology tools were only published one year later, in 2016.

In the Open Public Consultation, the respondents assessed that actions which contributed to a stronger maritime economy the most were studies to improve knowledge of blue growth; scientific advice for fisheries contributed the most to better protection of marine

resources, and events to share knowledge between stakeholders contributed the most to more joined-up approach to maritime policies. Generally, the vast majority of the respondents assessed that all actions contributed at least to some extent to a stronger maritime economy, more joined-up policies, or protection of marine resources. Support to Advisory Councils and studies to improve knowledge of blue growth were those actions most frequently selected as having no impact at all, but still, only by 9% of the respondents.

## CONCLUSIONS

Below we present our conclusions in relation to the effectiveness of each of the different thematic interventions of Title VI:

- **IMP:** the EMFF direct management component contributed to a more **integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs** in fields such as maritime intersectoral cooperation at basin-level scale. It also supported the MSP directive implementation (an example of this is SimCELT). In terms of **cross-sectoral initiatives**, the development of EMODnet has contributed mainly to enhancing the understanding of the European marine environment and to improve the efficiency of maritime enterprises. Regarding MSP, the initiatives to date have increased the capability of CAs to progress MSP development, especially in transboundary issues. The non-prospective nature of MSP projects has been highly beneficial as it has allowed MS to adopt systems that best meet their needs. It is too early to assess the contribution of funded projects to **sustainable economic growth**, in particular to the development of MEAs. At this stage, it is only possible to confirm that it is likely that the EMFF achieves this in the long term with its support for innovation in accordance with the sea basin vision. In terms of **marine protection actions**, a further, multi-funded approach is required to meet the goals, especially when the sea basin is shared with non-EU MS.
- **Scientific advice:** The work areas of ICES and the format of ICES advice have both evolved to be more effective in informing fisheries managers needing to deliver CFP objectives, developing advice based on MSY targets and exploring wider ecosystem effects. STECF has been found to be effective in delivering scientific advice in relation to the CFP and at the request of DG MARE. By involving a large number of independent experts in EWG's followed by review of the resulting reports by the STECF Executive Committee in plenary, the STECF ensures the advice produced is peer reviewed and is considered to be independent from DG MARE. It is thus effective in delivering the best available scientific advice, even if that advice is sometimes constrained by the time available to undertake the work and the available data. The EMFF funding under direct management has made an important contribution to scientific advice in areas beyond EU waters where EU fleets are operating. Together with the development of MS data collection under the DCF, the EMFF direct management component has also contributed to strengthening regional cooperation in data collection.
- **Control and enforcement:** MS have been reluctant to applying for joint chartering and/or purchase of control means, despite DG MARE efforts to achieve this. It is highly unlikely that this will be overcome over the second part of the EMFF programming period and, therefore the objectives of these thematic intervention will not be met.
- **Voluntary contributions to international organisations:** the EMFF direct management component has contributed to strengthening international organisations' capacities to conserve and manage fish stocks mainly by supporting: (1) research programmes that have improved scientific knowledge; (2) independent external reviews of RFMOs; and (3) discussions / interventions aiming at changing

/ modernising the international organisations' funding conventions. Enhanced data collection is important because it provides robust information on fish stocks which is ultimately key for making management and conservation decisions. Reviews of RFMOs should provide insights on these organisations' performance and areas for improvement. Strengthening international organisations' mandates are aimed at providing them with clearer legal basis and capacities to act.

- **Advisory councils:** gathering key fisheries-stakeholders in these councils and, in particular, hearing first-hand industry experience on certain measures, has proved to be very beneficial for the Commission's fisheries management (e.g. NWWAC recommendations on management of sole in VIId were adopted by the Commission). However, the membership of ACs consists of 60% industry groups and 40% of Other Groups of Interest and, in some instances, ACs have been unable to provide a consensus view; making it difficult for the Commission to readily take into account their recommendations.
- **Market intelligence:** the EMFF's main action related to developing and disseminating market intelligence has been to support the European Union Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA) over the 2014-2017 period. EUMOFA has proved to effectively deliver information on the markets for fisheries and aquaculture products, therefore contributing to market transparency. An array of stakeholders in public administrations and in the private sector use EUMOFA market information. These hold generally positive opinions about it and compare it favourably with other Commission-led observatories.
- **Technical assistance:** the activities carried out by FARNET and FAME support units have proved to support the implementation of the EMFF. Evidence collected in this study shows that FARNET successfully meets the needs of the local communities. Only occasionally, FARNET identifies needs but cannot act upon them if it does not receive a request for support from either the relevant MA or FLAG. The FAME SU has contributed to a more efficient and effective implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system of the shared management of the EMFF through the publication of several working papers available to the public on the FAME webpage. These have helped, for example, to operationalise concepts necessary to M&E activities at both the EU and MS level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve traceability of EMFF objectives in projects funded by EMFF, at all stages, e.g. by improving the monitoring of these projects (indicators clearly related to policy/regulation instrument objectives, reporting from projects)
- Consider the possibility of directing additional EMFF funds to the development of MS' MSP capacity in general (e.g. without a cross-border focus) or of introducing funding (via the shared EMFF funding arrangement or its successor) to address particular MS' MSP needs where there is a clear wider benefit across the EU. However, the Commission believed that the funding for Member State MSP is an internal obligation, with direct EMFF support mainly aimed at addressing common, cross-border issues.
- Develop regional RMFO data collection projects on biological data over longer time frames and with appropriate funding mechanisms and organisational infrastructures in order to gain the full potential benefits from regional cooperation.

### 3.2.3. Efficiency

To address this evaluation criterion, two questions have been posed. Firstly, to what extent has the intervention been cost-effective; secondly, is the indicative distribution of funding reasonable (are the funds being used, if not why not, are more funds needed, why). The main judgement criterion applied was the assessment of whether the operational costs of the measures implemented were proportionate to the results achieved.

#### To what extent has the intervention been cost-effective?

#### Is the indicative distribution of funding reasonable?

The strong link between CFP and IMP within regulation 508/2014 supports the financing/funding of IMP and associated tools. It helps to enhance DG MARE's footprint on global governance in maritime affairs.

In the period 2014-2016, an average of €1 425 333 per year was programmed for the development and implementation of integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs and visibility of the IMP.

There was an increase in the commitments in 2015 (set up of the Assistance Mechanism for Atlantic Action Plan) and in 2016 with more actions related to the Mediterranean sea basin or assistance mechanism to support EU MS for the implementation of MSP (see next section) or MSFD second phase implementation (project MEDCIS).

Although the project MEDCIS is better linked to Promotion of the protection of the marine environment (covered in this evaluation study under the Work Package 1D), it is aimed to establish a network with regional structures (in particular UNEP/MAP), MSFD competent authorities, policy makers and other stakeholders, as well relevant projects to ensure coordination across regions/sub-regions, and to boost the dissemination of results and the direct use of the project's outcomes by stakeholders.

Also, with the preparation of implementation (WP1B), EMFF supported coastguard cooperation such as associated regional fora, such as the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF) or Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum (MCGFF).

The following table shows the programmed budget for each element of IMP in the period 2014-2016 and the share of programming and the relative weight of EMFF direct management actions.

**Table 9: Budgets for IMP and implementation ratio (amounts committed)**

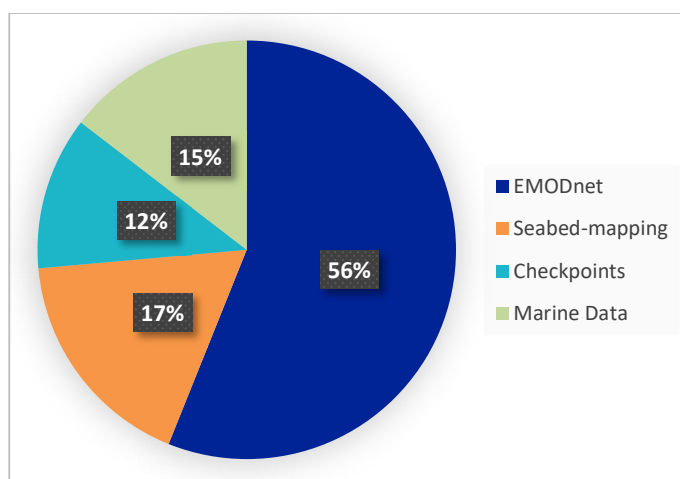
Programmed budget	governance	cross-sectoral initiatives	sustainable economic growth,	marine environment	Total programmed	Impl'n ratio
<b>2014</b>	€ 3 520 000	€ 21 240 000	€ 1 300 000	€ 3 260 000	<b>€ 29 320 000</b>	89%
<b>2015</b>	€ 3 682 000	€ 23 928 000	€ 1 260 000	€ 3 637 598	<b>€ 32 507 598</b>	91%
<b>2016</b>	€ 3 806 000	€ 27 792 000	€ 3 259 000	€ 4 269 664	<b>€ 39 126 664</b>	100%
<b>Average 2014-2016</b>	11%	72%	6%	11%	<b>€100 954 262</b>	

Note: programmed budget for IMP in 2017, 43,4 million euros; Source: consultants' elaboration based on data made available by DG MARE, June 2018.

In terms of efficiency, direct EMFF **funding to MSP** has been an iterative process over time, which has been adapted to the levels of progress in capacity building in the Member States. There has been an increasing focus on sea basin level initiatives over time, moving from larger to smaller sea areas as the need for increased MSP definition has grown. One **criticism** that was voiced in various interviews was the relative short duration (two years in most cases) of funded MSP projects.

The largest direct budget contribution on IMP has been made on Marine Knowledge related projects, although this contribution is also related to other EMFF objectives (e.g., MSP, Blue Growth, and environmental protection). In the period between 2014 and 2017 EUR 35.3 million have been committed, representing a s 51% of the total EMFF committed budget on IMP-Cross-sectoral initiatives (approx. EUR 11.8 million per annum). Even though Marine Knowledge gathers most of the IMP related budget in making marine data available, its cost is insignificant when compared with the cost producing the data (estimated in EUR 1.4 billion per annum<sup>94</sup>). This programmed budget falls into five main groups (Figure 2): (i) projects related to the core of EMODnet, with EUR 19.8 million represent the larger budget portion with 56% of the total; (ii) projects related to the seabed-mapping and the definition of the European Atlas of the Seas, with EUR 6.2 million represents the 17%; (iii) projects related to the consolidation and integration of other marine data activities and coordination, with EUR 5.1 million represents the 15%; and (iv) projects supporting the Sea basin Checkpoints, with EUR 4.2 million represents the 12%.

**Figure 1: Total programmed budget on Marine Knowledge related projects (2014-2017)**



One of the major direct budget contributions into MSP has been made via the 'Assistance Mechanism for the Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning' budget line (approx. EUR 1.2 million per annum). This was tendered by EASME and is being implemented since 2016 by s.Pro and Ecorys who established the European MSP Platform<sup>95</sup>, which provides an on-line platform for uploading MSP project documents, best practice documents and other relevant material in a public space. It also proactively promoted the gathering of MSP material from across both the EU and elsewhere to avoid 're-inventing the wheel'. The project team also conducted sea basin level and individual MS level workshops throughout the EU, prepared policy briefs and distributed synthesis material, as well as preparing technical reports on critical MPS issues. These latter documents illustrate the 'MSP journey', including a study on MSP information and data needs (2016) and an assessment of MSP-related issues for Blue Economy development (2017). The team is currently working on conflict-resolution methodologies for different sea space users.

This project fulfilled an important role in making existing techniques and good practise available to practitioners and targeting technical and knowledge barriers to MSP development in the EU. With funding now provided for three years, and available for a fourth, this also allowed the project to adapt to the changing nature of MSP status and capability in the EU and focus its energies accordingly.

Yet there is an argument that the direct EMFF funding focus on cross-border cooperation has resulted in some areas of MSP within MS internal sea areas receiving insufficient

<sup>94</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/2899>

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.msp-platform.eu/>

attention and support. The counter-argument is that the largely cross-border support to MSP practitioners has increased their wider capability for maritime spatial planning, and has introduced the broad tools, skills and mechanisms that can be allowed to internal waters. This issue is worthy of further consideration, with the possibility of more direct EMFF funding focussed on developing MS MSP capacity in general (e.g. without a cross-border focus) or even the introduction of funding via the shared EMFF funding arrangement (or its successor) to address particular MS MSP needs. National investment in MSP is highly variable. We were unable to obtain any quantitative figures on this, but given that some Member States, such as Denmark, only have around 1.5 FTE allocated to MSP development (compared to 10 FTE in Sweden), this will be a fundamental constraint to this process.

Regarding EU **Blue Growth** initiatives funded by EMFF to support maritime economic activities (MEAs) on the period 2014-2016, the Atlantic Action Plan was the main mechanism for the setup of projects. Under the umbrella of the plan, these actions were mainly funded by ERDF (connectivity investments and market driven studies<sup>96</sup>) or H2020. The use of H2020 was driven to address innovation in particular, aquaculture (fish and seaweed<sup>97</sup>), marine or biotechnologies<sup>98</sup>(macro-algae). It is too early to make any statements as the projects are on-going on the period 2017-2020.

On the period 2014-2016, the other actions of EMFF were more focused on socio-economic scoping or feasibility studies to prepare future actions, including the launch of assistance mechanisms.

The main point which can be stated regarding the efficiency to support the development of maritime economic activities (MEAs) and job creation is that for the time being, actions are only publicly funded to attract private investors. These actions are to define and share a vision of Blue Economy in the sea- basin in which actions can then be launched later and then to raise awareness on the potentials of Blue Economy of donors and investors (EIB, etc.), but also private ones.

The full framework of **scientific advice and data collection** supported under the EMFF direct management has an annual budget of around 9 million, which is broadly split 50/50 between scientific advisory work (provided by ICES and STECF) and other contracts. As shown in the table below, implementation ratio<sup>99</sup> was 93% in 2014 and decreased to 75% in 2015, when the programmed amount increased significantly, and then increased to 97%.

The single largest beneficiaries of the budgetary programme in 2018 are the two main providers of scientific advice:

- ICES (EUR 1.86m per annum on contribution to stock assessment and requests for advice of which EUR1.36 is recurring advice and EUR 0.23m non-recurring) and
- STECF (EUR 2.0.9m) of which EUR1.6 is to the Joint Research Council (JRC) which has operated as the STECF secretariat since 2005 and EUR 1m funds the special allowances to STECF members and external experts' attendance at STECF meetings, also the ad-hoc advice requests and STECF members participation in non-STEFC meetings
- Joint Research Council (JRC) (EUR1.14m) to operate as the STECF secretariat and in addition to provide advice to DG MARE since 2005

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<sup>96</sup> SEACAMS2 (marine renewable energies) or Marine-I (marine technology)

<sup>97</sup> SABANA H2020 project

<sup>98</sup> GENILA G H2020 project

<sup>99</sup> Implementation ratio is the amount committed as a proportion of the budget programmed.

As a part of this evaluation, a **case study** was undertaken on STECF, which provides more detail. Further information on ICES is provided below.

In addition to the two main providers, EMFF direct management support since 2014 has been used for framework contracts and specific projects, including:

- Framework Contract for Scientific Advice beyond EU waters (EUR 1m committed per annum)
- Framework Contract for Scientific Advice for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (EUR 0.5m in 2016)
- Tagging study to determine mortality sources on cod in the Irish Sea (EUR 0.6m in 2015).
- Availability and dissemination of DCF data (EUR 0.6m in 2015)

Further research projects with somewhat smaller budgets have supported scientific projects in RFMOs and publications to enhance the dialogue with the fishing industry and those affected by the CFP (OP). Some projects are within EU waters, but the majority relate to fishing areas beyond EU waters.

**Table 10: Total support under scientific advice per annum 2014-16**

year	programmed	committed	paid	Implementation ratio
2014	€ 6 990 000	€ 6 528 076	€ 5 658 115	93%
2015	€ 8 680 000	€ 6 537 917	€ 4 632 844	75%
2016	€ 8 590 000	€ 8 309 630	€ 3 236 062	97%

Source: DG MARE, early 2018;

EMFF also consider support to Member States for **control and enforcement** under shared management measures. Article 76 of the EMFF includes a wide range of eligible operations in relation to control and enforcement concerning inter alia development and purchase of hardware and software, modernisation and purchase of control means, operation costs of control and training and exchange programmes. EMFF budget for article 76 measures under shared management is EUR 580 million over the 2014-2020 programming period.

As shown in the following table, actions programmed under article 87 represented an annual amount in excess of EUR 15 million until 2015, and EUR 5 million to EUR 6 million as from 2016. In terms of commitments, the envelope is close to EUR 5.17 million per year between 2014 and 2017. Implementation ratio continuously increased from 26% in 2014 to 87% in 2017. In terms of expenditures, EUR 3.1 million per year on average have been paid between 2014-2017 (situation in early 2018).

**Table 11: Summary of amounts programmed, committed and paid for measures falling under EMFF article 87 (control and enforcement)**

year	programmed	committed	paid	Implementation ratio
2014	€ 15 439 690	€ 3 984 352	€ 3 211 017	26%
2015	€ 15 510 967	€ 6 466 116	€ 4 016 856	42%
2016	€ 6 010 967	€ 4 802 962	€ 3 365 702	80%
2017	€ 6 225 000	€ 5 430 142	€ 1 807 947	87%
2018	€ 5 500 000			

Source: DG MARE, situation early 2018.

During the first three years of the programming period, joint chartering of patrol resources was expected to mobilise  $\approx$  70% of funding available with approximately EUR 10 million per year and IT services supplies another 22% on average with EUR 3.5 million per year. As from 2017, the envelope programmed for joint chartering has been removed due to

lack of uptake by Member States and the envelope for IT services and supply increased to ≈ EUR 4.5 million to represent 78% of programmed budgets.

Concerning commitments, IT services and supply represent approximately EUR 3.5 million per year on average over the 2014-2017 period, i.e. 75% of actual commitments under this EMFF article. Other significant commitments include missions for EU agents and meetings of the EU expert group on control with 14% (EUR 750 000 per year) and 6% (EUR 285 000 per year) respectively.

The following table shows the **amounts programmed, committed and paid under EMFF article 88 voluntary contributions to international organisations**. It can be noted that the amounts programmed more than doubled between 2014 and 2018. Implementation ratio was close to 100% in 2014-2017 and 62% in 2018.

Voluntary contributions to IO's are substantially higher than EU compulsory contributions (i.e. IOs membership fees) that are in the region of EUR 5.4 million per year.

**Table 12: Amounts programmed, committed and paid under EMFF article 88 "voluntary contributions to international organisations"**

year	programmed	committed	paid	Implementation ratio
2014	€ 6 137 369	€ 6 053 998	€ 5 305 279	99%
2015	€ 7 977 720	€ 7 691 350	€ 6 959 004	96%
2016	€ 10 675 000	€ 10 650 211	€ 8 165 793	98%
2017	€ 12 670 000	€ 7 891 521	€ 1 588 067	62%
2018	€ 12 292 000			

Source: DG MARE. Note: situation early 2018.

Depending on the needs, the EU can mobilise other sources of funding to support international organisations, including research funds, the European Development Funds and sectoral support envelopes under SFPAs concluded with third countries.

Improving the efficiency of the international organisations was not a main focus for EU voluntary contributions since this is mostly addressed through IO's internal arrangements based on IOs own internal procedures. However, the programming of EU grants under EMFF article 88 covering different possible types of intervention (ex. the 2016 EU grant to IOTC to support the IOTC scientific committee program of work with EUR 600 000 funding) minimise transaction costs for both sides, and therefore contribute to improve the IOs efficiency.

With regards to **Advisory Councils**, the funding is based on a set, equal budget per AC. In 2016 the annual budget per AC increased by 20% from EUR 250,000 to EUR 300,000. The budget is irrespective of membership size, translation demands or travel requirements. The Commission contributes 90% of the budget and ACs are expected to show the remaining 10% is received from its members and/or Member States associated with the AC. Budget was committed for all eleven ACs in 2017. Commitments amounted to 100% of programmed budget in 2014, 64% in 2015, and 82% in 2016. Payments are slightly less than the committed amounts due to underspend by some ACs.



**Table 13: Total EMFF funding under direct management for Advisory Councils per annum 2014-17**

Year	Programmed	Committed	Paid	Implementation ratio
2014	€ 1 750 000	€ 1 750 000	€ 1 647 554	100%
2015	€ 2 750 000	€ 1 750 000	€ 1 658 956	64%
2016	€ 3 300 000	€ 2 700 000	€ 2 077 642	82%
2017		€ 2 908 861	€ 1 127 089	

Source: DG MARE, early 2018

The feedback obtained from the AC suggests that the budget is generally sufficient for the tasks expected of them, but some would like increased flexibility and access to commission scientific studies.

EMFF article 90 provided for financial resources to support the development and dissemination or market intelligence by the Commission in accordance with CMO article 42. According to information available, amounts programmed over the 2014-2018 period under EMFF article 90 represented EUR 4.8 million per year on average. Amounts committed were close to EUR 4.2 million per year on average, i.e. 87% of programmed amounts. In 2014 and 2015, 100% of commitments have been paid, but only 53% in 2016.

**Table 14: Summary of amounts programmed, committed and paid for measures falling under EMFF article 90 "Market Intelligence"**

year	programmed	committed	paid	Implementation ratio
2014	€ 4 944 000	€ 4 047 880	€ 4 047 880	82%
2015	€ 4 944 966	€ 4 047 880	€ 4 047 880	82%
2016	€ 4 827 880	€ 4 565 030	€ 2 426 090	95%
2017	€ 4 667 880	€ 4 162 880		89%
2018	€ 4 815 000			

Source: DG MARE, situation early 2018.

Almost 96% of EMFF Article 90 funding has been used to support the European Union Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA) over the 2014-2017 period (EU commitment of  $\approx$  EUR 4.05 million per year). EUMOFA is fully implemented by a consortium of specialised companies under a service contract with DG MARE which oversees its development and production. The remaining 4% have been utilised to fund complementary actions in relation to Market organisation and supporting market intelligence including an information system on commercial designations of fisheries and aquaculture products and a study on consumption patterns in the Member States. Other studies are in the pipe-line.

**FARNET's** activities are supported by a 1-year direct service contract, renewable 6 times. The first contract was concluded in 2015, and renewed 3 times to date (2016, 2017, 2018). The programmed budget was €0 in 2014; €2.100.000 in 2015; €2.000.000 in 2016, 2017 and 2018. A more efficient system of resource management is now in place, which deploys financial resources on the basis of the tasks to be performed (lump sums) rather than on the basis of the time spent to complete the tasks (daily fees).

**FAME's** activities are supported by a 1-year direct service contract, renewable 6 times. The first contract was concluded in 2015, renewed 3 times to date (2016, 2017, 2018). The contract sets out the provision of support services to help the Commission undertake a set of tasks linked to the CMES and fulfil the obligations included in the ESI Funds Regulation. The programmed budget was €0 in 2014 and €1.000.000 for each following year (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). Feedback from FAME SU suggests that its operations have sufficient resources in the light of the limited number of stakeholders with whom the SU interact.

In fact, it is believed that SU's interventions being currently based on a standardized approach allows for the achievement of economies-of-scale in the management of available resources.

## CONCLUSIONS

The support offered by EMFF direct management component is broadly efficient, in that the intervention been cost-effective for the most intervention categories, and the indicative distribution of funding is reasonable. There is, however, some potential for improvement.

- Given the relative newness of the subject, and the need to develop institutional capacity for MSP in most Member States, many cross-boundary MSP projects struggled to develop the necessary comfortable cross-border working relationships, and to design and implement activities in the time allowed.
- The single largest beneficiaries of the budgetary programming in 2018 are the two main providers of scientific advice: ICES and STECF. The efficiency of the STECF is dependent on the correct balance being struck between delivering advice to DG MARE in as cost-effective a manner as possible and ensuring the resulting advice is robust and accepted by stakeholders. To achieve the latter, sufficient participation by experts from many MS is required to give assurance that the resulting advice is devoid of bias from individual MS regions.
- The decision to contract out EUMOFA implementation almost entirely to a single contractor increases its efficiency by reducing transaction costs and administrative burden stemming from multiple procurements for data purchase, IT developments, analyses etc.
- With regards to FARNET, the SU's ability to cope with urgencies is hampered by a currently less than adequate number of full-time staff; what is more, the issuing frequency of the FARNET Magazine – currently once per year – is inadequate considering the role that this publication plays in fostering the image of the network vis-à-vis the FLAGS. Taking into account the budgetary constraints, increasing the number of publications to two or three per year would help nurturing the image of an EU that is closer to the local communities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Endorse the relatively new approach of introducing a second phase in MSP projects, in order to review the outputs produced to date, update analyses, and possibly make use of new/subsequent MSP development funding streams, especially if the necessary ex-post and ex-ante evaluations can be built into projects to ensure that their successors remain relevant.
- In view of the problems encountered by the Commission to finalise and implement the IT tools envisaged in the EU legislation, an increase of the relevant financial envelope should be considered. However, budget availability may not be the only factor hindering progresses and the Commission should make a detailed assessment of the problems in relation to IT development.
- For the Advisory Councils, the recent increase the overall budget is reported to be sufficient to deliver the tasks required. However, there is desire for more flexibility to use underspend and apply for additional funding to contribute to scientific research. If multi-annual support is possible it would allow increased flexibility for ACs to manage their resources against fluctuating issues for preparation of advices.
- There is a need to increase the multilingualism of FARNET output production in order to facilitate FLAGS' access to the various thematic and methodology tools. This requires additional budget commitments.

### 3.2.4. Coherence

The criterion of coherence (in its internal and external aspect) was analysed by investigating the potential existence of evidence for synergies with other EU instruments, MS actions and other actors' interventions in the pursuit of CFP objectives and wider EU policy objectives.

**To what extent is the intervention coherent internally (with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy and the Integrated Maritime Policy) and externally (with wider EU policy objectives)?**

#### ***Internal coherence***

The close relationship between the **Regional Sea Conventions** (OSPAR, HELCOM, Barcelona Convention and Black Sea Commission), where their supporting institutions partnered in EMFF funded action, ensures consistency in action. During the period under investigation, OSPAR and HELCOM were associated in co-funded projects (ie, EcApRHA, Baltic Boost, ...). The Atlantic Action Plan supported OSPAR processes to help develop a coherent network of marine protected areas around Europe's Atlantic coast and calls for action and cooperation through OSPAR to restore ecosystems. In the Baltic, INTERREG projects such as the BalticRIM helped integrate management of cultural heritage in and at the Baltic Sea into MSP.

The **STECF** is coherent with the EMFF objectives to support the implementation of the CFP. Specifically, the work of STECF is focused on CFP implementation, which is also coherent with other EU policy instruments such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) even if the focus of the STECF is solely on the CFP. There is also an effort to ensure wider coherence with other scientific advice: "Where necessary, the secretariat shall coordinate activities of STECF and its working groups with those of other Community and international bodies. (article 6(56) of 2016/C 74/05)". As the issues surrounding Mediterranean stock advice illustrate, this is not always achieved. However, for the most part there is coherence between STECF actions, other EU instruments, MS actions and other actors (such as ICES).

With regards to contributions to **International Organisations**, according to IO's scientific committee reports available from IOs websites, EMFF supported research programmes contributed to the improvement of scientific advices. Notable examples included the FAO-implemented projects (Adriamed, CopeMed, MedSudMed, and EastMed) which served to harmonise many data collection activities and improved engagement of relevant Mediterranean countries in regional data collection activities, and the ICCAT-implemented Atlantic-wide bluefin tuna research programme (GBYP) with improved data collection and science contributing to improvement management decision-making which can be assumed to have contributed to the spectacular recovery of the stocks over the last three years.

As the **Advisory Councils** are established through the CFP, their coherence with CFP objectives should be assured. The advice they provide to the Commission and to the Member States all seek to best implement the CFP. The involvement of the OIGs in discussions and in the drafting the advice does help to ensure environmental objectives and wider EU environmental policies such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive are kept in mind by the ACs.

**EUMOFA** is designed to deliver CMO commitments with respect to market intelligence. Its coherence with the CFP is therefore clear, as CMO represents one of the pillars of the CFP with respect to marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products. EUMOFA is also coherent with other Commission's strategies aiming at improving market transparency such as market observatories for agriculture products or market observatories for energy prices.

Finally, with regards to **technical assistance**, although it is doubtful whether contributing to the CFP falls within the mandates of CLLD-oriented FARNET and relating Support Unit, a high degree of coherence has been identified between the CFP and the local community objectives. More specifically, the latter do overlap to the extent that both CFP and CLLD seeks to promote sustainable fishery and aquaculture, sustainable Blue Economy and sustainable international governance of maritime resources. On the other hand, no duplication between FARNET operations and activities carried out in the framework of other policies has been detected. The reason for this is to be found in the highly technical and specialised nature of the tasks performed – and of the output produced – by the SU.

### **External coherence**

The intervention is coherent, to an extent, with several other programmes and actions, implemented by EU and other actors. This is most visible in the areas of **MSP development**, supported actions in the field of **environment**, and in **scientific advice**.

**MSP development** is by nature a multi-sectoral approach, with considerable potential – and need – for coherence with other EU and MS policies and development objectives. One key area is marine conservation, where Natura 2000 (including the Habitats and Birds Directives), the OSPAR MPA network commitments and national approaches such as the UK's Marine Conservation Zones all need to be recognised in maritime spatial planning.

The EMFF supported actions in the field of **environment** with strong integration content such as MPAs (Habitats Directive) but provided limited support to other more holistic approaches such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), which provides a relevant framework for integration of Blue Economy and environmental management in coastal zones, and are already funded through other programs such as LIFE.

Policy developments in the area of environmental protection and sustainability were already largely aligned. But since 2013 the Atlantic Action Plan strengthened this coherence with existing policies (e.g. MSFD: definition/ assessment of initial environmental status of marine waters), data collection efforts (e.g. Copernicus, EMODNet, SeaDataNet and AtlantOS) and new requirements (e.g. for maritime spatial planning). Projects covering the Atlantic marine and coastal environment have generally been financed from the ESIFs, LIFE or H2020. Funding from the largest projects has tended to come from H2020 and the EIB. Almost 50% of all projects on the sustainable management of marine resources are transnational projects.

There is also evidence of coherence of EMFF-supported actions in the field of **IMP** and their coherence with EU policies outside the CFP. For example, SIMCelt briefing notes cover other sectoral interests such as offshore energy (e.g. wind, wave and tidal) and should help progressing towards the Renewable Energy Directive (2009). Other SIMCelt outputs will also support meeting objectives under the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) Directive (2007). In addition, the outputs also potentially support a number of the investment priorities of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC, or better known as Interreg V), including research & innovation, environment and reduce efficiency and combatting climate change.

For the most part **STECF** work is coherent with the work of other scientific bodies and international organisations. Critically, the coherence between STECF and ICES is generally good. An exception has been in the Mediterranean where there has been a lack of coherence with GFCM assessment activities and FAO-funded work in the region, resulting in some duplication and disparity in the resulting management planning. DG MARE and STECF sought to address this issue through specific meetings with GFCM on the subject, but some inconsistencies persist.

The coherence of studies, pilots and **scientific advice** funded under direct management with **Horizon 2020** is discussed in detail in section 3.1.2 of this report.

The external coherence was generally positively assessed in the Open Public Consultations. The significant majority of the respondents assessed that the measures undertaken were complementary with other EU policies (namely regional, environmental, research, energy, transport, space and industrial policies), however, the opinion that they are 'complementary but could be better coordinated' prevailed in case of all policies mentioned, and within all respondents' categories.

## CONCLUSIONS

Fisheries and aquaculture management are subject to EU and national guidance. Fisheries falls under the CFP, where special considerations include spatial management areas, gear zoning and avoiding conflicts with other sea users, as well as the environmental considerations. Aquaculture is considered a key MEA in regard to the EU Blue Growth strategy, and thus needs to be developed in synergy with other MEAs to maximise cross-sectoral leverage.

The work of STECF is coherent with (and dependent upon) the collation provision of data under the DCF by the Member States. Similarly, the implementation of the landing obligation by MS is coherent with the work of STECF, which is reviewing the joint recommendations being put forward by MS groups.

EUMOFA is the main implementing tool of CMO article 42. It is designed to deliver CMO commitments with respect to market intelligence. EUMOFA internal coherence cannot be challenged. EUMOFA is also coherent with other Commission's initiatives aiming at improving market transparency like for example, market observatories for agriculture products or market observatories for energy prices.

As the Advisory Councils are established under the CFP<sup>100</sup>, their coherence with CFP objectives is inherent.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- A number of EMFF actions, whilst not specifically targeting MSFD, such as WestMed which formulated subsea basin goals to reduce marine and maritime pollution and SIMCELT, which looked at spatial planning to reduce cumulative impacts also tackled major environmental issues. Better integration of such projects with existing frameworks – notably the assessment of cumulative effects under the MSFD – would provide for a more coherent framework.
- It is essential to link marine environmental protection with a shared vision for a sustainable Blue Economy. The assistance mechanism in each sea basin approach is intended to meet these two objectives in order to pave the way for sustainable projects, as was done under the Atlantic Plan.
- The lack of coherence between STECF and GFCM assessment activities should continue to be addressed by DG MARE, GFCM and STECF to avoid duplication and discrepancies.
- The focus of the IMP on the integration of maritime surveillance is viewed as contributory towards the development of a coherent and coordinated approach to

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<sup>100</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/1575 of 23 June 2017 amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/242 laying down detailed rules on the functioning of the Advisory Councils under the common fisheries policy.

maritime issues, calling for closer cooperation across sectoral boundaries involving national and EU maritime authorities. This approach would lead to a more structured and systematic collaboration involving the ability to share information through the development of a Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) established at National and EU levels. It would also lead to enhanced effectiveness and greater efficiencies amongst the many maritime authorities, agencies and bodies involved.

### 3.2.5. EU Added value

The EU added value was assessed by investigating the extent to which the EMFF direct management support has achieved benefits beyond what could have been achieved by national spending.

#### **What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention compared to what could be achieved by Member States at national and/or regional levels?**

EMFF support to **International Organisation's functioning** could be mobilised to organise meetings that could not have been funded otherwise. Notable examples include organisations of CECAF and WECAF meetings and working groups that their umbrella institutions, FAO, could not fund in the absence of dedicated budget<sup>101</sup>. EMFF could also support regular and special meetings of ICCAT commission<sup>102</sup> during which conservation and management measures are discussed between parties and adopted when a consensus is obtained. ICCAT commission meeting are expensive to organise ( $\approx$  EUR 650 000 per meeting) with the organisation core budget (EUR 3.4 million per year<sup>103</sup>) structurally insufficient to cover this level of expenses.

Significant progress has been done to better **understand the European marine environment** that would have been impossible without the EMFF support. Without EU support, EMODnet would not have existed, and without EMODnet, many resources which are now consider essential and obvious, would not exist. For example, there would be no pan-European digital seabed map nor a broad scale seabed habitat map.

EU involvement in **EUMOFA** achieves benefits beyond what could be achieved at national levels: one added value component of EUMOFA is to streamline different data sources of interest in relation to the EU market for fisheries and aquaculture products (inter alia national sources, FAO, Eurostat) and to harmonise and publish these data under standardised formats while ensuring that needs of stakeholders in all Member States are covered.

Furthermore, EU support is essential to the functioning of the **STECF** as it provides budget for MS expert participation in meetings as well as the secretariat of the STECF. Without this centralised coordination, it is understood that such a body would not exist. In its absence, such scientific and technical advice would be managed by Member States where the priorities, agendas and approaches to the provision of advice would differ. The essential element of independence and broad participation would be lost if advice were derived from national spending, along with much of the credibility of the outputs.

With regards to **Advisory Councils**, without EU support the ACs would not exist in their present form. Some suggest that regional industry groupings may have been formed for some sea areas to respond to the multiple fisheries management and marine development issues facing the sector. However, this would likely be a 100% industry group rather than having a 60/40 membership requirement. While this insistence on the 60/40 membership

<sup>101</sup> CECAF and WECAFC budgets are small and contributions from FAO regular budget have been decreasing

<sup>102</sup> According to ICCAT status, regular meetings of the Commission are organised every two years. Special meetings are organised between two regular meetings.

<sup>103</sup> ICCAT biennial report 2015-2016 – Volume 4

creates challenges, the participation of Other Interest Groups (OIGs) helps to ensure that CFP environmental objectives are considered and that a wider range of views are debated at AC level. While a consensus view cannot always be achieved, the considerable effort applied by the ACs to do so is of great benefit to the Commission. The alternative would be the Commission receiving these disparate views directly with no understanding of where common ground may exist. The EU value added for the 40% OIG membership is that financial support means that an organisation's resources are less of a barrier and so a wider range of stakeholders have the potential to participate.

The significant EU added-value of **FARNET** is represented by the fact that the local needs are unlikely to be addressed by means other than FARNET. When referring to the network as such, the SU has encouraged the setting-up of national networks aimed at supporting FLAGs. Such networks already exist in most but not all MS. However, their overall performance is limited compared to FARNET's. Other elements of FARNET/SU's EU added value which confirm that similar results could not be achieved without it and/or at national/regional level include:

- a privileged position from which the SU observes and "animates" CLLD across the EU. The knowledge of what goes on the ground allows the SU to detect problems, identify solutions and encourage stakeholders;
- a neutral non-political stance, allowing the SU to use the authority that comes with its affiliation to DG MARE without being perceived as authoritative by often conservative and inward-looking fishery and coastal local communities.

In the Open Public Consultations respondents were asked what the EU-added value is for the activities undertaken within CFP. Generally, all the measures were considered best done at EU level or at least adding to work at the national level, rather at the national level or through bilateral or multilateral agreements. This view was shared by the respondents from different sectors, but was the most significant for those from the private sector.

## CONCLUSION

The interventions supported by the direct management component of EMFF achieve benefits beyond what could have been achieved by national and/or regional spending. EUMOFA, STECF, Advisory Councils and FARNET, as well as maritime policy interventions such as EMODnet and mechanisms and projects for fostering cross-border maritime spatial planning would have not existed had it not been for EMFF support.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain support to EUMOFA: the involvement of the Commission in an observatory can also be considered as beneficial as public bodies are sometimes seen as more objective and credible than private bodies when pursuing this activity. Public bodies may assure better access to information for all market participants involved in the value chain and promote an open, stable and standardised framework for the collection and presentation of data. The involvement of the Commission also ensures that the needs of all Member States are addressed.
- Maintain support to Advisory Councils: a stakeholder group without EU funding would not be as well-resourced with member organisations or Member States expected to foot the bill. This would prevent participation by certain smaller sector groups and the ACs would experience major difficulty in agreeing fee levels and recovering monies due. The secretariat could spend a lot of its time on financial administrative matters rather than on helping the group to produce the advice.
- The EMODnet biological data group has also one of the strongest potentials to leverage new business and economic growth, however, the observation of marine biodiversity faces more challenges than for other groups, mainly due to the nature

of marine life. Increasing the proportion of funding programmed for this group, will contribute to develop the right tools to make high quality biological and biodiversity data (which exists in various unconnected organisations and data systems) more easily accessible in a harmonised way via EMODnet.

- Handing over FARNET’s tasks to more narrow levels of intervention entails a high risk of localisation. Furthermore, national networks encounter several difficulties. First, national budgetary concerns cause some MSs to be altogether unable to invest in their establishment. Moreover, those MSs who are prepared to invest cannot deploy financial resources that are comparable to those supporting FARNET operations. Second, national networks are not as highly specialized as FARNET. Finally, they cannot capitalize on the learning potential that a transnational network such as FARNET possesses.



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