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Questions and answers on the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

What is the EMFF?

The EMFF is the financial instrument that will help deliver the objectives of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and that will support the implementation of the EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP).

The EMFF will support the social dimension of the reformed CFP. It will focus on the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture as well as support to growth and jobs in coastal communities across the EU.

The EMFF is part of the EU multi-annual financial framework for the 2014-2020 programming period. Its total budget of € 6.5 billion is completed by € 0.9 billion for sustainable fisheries partnership agreements with third countries.

What are the priorities of EMFF?

The EMFF focuses on the long-term objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth over the 2014-2020 period. It will contribute to sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture, to a consistent framework for the Integrated Maritime Policy and to a balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas. These broad objectives are structured around six priorities within the EMFF:

- 1. Environmentally sustainable, resource efficient, competitive fisheries which are more selective, produce less discards, and do less damage to marine ecosystems. EMFF support under this priority will thus focus on innovation and added value that can make the fisheries sector economically viable and resilient to external shocks and to competition from third countries.
- 2. Environmentally sustainable, resource efficient, competitive aquaculture to make this industry green, economically viable and competitive, while providing EU consumers with healthy and highly nutritional products.
- 3. Fostering the implementation of the CFP through the collection and management of data to improve scientific knowledge and through support to monitoring, control and enforcement of fisheries legislations.
- 4. Increasing employment and territorial cohesion through the promotion of economic growth and social inclusion in coastal and inland communities depending on fishing.
- 5. Fostering marketing and processing through improved market organisation for fishery and aquaculture products and through improved processing and marketing sectors in particular in Outermost Regions.

- 6. Fostering the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy.

In addition, the EMFF will include accompanying measures for voluntary payments to Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and technical assistance.

Who will benefit and how?

- European communities dependent on fishing will benefit from new opportunities in fisheries, aquaculture and other areas of the maritime economy, which in turn will have positive spin-offs on local growth and employment.
- European aquaculture will have more investment to promote green growth, innovation and competitiveness.
- The European processing industry will benefit from stable supplies of wild and farmed produce.
- Scientists and researchers will benefit from specific provisions for the public funding of data collection and scientific advice and from measures to foster innovation and transfer of knowledge between scientists and fishermen.
- Companies engaged in coastal or offshore economic activities as well as enterprises providing services will also benefit from the fund.
- European consumers will have access to healthy fisheries and farmed products with high nutritional value.

How is environmental sustainability ensured?

The EMFF includes funding opportunities for the protection of the environment through measures in support of fisheries resources management including the transition to Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), the introduction of landing obligations, and the adoption of Long Term Management Plans. The EMFF will support, for example:

- The reduction of the impact of fisheries/aquaculture on the environment, including through support for low impact gear.
- Measures to facilitate the introduction of the gradual discard ban, such as more selective fishing gears and techniques; or investments in equipment on board and port facilities necessary to use the unwanted catches.
- Management, restoration and monitoring of Natura 2000 sites and of other marine protected areas.
- Permanent cessation of fishing activities to reduce the fishing pressure from fleet segments in overcapacity.
- Climate change mitigation measures in particular through energy audits and changes of fishing vessels engines to increase energy efficiency and to reduce emissions.
- Marketing measures and promotion campaigns in support of sustainable fishing and aquaculture products

In addition, the budget for data collection and scientific advice (to increase the number of stocks for which scientific advice is available), and fisheries control (to ensure better compliance) has been substantially increased.

What about support to innovation?

The EMFF also includes measures with a strong focus on innovation in order to promote the development of new products and processes. The aim is to help the fisheries and

aquaculture sectors to add value to their products, to reduce the environmental impact of their activities and to reduce production costs. This support is particularly important for the small scale coastal fleet.

Other measures will encourage co-operation between scientists and fishermen, with the aim of achieving more sustainable fishing.

The support for community-led local development in fisheries-dependent areas will also help disseminate innovation measures at local level.

The EMFF will seek to promote new forms of aquaculture with high potential for innovation and growth potential, such as offshore and non-food aquaculture (for example producing algae). Multifunctional aquaculture is an opportunity to diversify the income of aquaculture enterprises through complementary activities, such as angling, tourism, environmental services, direct sale or educational activities.

What about the social dimension?

In line with the Europe 2020 priority of inclusive growth, the EMFF will promote social cohesion and job creation in fisheries dependent communities, in particular through diversification into other maritime sectors. It will also bring reinforced support to the community-led approach to the sustainable development of fisheries areas.

The EMFF will also provide support for many forms of training in particular for unemployed youths and spouses or partners of fishers and fish farmers on activities related to fishing and to their role in the family business (i.e. helping them to acquire new business skills). Finally it will provide aid for business start-ups of young fishermen.

Small-scale coastal fleets are important for employment and often hold together the social fabric of coastal communities. The EMFF will give them priority and privileged access to funding, in particular by applying a higher rate of aid intensity. They will also be able to receive professional advice on business and marketing strategies, for example to start up an activity to generate additional income.

What about the Integrated Maritime Policy?

The EMFF will also support the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), which facilitates coordination across borders and across sectors and brings about cost-effective synergies and money savings.

Funding will mainly focus on those initiatives that benefit various sectors across the board but cannot be accomplished by any single sector-based policy or single Member State. These are maritime spatial planning, integrated maritime surveillance and marine knowledge.

- Maritime Spatial Planning provides a stable legal framework to manage marine areas, resources and services in a sustainable way. It can accelerate maritime investments and lower legal and administrative costs for companies. The EMFF will be able to finance activities which support the implementation of maritime spatial planning in cross-border regions.
- Integrated Maritime Surveillance helps public actors to share data and thus cope with real time events at sea more efficiently. It avoids costly duplication of resource-consuming maritime surveillance activities. Integrated surveillance means better use of public money. EMFF could finance the creation of a de-centralised information sharing environment to improve maritime surveillance.
- Marine Knowledge 2020 aims at pooling together Europe's fragmented marine knowledge into a resource database that is freely accessible to the public. EMFF

would help finance the establishment of this database, known as EMODNet. Entrepreneurs and academics need coherent and good-quality data to develop their business and research, and thus increase Europe's competitiveness. Marine Knowledge 2020 is estimated to save around €300 million a year for the EU.

How to ensure that the money is correctly spent?

Along with the other European Structural and Investment Funds, the EMFF has a number of novel features which will ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of programmes:

- A number of framework conditions must be in place "ex-ante", before the funds are disbursed (for instance, sufficient administrative capacity to deliver on fisheries control and data collection) to ensure that investments can be made in the most effective manner.
- Progress towards the achievement of objectives will be closely monitored and measured against a set of milestones agreed as part of a performance framework. The release of additional funds, the performance reserve, will also be contingent on performance.
- Access to funds will also conditional upon the compliance of Member States and operators with the objectives, rules and targets of the Common Fisheries Policy, in particular control obligations, the rules against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU Regulation) and the data collection obligations of the Member States. In practice this will mean that:
 - Fishermen who have committed serious infringements, in terms of fisheries control or who own fishing vessels included in the IUU list, will not receive any subsidies (and will need to return funds received).
 - The Commission may interrupt or suspend payments to Member States that do not comply with their obligations in terms of control and data collection.

Last but not least, funding under the EMFF is subject to new transparency rules: Member States will have to publish in a single website or a single website portal a list of operations supported under the EMFF along with the amount of EU contribution for each operation. This list will be updated at least every six months. This is particularly important to prevent that beneficiaries involved in illegal fishing activities receive funding.

What about simplifying and cutting red tape?

With the integration of five CFP and IMP financial instruments into a single regulation, all rules and procedures are streamlined and unified into a single set of financial decisions, reporting, monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Under the previous programming period there were no limits to how many times a project could be audited. This possibility could represent a disproportionate administrative burden for beneficiaries. Projects under a certain threshold will be audited only once and bigger projects no more than one time per accounting year.

The rules for implementing the EMFF will be the same as those for the Structural Funds (European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund etc). This will allow more efficient administrative gains for the Member states' administrations.

See also: [IP/14/458](#)