

European Fisheries Fund

FACT SHEET



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The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) began operating in January 2007. Its aim is to improve the sector's competitiveness and help it become environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. To achieve this, it has a budget of EUR 3.8 billion (or EUR 4.3 billion in current prices) for the seven-year period 2007-2013. Funding is available for all sectors of the industry: sea and inland fishing, aquaculture, and processing and marketing of fisheries products. Particular attention is given to fishing communities most affected by recent changes.

The EFF is designed to be simpler to manage and implement than its predecessor, the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). Alongside its greater flexibility, the EFF contains several innovations. These include assistance to fishermen to move towards more selective fishing methods, increased emphasis on sustainable fishing and measures of common interest, including pilot projects, finance for local development strategies and support for aqua-environmental measures. As under the FIFG, no funding is available for the construction of new vessels or to increase the size of their holds. In common with the other EU structural funds, EU financing cannot be used alone, but only to complement national, regional or local expenditure.

A further novelty is the fact that funding is now heavily geared towards the 'convergence' regions, i.e. those whose economic welfare is below the EU average.

How it works

National authorities draw up a strategic plan giving a long-term view of how they see the development of their fisheries and aquaculture policy between 2007 and 2013, and explaining how this meets the CFP's objectives. The plan must define priorities, objectives, public spending estimates and deadlines. This is then followed by an operational programme describing in more detail the way the national authorities intend to translate the opportunities offered by the EFF into practice. Both are prepared in close consultation with regional and local economic and social partners.

Funding opportunities

The EFF targets five priority areas. Many of its activities continue the practices of the FIFG, but some are new.

Adjustment of the fleet (axis 1)

If a Member State decides to cut fishing opportunities, aid may be available for vessels permanently or temporarily ceasing their activities. Aid can also be given for a range of other operations: on-board

safety and working improvements, more selective gear, small-scale coastal fisheries, socio-economic measures including early retirement, and retraining.

Vessels in certain fleet segments may receive aid to replace their engines to make them more energy efficient, but not more powerful.

Aquaculture, processing and marketing, inland fishing (axis 2)

Aid is available for diversification into new aquaculture species and species with good market prospects, environmentally-friendly aquaculture, public and animal health measures, processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products, and lifelong learning.

Special provisions exist for inland fishing, reflecting its importance in central and Eastern Europe.

Measures of common interest (axis 3)

These are activities not normally supported by the private sector and whose overall importance goes beyond the commercial interests of individual companies. They can include protection and development of aquatic fauna and flora, ports, shelters and landing sites, development of new marketing and promotional campaigns, pilot projects and other collective actions.

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Sustainable development of fisheries areas (axis 4)

Funding in this category is based on local development strategies, reflecting a bottom-up approach. It aims to help local communities reduce their economic dependency on fish catches.

Coastal communities, and those near lakes and ponds with a significant level of employment in the fisheries sector, are eligible for EU aid to strengthen their general competitiveness, add value to fisheries products, develop tourism infrastructure and services, protect the environment, and encourage inter-regional and transnational cooperation.

Technical assistance (axis 5)

This category covers items such as studies, reports, information activities and other actions relating to the implementation of the operational programmes.

Regulatory framework

There are three elements: a Council regulation setting out basic principles; a Commission implementing regulation laying down detailed procedures that Member States must follow; and a *vade mecum* of practical advice for national authorities on how to draft and implement their programmes.

Emergency regime

In July 2008, the Council adopted some temporary derogations to the EFF rules, to make it easier for Member States to accompany the process of fleet restructuring in response to the serious economic crisis that was sweeping through the industry. These included the creation of Fleet Adaptation Schemes, which provide additional support to encourage substantial capacity

reductions in those fleet segments which are most fuel-intensive. These derogations will last for two years, and will be subject to ongoing monitoring and assessment. Full details can be found in Council Regulation (EC) No 744/2008 of 24 July 2008 instituting a temporary specific action aiming to promote the restructuring of the European Community fishing fleets affected by the economic crisis.

Documents

Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 of 27 July 2006 on the European Fisheries Fund.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 498/2007 of 26 March 2007 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 198/2006 on the European Fisheries Fund.

Allocation of EFF aid from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013

Member State	Convergence	Non convergence	Total
Belgium		26 261 648	26 261 648
Bulgaria	80 009 708		80 009 708
Czech Republic	27 106 675		27 106 675
Denmark		133 675 169	133 675 169
Germany	96 861 240	59 004 177	155 865 417
Estonia	84 568 039		84 568 039
Ireland		42 266 603	42 266 603
Greece	176 836 728	30 995 509	207 832 237
Spain	945 692 445	186 198 467	1 131 890 912
France	34 250 343	181 802 741	216 053 084
Italy	318 281 864	106 060 990	424 342 854
Cyprus		19 724 418	19 724 418
Latvia	125 015 563		125 015 563
Lithuania	54 713 408		54 713 408
Hungary	34 291 357	559 503	34 850 860
Malta	8 372 329		8 372 329
Netherlands		48 578 417	48 578 417
Austria	187 326	5 071 992	5 259 318
Poland	734 092 574		734 092 574
Portugal	223 943 059	22 542 190	246 485 249
Romania	230 714 207		230 714 207
Slovenia	21 640 283		21 640 283
Slovakia	12 681 459	1 007 069	13 688 528
Finland		39 448 827	39 448 827
Sweden		54 664 803	54 664 803
United Kingdom	43 150 701	94 677 188	137 827 889
Total	3 252 409 308	1 052 539 711	4 304 949 019

* Amounts in EUR, current prices