EMFF
EUROPEAN MARITIME AND FISHERIES FUND

What is the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund?
The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is the fund for the EU’s maritime and fisheries policies for 2014 to 2020. It is one of the five European Structural and Investment Funds, which complement each other and seek to promote a growth- and jobs-based recovery in the EU. The fund:
- helps fishers in the transition to sustainable fishing;
- supports coastal communities in diversifying their economies;
- finances projects that create new jobs and improve quality of life along EU coasts;
- makes it easier for applicants to access financing.

Specific objectives
- Promoting competitive, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible fisheries and aquaculture.
- Fostering the development and implementation of the EU’s integrated maritime policy in a complementary manner to the cohesion policy and to the common fisheries policy.
- Promoting balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas.
- Fostering the implementation of the common fisheries policy.

Why is it necessary?
The EU has exclusive competence for the conservation of marine biological resources, both in EU waters and in relation to the international obligations deriving from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and from other United Nations agreements to which the EU is a party. The exclusive competence also applies to the bilateral fisheries agreements signed with non-EU countries. All these areas are regulated by the common fisheries policy.

The common fisheries policy also includes areas of shared competence between the EU and its Member States, where the subsidiarity principle applies. For aquaculture, the EU added value lies in finding solutions to the sector’s most common problems; in market policy, Member States and economic actors maintain a high degree of autonomy in applying the various market policy instruments at their disposal.

The integrated maritime policy provides a coherent approach to all other maritime issues through close coordination and cooperation across sectors and between international, national, regional and local decision-makers. Similarly, the blue economy policy encourages EU governments, industry and stakeholders to develop joint approaches to driving growth while safeguarding the marine environment and the EU’s unique maritime assets.

The EMFF is not only directed at fisheries and innovation in fisheries, aquaculture and processing, but also at supporting diversification and promoting the economic development of fisheries-dependent areas.

Outlook for the 2021–2027 period
The programme will be continued in the next multiannual financial framework, with the inclusion of ‘aquaculture’ in its name.

Budget implementation (in million EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXECUTED COMMITMENTS</th>
<th>EXECUTED PAYMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>931.5</td>
<td>2018 7509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>939.8</td>
<td>2019 843.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>960.0</td>
<td>2020 869.9</td>
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Key performance indicators

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<th>Baseline</th>
<th>PROGRESS TO TARGET</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Value of aquaculture production in the EU (in billion EUR) (1)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>EUR 4.7 billion out of 2023 target of EUR 4.9 billion</td>
<td>On track</td>
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<td>Percentage of surface area of marine waters conserved through protection measures</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>&gt;100%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12.0% of the exclusive economic zone compared to a target of 10.0%</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of employment maintained with support from the EMFF (in number of jobs)</td>
<td>26 550</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>18 984 jobs out of 26 550</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of local strategies selected by fisheries local action groups</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>&gt;100%</td>
<td>367 strategies compared to a target of 276</td>
<td>On track</td>
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(1) Latest available data are from Eurostat, 2018.

% of target achieved by the end of 2020

Where are we in the implementation?

- For 2019 (the most recent year for which complete, validated data are available), the pace of implementation was comparable to 2018. EUR 3.21 billion in funding was committed, corresponding to 56.5% of the total funding available. Payments to beneficiaries continued to advance and reached EUR 1.73 billion (or 30.5% of the total EMFF funding), with around one third of all payments being made in 2019.
- At the end of 2020, cumulative net payments to Member States totalled just over EUR 2.4 billion. This represents 43% of the total amounts allocated to the programmes, and shows significant progress from the position at the end of 2019 (29%). This trend is comparable to that seen in the other European Structural and Investment Funds, and indicates that the measures introduced by the Commission to help Member States tackle the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were broadly effective.

Performance assessment

- **Support to the EU fishing fleet.** By the end of 2019, the EMFF had supported a total of 9 874 individual vessels (14.6% of the total active fleet). This type of support helped improve health and safety conditions on board, as well finance fishing gear innovations to reduce environmental impact and improve energy efficiency.
- **Small-scale coastal fisheries.** To date, the EMFF has supported 4 547 such small-scale fisheries' vessels, with an average contribution of EUR 17 800 per vessel. The small-scale fishing sector is made up of smaller vessels and is particularly important as it typically represents micro and small enterprises operating in small coastal communities.
- **Landing obligation and innovation.** Discarding is the practice of returning unwanted catches to the sea, either dead or alive, because they are undersized, due to market demand, because the fisher’s quota is full or because of catch-composition rules. The introduction of the landing obligation since the reform of the common fisheries policy of 2013 aims at eliminating this wasteful practice. Member States committed EUR 116.7 million in EMFF support to facilitate implementation of the landing obligation, along with EUR 164.1 million in EMFF support for innovation, nearly half of which was related to aquaculture.
- **Natura 2000, biodiversity and climate change.** Member States committed EUR 336 million in EMFF support to measures directly or potentially supporting the Natura 2000 network, and EUR 1.4 billion to support operations relating to protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems. Overall, the EMFF contribution to climate change objectives by the end of 2019 was EUR 926 million, or 18.3% of the total EMFF funding committed to date.
- **Outermost regions.** Spain, France and Portugal committed EUR 131 million to support the economic viability of operations in the outermost regions.
- Operations financed via shared management continue to help improve the sustainability of fishing and aquaculture, as well as to maintain and protect the natural environment, encourage innovation and adoption of new technology and increase cooperation and partnerships between businesses, thus contributing to the achievement of these objectives.
- In fostering the implementation of the common fisheries policy, the Commission had been managing the fisheries conservation policy to achieve maximum sustainable yield for fish stocks by 2020, which is demonstrated by a positive trend in the indicator on maximum sustainable yield levels. Recent economic data also show that efforts to make fisheries sustainable pay off in terms of higher, stable yields, fleet profitability and jobs. Despite the overall improvement, there are areas such as the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea where most of the stocks are still being exploited beyond sustainable levels. The Commission adopted and implemented concrete regional action plans to reverse the stock situation and improve science and control. An example of this is the adoption of stand-alone fishing opportunities for both the Mediterranean and the Black Sea for the first time in December 2019. In addition, the Commission is further pursuing its efforts in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, especially through negotiations on the proposed revision of the fisheries control system.

Concrete examples of achievements

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<th>9 800</th>
<th>At least 100 000</th>
<th>47 000</th>
<th>EUR 164 million</th>
<th>8 445</th>
<th>5 000</th>
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<td>fishing vessels benefited from the EMFF between 2014 and 2019 (about 19% of the EU fleet). 46% of the vessels belonged to the small-scale coastal fishing fleet.</td>
<td>fishers, 442 000 members of producer organisations and 53 500 employees of processing companies benefited from the EMFF between 2014 and 2019.</td>
<td>operations were selected to receive funding under the EMFF between 2014 and 2019, almost 43 000 of which were addressed to small and medium-sized enterprises or private persons.</td>
<td>in contributions from the EMFF was used to support innovation and new technologies through 815 operations between 2014 and 2019.</td>
<td>projects addressing the environment and resource efficiency were selected between 2014 and 2019, with an EMFF contribution of EUR 1 312 million.</td>
<td>operations were supported relating to better management of Natura 2000 and other marine protected areas between 2014 and 2019.</td>
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