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EVALUATION

Ex-post Evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) for the 2014-2020 programming period

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Glossary

Term or acronym	*Meaning or definition*
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
BMVI	Integrated Border Management Fund – Border Management and Visa Policy Instrument
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
Common Indicators	The set of indicators defined in Annex IV of the AMIF Regulation (EU) 516/2014
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
DG	Directorate-General
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
DG RTD	Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
Direct Management	In direct management, the European Commission is directly responsible for all steps in a programme's implementation.
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EBF	External Border Fund
EC	European Commission
EIF	European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals
EMAS	Emergency Assistance
EMN	European Migration Network
ERF	European Refugee Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus

EU	European Union
Eurostat	European Statistical Office
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
FEAD	Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived
FIR	Final implementation report
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
Indirect Management	Funding managed by partner organisations or other authorities inside or outside the EU, e.g. national authorities or international organisations. The majority of the EU budget allocated to humanitarian aid and international development, for instance, is implemented under indirect management.
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISF	Internal Security Fund
MS	Member States
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RF	European Return Fund
SA	Specific Action
SCOs	Simplified cost options
SFC	Electronic data exchange system for shared management
Shared Management	In shared management, both the European Commission and national authorities in Member States, such as ministries and public institutions, are in charge of running a particular programme.
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SO	Specific Objective
SOLID	Collective funds that were used to fund migration actions in the 2007-2013 period. The SOLID Funds were comprised of four instruments: the European Refugee Fund (ERF), the External Border Fund (‘EBF’), the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (‘EIF’) and the European Return Fund (‘RF’).
SWD	Staff Working Document
TA	Technical Assistance
TCN	Third-country national

TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFEU	Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union
UA	Union Actions
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (hereinafter 'AMIF' or the 'Fund') was established by Regulation No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council [1](hereinafter, 'AMIF Regulation') for the 2014-2020 programming period , applies as of 1 January 2014 to all Member States (including the United Kingdom which ceased to be a Member State on 31 January 2020 and with exception of Denmark[2]).

The purpose of the ex-post evaluation is set out in Article 57(2),(b) of the Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council[3] (hereinafter 'the Horizontal Regulation')[4] requires the Commission to carry out an ex-post evaluation by 30 June 2024 to assess the effects of the AMIF Regulation and Horizontal Regulation following the closure of the national programmes.

The deadline of 30 June 2024 was extended by one year further to the amendment of the Horizontal Regulation by Regulation (EU) 2022/585[5], following the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, which extended the implementation of AMIF, as well as of the Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visa[6] and the Internal Security Fund – Police[7] (hereinafter, also jointly as the "Home Affairs Funds") by one year, to allow the Member States to fully use any unspent amounts from their national programmes, and, where necessary, to swiftly revise the implementation of their programmes to address the challenges arising from the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. The evaluation covers the entire implementation period of the AMIF, that is, from 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2024. The material scope covers activities under the three existing management modes: shared management, direct management and indirect

[1] Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, amending Council Decision 2008/381/EC and repealing Decisions No 573/2007/EC and No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decision 2007/435/EC, OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, p. 168-194, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/516/2022-04-12

[2] The AMIF Regulation is based on legal bases under Title V of Part Three TFEU, concerning the area of freedom, security and justice. As a consequence, the application of the Regulation to Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland is subject to the provisions laid down in Protocol No 21 and Protocol No 22 annexed to the TEU and the TFEU. In accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of Protocol No 22, Denmark does not take part in the adoption by the Council of measures proposed pursuant to Title V of Part Three TFEU, and such measures are not binding upon or applicable in Denmark. In accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of Protocol No 21, the United Kingdom and Ireland do not take part in the adoption by the Council of measures proposed pursuant to Title V of Part Three TFEU, and such measures are not binding on or applicable in the United Kingdom or Ireland. In accordance with Article 3 of Protocol No 21, the United Kingdom and Ireland notified their wish to take part in the adoption and application of the AMIF Regulation.

[3] OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, p. 112-142, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/514/2022-04-12

[4] OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, p. 112-142, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/514/2022-04-12

[5] Regulation (EU) 2022/585.

[6] Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing as part of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa and repealing Decision No 574/2007/EC. OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, pp. 143–167.

[7] Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 Abril 2014 establishing, as part of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management and repealing Council Decision 2007/125/JHA. OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, pp. 93–111. ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/513/oj.

management. The geographical scope includes all 27 AMIF participating Member States, i.e., all Member States during the period except Denmark.

The evaluation primarily focuses on assessing the main evaluation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, complementarity, EU added value, sustainability, and simplification and reduction of administrative burden. The evaluation questions, as well as the result and output indicators to be used in this evaluation, were defined in a delegated regulation setting up a common monitoring and evaluation framework for all Home Affairs Funds during the 2014-2020 period[8].

The Evaluation is based on twelve evaluation questions organised around these eight evaluation criteria, as follows:

Effectiveness	• How did the Fund contribute to the achievement of SO1? • How did the Fund contribute to the achievement of SO2? • How did the Fund contribute to the achievement of SO3? • How did the Fund contribute to the achievement of SO4?
Efficiency	• Were the general objectives of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost?
Relevance	• Did the objectives of the interventions funded by the Fund correspond to the actual needs?
Coherence	• Were the objectives set in the national programme Fund coherent with the ones set in other programmes funded by EU resources and applying to similar areas of work? • Was the coherence ensured also during the implementation of the Fund?
Complementarity	• Were the objectives set in the national programme and the corresponding implemented actions complementary to those set in the framework of other policies, in particular those pursued by the Member State?
EU Added Value	• Was any value added brought about by the EU support?
Sustainability	• Are the positive effects of the projects supported by the Fund likely to last when the support from AMIF will be over?
Simplification	• Were the Fund management procedures simplified and the administrative burden reduced for its beneficiaries?

1.1. Policy context and development

According to Article 4 (2), (j) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (the 'TFEU'), the Union shares competence with the Member States in the area of freedom, security and justice as laid down in Title V TFEU.

According to Article 67 (1) and (2) TFEU, the Union shall constitute an area of freedom, security and justice with respect for fundamental rights and the different legal systems and traditions of the Member States and it shall frame a **common policy on asylum, immigration and external border control**.

[8] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/207 of 3 October 2016 on the common monitoring and evaluation framework provided for in Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management, OJ L 33, 8.2.2017, p. 1-13, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2017/207/oj.

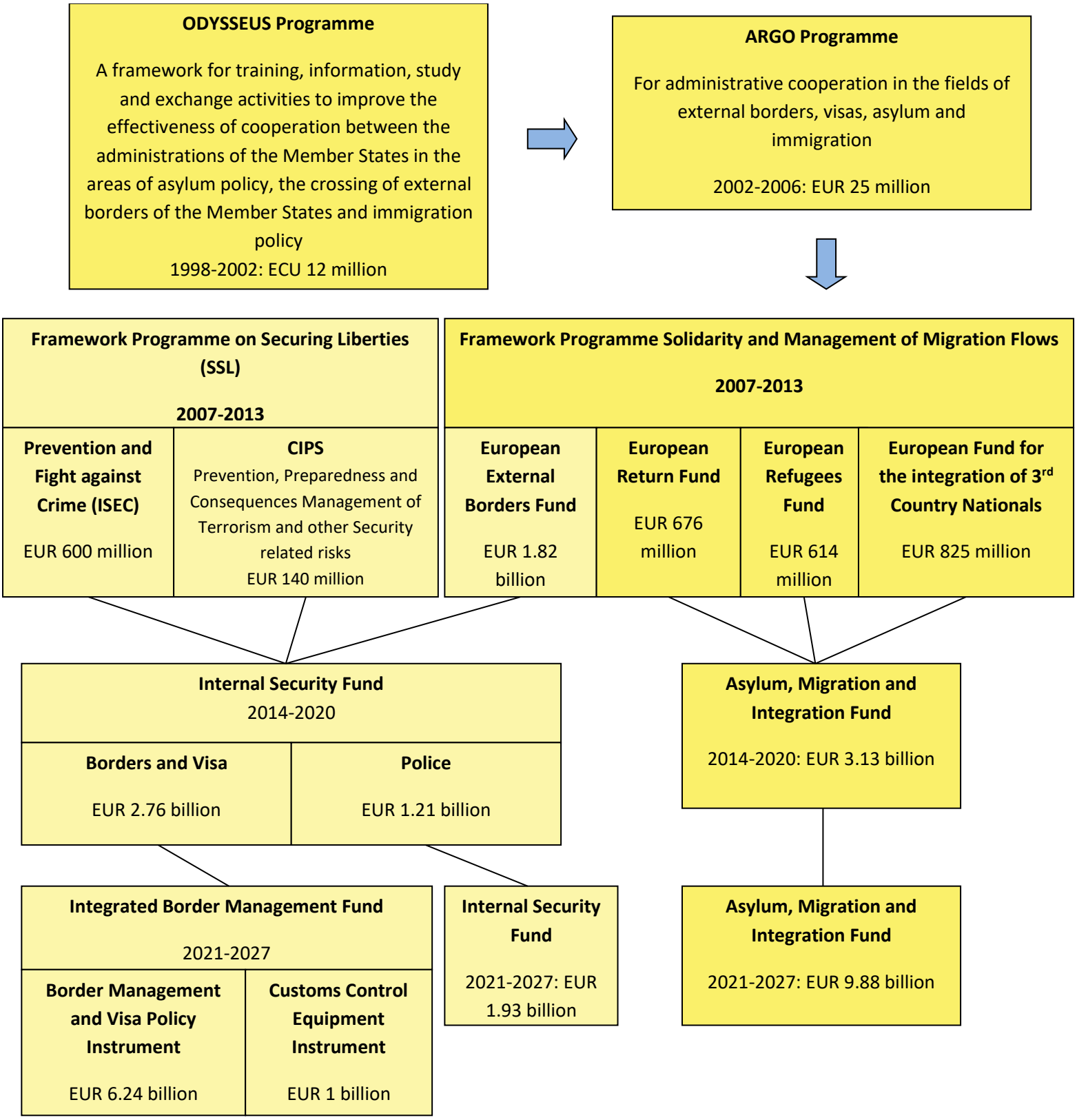
The right to asylum is enshrined in Article 18 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, which became legally binding with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009 and which has the same legal value as the EU Treaties pursuant to Article 6 (1) of the Treaty on the European Union.

Pursuant to Article 79(5) TFEU, Member States maintain the prerogative to determine volumes of admission of third-country nationals coming from outside the EU to their territory in order to seeking work, whether employed or self-employed, as laid down in Article 79(5) TFEU.

The figure below presents the main stages in the development of EU support to the Home Affairs policy areas from 1998 through 2027, with a focus on the funds related to asylum and migration.[9]

[9] Due to lack of space, the diagram does not depict the Framework Programme on Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters which took place from 2002-2006 with an initial allocation of EUR 65 million.

Figure 1: Development of Home Affairs Funds



Migration and border management were addressed through the SOLID Funds from 2007-2013. The SOLID Funds were comprised of four instruments: the European Refugee Fund (ERF)[10], the External Border Fund ('EBF')[11], the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals ('EIF')[12] and the European Return Fund ('RF')[13]. For the 2014-2020 programming period, the policy objectives of the SOLID funds were divided into the AMIF[14] and Internal Security Fund Borders & Visa (ISF BV)[15] and ISF Police (ISF P)[16], with the AMIF being the successor of the ERF, EIF and RF.

During the 2014-2020 programming period, a number of crises and challenges affecting migration flows, from the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015 to the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine in 2022, demanded a high level of flexibility and adaptation in the implementation of the AMIF in response. Notably, the implementation period of the AMIF (and ISF) was extended by 1 year (from 30 June 2023 to 30 June 2024) to allow the Member States to fully use any unspent amounts from those programmes, and, where necessary, to swiftly revise the implementation of their programmes to address the challenges arising from the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022. The way in which the instrument has been able to adapt to this evolution and developments is part of the subjects studied in the evaluation.

1.2. Methodology

The preparatory work for this Evaluation was conducted by an external consortium composed by "Ernst and Young (EY)" and "Technopolis Group" on behalf of the European Commission. The study used qualitative and quantitative methods, including desk review of EU and national documents; EU-level interviews with stakeholders such as European Commission officials, implementing partners, and beneficiaries; focus groups; targeted surveys with beneficiaries and national authorities; and a public consultation. It included data analysis covering country case and thematic case studies. The data collected were

[10] Decision No 573/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 May 2007 establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows and repealing Council Decision 2004/904/EC, *OJ L 144, 6.6.2007, p. 1–21 ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2007/573/oj*.

[11] Decision No 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 May 2007 establishing the External Borders Fund for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows, *OJ L 144, 6.6.2007, p. 22–44*, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2007/574/oj.

[12] 2007/435/EC: Council Decision of 25 June 2007 establishing the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows, *OJ L 168, 28.6.2007, p. 18–36*, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2007/435/oj.

[13] Decision No 575/2007/EC of 23 May 2007 establishing the European Return Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows,' *OJ L 144, 6.6.2007, p. 45–65, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2007/575/oj*.

[14] Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, amending Council Decision 2008/381/EC and repealing Decisions No 573/2007/EC and No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decision 2007/435/EC, OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, p. 168-194, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/516/2022-04-12

[15] Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing as part of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa and repealing Decision No 574/2007/EC. OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, pp. 143–167.

[16] Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 Abril 2014 establishing, as part of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management and repealing Council Decision 2007/125/JHA. OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, pp. 93–111. ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/513/oj.

triangulated to validate consistency across sources and provide well-founded insights and responses to the evaluation questions. A complete description of the methodology applied is included in Annex I.

1.3. Limitations

The evaluation faced challenges related to data quality, availability, and consistency across Member States. Differences in the level of detail in Final Implementation Reports (FIRs) and national ex-post evaluations made cross-country comparisons difficult. The level of granularity was inadequate at times, from discussions at the first focus group remaining general to titles or descriptions of projects being too narrow for precise tagging in the taxonomy. For the counterfactual analysis, the limited availability of data for Denmark required narrowing the time span of the counterfactual analysis to years for which data was available. Additionally, turnover within key stakeholders impacted the continuity of information. To address these challenges, the study applied triangulation methods and cross-referenced multiple sources.

2. WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION?

2.1 Description of the intervention and its objectives

Article 3 of AMIF Regulation sets out the objectives of the Fund. Its **general objective** was "to contribute to the efficient management of migration flows and to the implementation, strengthening and development of the common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection and the common immigration policy, while fully respecting the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union"[17].

Within this general objective, the Fund pursues four **specific objectives (SO)[18]:**

- **SO1**: to strengthen and develop all aspects of the Common European Asylum System, including its external dimension;
- **SO2**: to support legal migration to the Member States in accordance with their economic and social needs, such as labour market needs, while safeguarding the integrity of the immigration systems of Member States, and to promote the effective integration of third-country nationals;
- **SO3**: to enhance fair and effective return strategies in the Member States which contribute to combating illegal immigration, with an emphasis on sustainability of return and effective readmission in the countries of origin and transit;
- **SO4**: to enhance solidarity and responsibility-sharing between the Member States, in particular towards those most affected by migration and asylum flows, including through practical cooperation.

To achieve these objectives, the AMIF was implemented through a **multi-layered management approach**. The majority of AMIF resources were implemented under **shared management**, under which national authorities are responsible for carrying out a national programme following EU guidelines. In additional to the actions defined in the initially adopted programmes, the national programmes also include later funding for

[17] Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) No 516/2014.
[18] Article 3(2) of Regulation (EU) No 516/2014.

resettlement, the transfer of applicants for[19] and beneficiaries of international protection, and specific actions. Specific actions were a means of allocating further resources to the national programmes for projects which require cooperative effort amongst Member States and generate significant added value for the Union.

AMIF was also implemented under **direct management** where interventions are implemented by the Commission and **indirect management** where specific projects are carried out by international bodies acting on behalf of the Commission. Within direct and indirect management were:

- Union actions, which are transnational actions or actions of particular interest to the Union pursuant to Article 20 of AMIF Regulation;
- Emergency assistance (EMAS) to address urgent and specific needs in the event of an emergency situation pursuant to Article 21 of AMIF Regulation;
- the European Migration Network (EMN), an EU network of migration and asylum experts who work together to provide objective, comparable policy-relevant information and knowledge on emerging issues relating to asylum and migration in Europe pursuant to Article 22 of AMIF Regulation;
- and technical assistance pursuant to Article 23 of AMIF Regulation.

2.2 Intervention Logics

To address the objectives above and illustrate the connection between needs and how AMIF implementation addresses those needs, an intervention logic, providing a description of how and why desired changes is expected to happen as a result of the AMIF actions, has been developed for each specific objective.

Specific Objective 1 – Common European Asylum System

This specific objective aimed to **strengthen and develop all aspects of the CEAS, including its external dimension**. The CEAS is based on three pillars: bringing more harmonisation to standards of protection by further aligning the Member States' asylum legislation; effective and well-supported practical cooperation; and increased solidarity and sense of responsibility among EU Member States as well as between EU and non-EU countries.[20] Efforts focused on improving the capacity of Member States' asylum systems, including infrastructure and services, while enhancing cooperation with third countries to better manage migration. These measures aimed to ensure protection for those in need of international assistance and to provide technical support to Member States in collaboration with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The AMIF played a crucial role by supporting the reception and asylum system with actions targeting TCNs, including refugees, asylum seekers and resettled individuals. It further strengthened Member States' ability to develop, monitor, and evaluate their asylum policies, while facilitating the

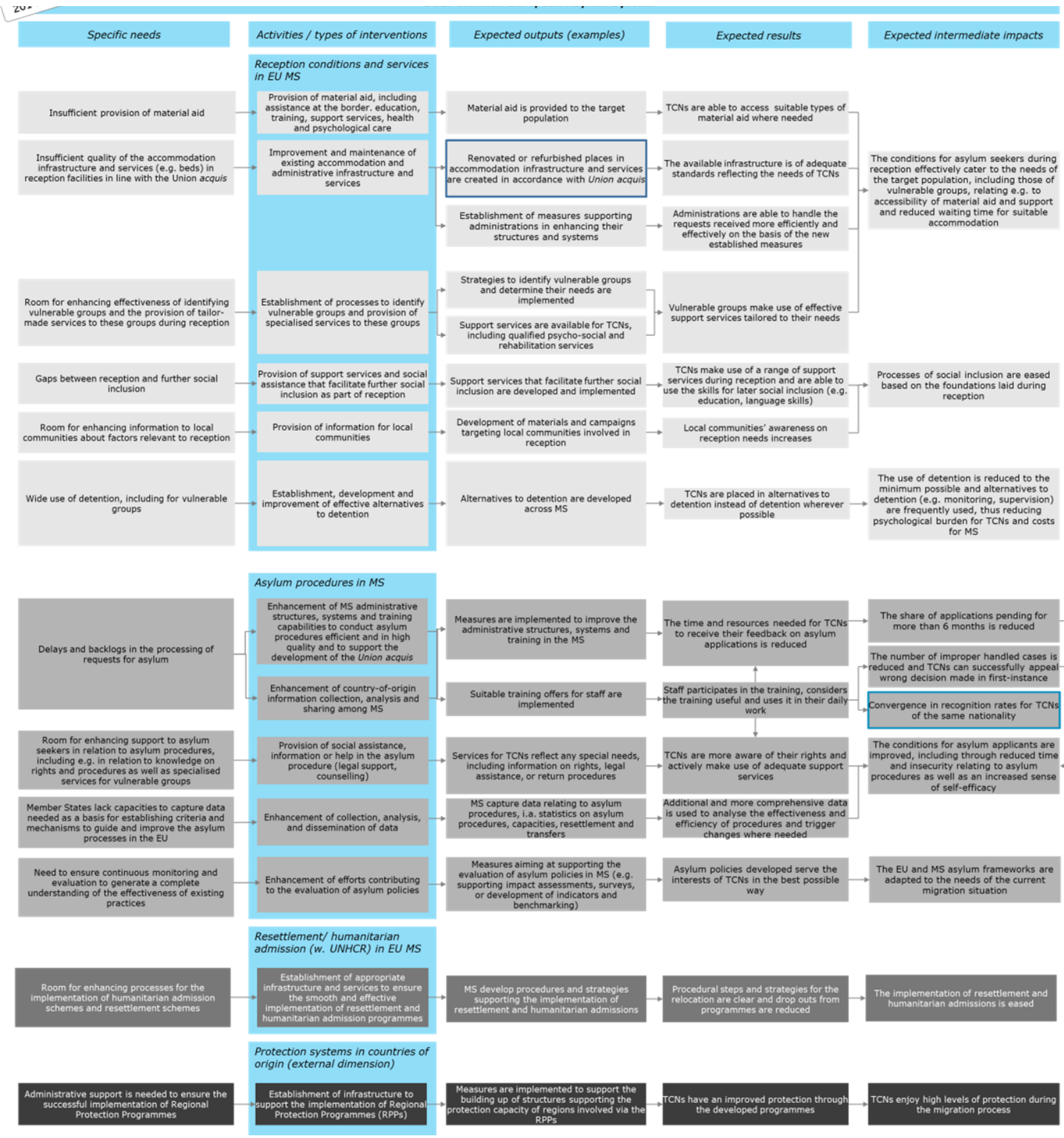
[19] It should be noted that this applies only as per the consolidated version of the AMIF Regulation resulting from the amendment by Regulation (EU) 2018/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2018 amending Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, as regards the recommitment of the remaining amounts committed to support the implementation of Council Decisions (EU) 2015/1523 and (EU) 2015/1601 or the allocation of those amounts to other actions under the national programmes, OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/2000/oj.

[20] European Commission, COM(2008) *360 Final Policy Plan on Asylum: an integrated approach to protection across the EU*, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0360:FIN:EN:PDF.

resettlement and transfer of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, as well as other humanitarian admissions.

The **target groups** addressed under this specific objective include all TCNs who are either in need of international protection, in migration, and those in need of resettlement or humanitarian admission. Furthermore, applicants for or beneficiaries of international protection or asylum are also targeted. The Fund aims to provide legal and sustainable support that responds to the needs of each target group, including those who are particularly vulnerable, such as children.

Figure 2: Intervention logic for SO1

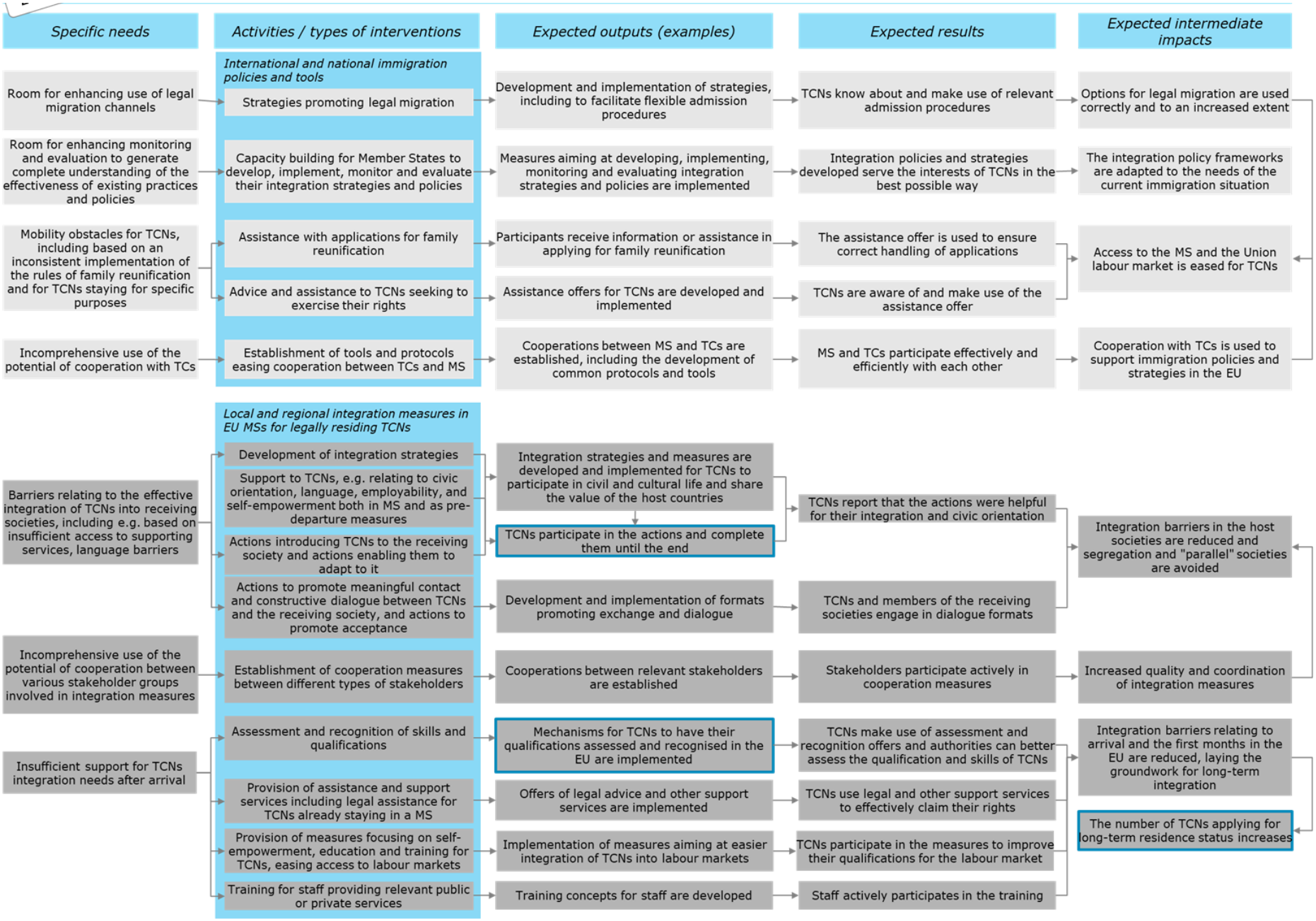


SO2 – Legal migration and integration

The second specific objective focused on **supporting legal migration to the Member States in accordance with their economic and social needs, such as labour market needs, while safeguarding the integrity of the immigration systems and to promote the effective integration of TCNs.** The measures were aimed at supporting Member States in the development and implementation of policies that promoted legal migration, including family reunification and enforcement of labour standards. It also focused on facilitating regular entry and residence in the Union, enhancing cooperation with third countries, as well as promoting integration and social and economic inclusion of TCNs.

The main **target group** under SO2 are TCNs who are lawfully residing in a Member State or are in the process of obtaining such residency. Family members of individuals in the target group can also be included in the measures if necessary. The objective also includes those who have access to integration or professional language courses, have a residency permit, or have a permit for skilled employment or vocational training. The target group should receive tailored support to ensure successful integration and social inclusion, while meeting the economic and social needs of Member States. TCNs receiving information on legal migration pathways or participating in mobility schemes are also included.

Figure 3: Intervention logic for SO2



SO3 – Return

This specific objective aimed to contribute to enhancing fair and effective return strategies in the Member States, which contribute to combating illegal immigration, with an emphasis on sustainability of return and effective readmission in the countries of origin and transit. It supported an integrated and coordinated approach to return management at both Union and Member State levels. The development of capacities for effective and sustainable returns included supporting assisted voluntary return, family tracing and reintegration, while respecting the best interests of minors.

The **target groups** under SO3 comprises those awaiting decisions on their residence permits, TCNs who opt for voluntary return to their countries of origin, individuals who do not meet the requirements for legal residence, including those for whom the enforcement of deportation has been postponed in compliance with the relevant articles of Directive 2008/115/EC, those who have already left the EU Member State either voluntarily or through a removal based on an adminstrative or judicial decision, and TCNs in migration who are in their countries of origin or in transit countries with the purpose of countering irregular migration.

Figure 4: Intervention logic for SO3

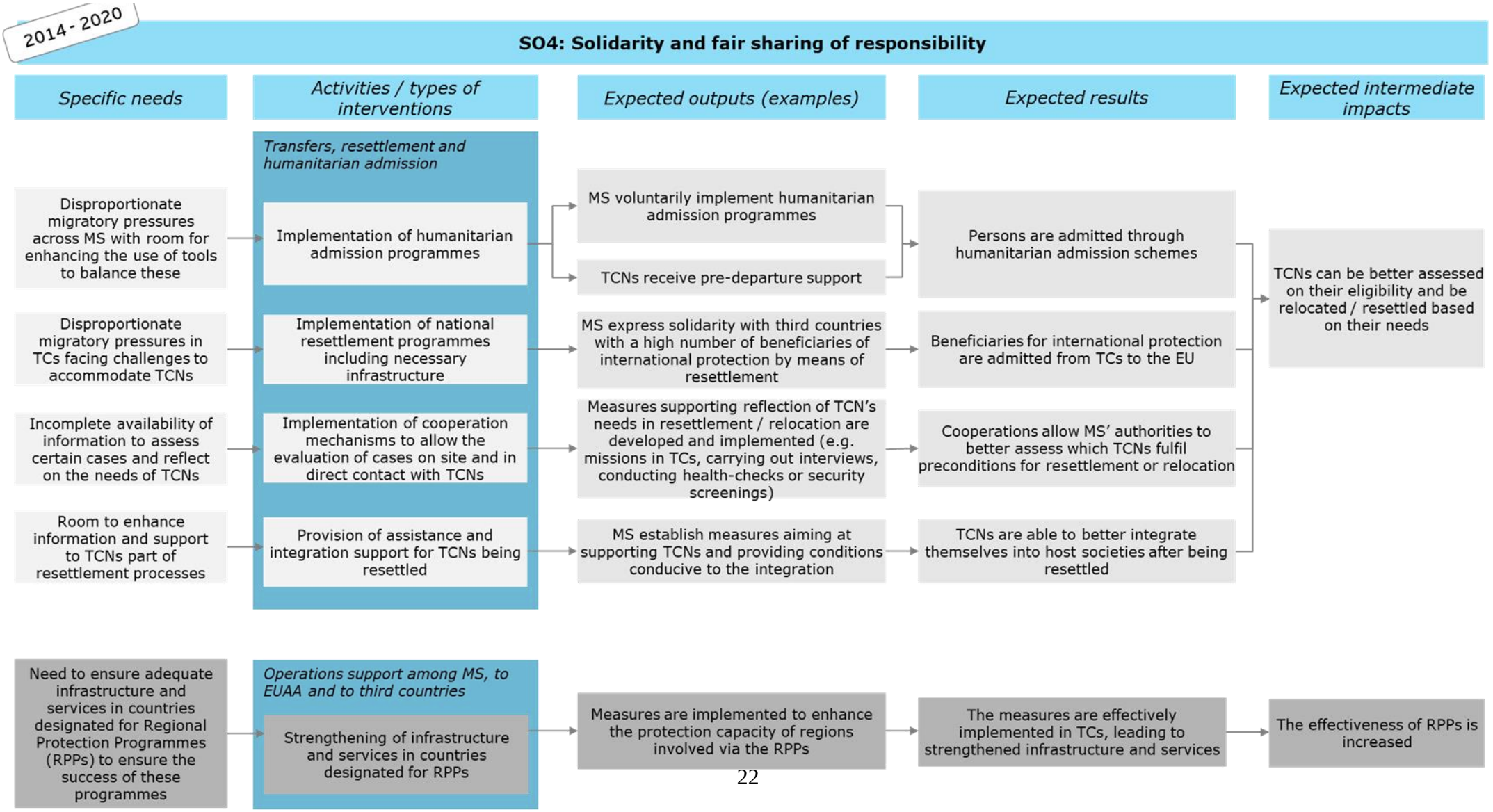


SO4 – Solidarity

This specific objective was set to **enhance solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility between the Member States, in particular as regards those most affected by migration and asylum challenges, including through practical cooperation**. This included supporting resettlement in the Union and transfers of applicants for international protection or beneficiaries of international protection from one Member State to another. This objective aimed to foster a fair sharing of responsibility among Member States, particularly those most affected by migration and asylum challenges.

The main **target group** of SO4 is the Member States as the actions aim to enhance Member States capacity to process applications for international protection and support applicants or beneficiaries of international protection. In addition, SO4 supports Member States resettlement and humanitarian admission efforts, thereby demonstrating solidarity with third countires impacted by a large number of persons in need of international protection.

Figure 5: Intervention logic for SO4



2.3 Point(s) of comparison

Comparison with SOLID funds

The main benchmark of comparison for this ex-post evaluation are the SOLID funds. The ex-post evaluation[21] of the SOLID[22] funds and the AMIF impact assessment highlighted several shortcomings of the SOLID funds design and delivery.

First, the SOLID funds were only deemed suitable for addressing future needs to a limited extent. For example, the ERF did not sufficiently support resettlement nor relocation. The financial incentives for these activities were limited and as a result Member States prioritized other needs. To address this, AMIF established common Union resettlement priorities and Member States received a lump sum up to EUR 10 000 for every person effectively resettled[23] and EUR 6 000 for every applicant or beneficiary of international protection transferred from another Member State[24]. The EIF effectively supported integration strategies at the national level, however, did not adequately address integration challenges at the regional and local levels. In response, the AMIF design placed greater emphasis on integration strategies at the regional and local level. Article 19(1), point (b) of AMIF Regulation lays down that in their national programmes Member States should in particular pursue "setting up and developing integration strategies, encompassing different aspects of the two-way dynamic process, to be implemented at national/local/regional level where appropriate, taking into account the integration needs of third-country nationals at local/regional level, addressing specific needs of different categories of migrants and developing effective partnerships between relevant stakeholders".

Secondly, the SOLID funds were not designed for activities in third countries and therefore the design needed to be adapted to address the external dimension of migration. In response, AMIF supported pre-departure measures in third countries, and cooperation with third countries to facilitate repatriation and readmission.

[21] EU Commission SWD on the Ex Post Evaluation of the European Return Fund 2011-2013 Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Ex post evaluation reports for the period 2011 to 2013 of actions co-financed by the four Funds under the framework programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' {COM(2018) 456 final} - {SWD(2018) 333 final} - {SWD(2018) 334 final} - {SWD(2018) 336 final}

[22] Decision No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 May 2007 establishing the European Return Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General Programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows

Decision No 573/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 May 2007 establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows and repealing Council Decision 2004/904/EC

2007/435/EC: Council Decision of 25 June 2007 establishing the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows

[23] Article 17 of AMIF Regulation.

[24] Article 18 of AMIF Regulation.

Third, the Impact Assessment[25] for the AMIF identified operational limitations in the delivery mechanism of the SOLID programme, mainly caused by the administrative complexity of fund-specific rules and frameworks. In response, AMIF revised the framework for emergency assistance and combined the RF, ERF and EIF in one Fund with a common set of rules to simplify administrative procedures and encourage synergies. AMIF sought to improve reporting by introducing common indicators for the measurement of the specific objectives, and a Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to ensure consistent and uniform reporting across Member States. AMIF also introduced simplified cost options (SCOs) as a means of reducing administrative burden and improving the efficiency of the Fund, SCOs are further addressed in Section 4.1.3 Simplification and reduction of administrative burden.

Funding for SOLID funds

Overall, the ERF, EIF and RF had a total budget of around EUR 2 115 million, of which about 93-96%[26] of the funds was managed under shared management. The remainder of which was implemented under direct management by the Commission.

- In the area of **asylum**, the ERF provided for resources totalling **EUR 614 million**[27] for the period 2008-2013 for all EU Member States except Denmark.

- As concerns **integration**, the EIF addressed the integration of legally residing TCN and legal migration with a financial envelope of **EUR 825 million**[28] for 2007-2013, also excluding Denmark.

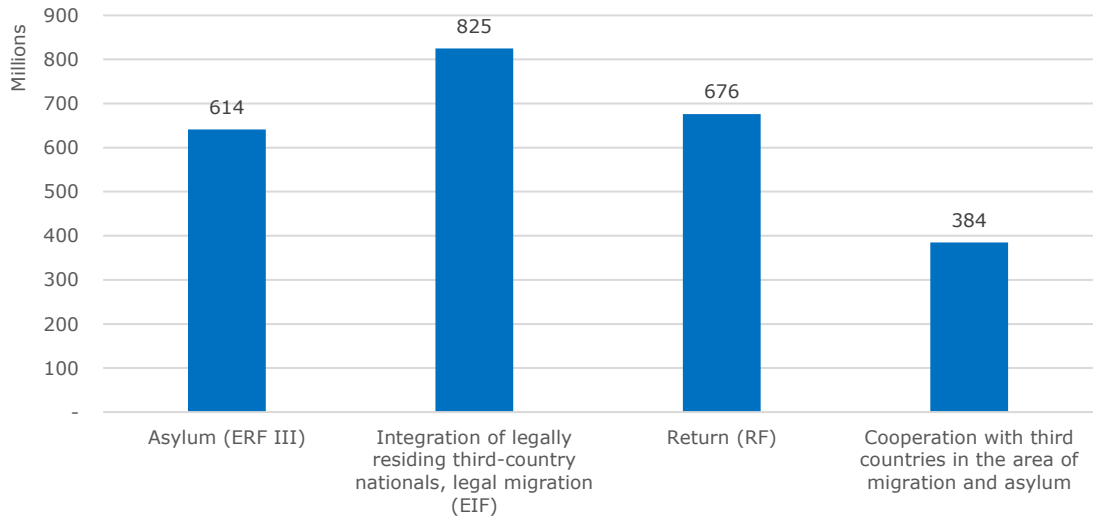
- In the area of **return**, the RF had financial envelope of **EUR 676 million**[29] for 2008-2013, covering all EU Member States except Denmark.

In addition to the ERF, EIF and RF, the external dimension of migration and asylum was addressed through the Thematic Programme "Cooperation with Third Countries in the Area of Migration and Asylum" with EUR **384 million** for 2007-2013[30].

Therefore, **in total, EUR 2 499 million** were allocated for the policy areas relevant to AMIF during the 2007-2013 programming period.

[25] European Commission (2011). *Commission staff working paper – Impact assessment, SEC(2011) 1358 final, 15 November 2011*.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Article 12(1) of the ERF Regulation.
[28] Article 11(1) of the EIF Regulation.
[29] Article 13(1) of the RF Regulation.
[30] European Commission (2011). *Commission staff working paper – Impact assessment, SEC(2011) 1358 final, 15 November 2011*.

Figure 6: Budget allocation for the policy areas of asylum, integration, return and international cooperation in the 2007-2013 funding period (in EUR)



Source: Preparatory study based on 2011 Impact Assessment

3. HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?

This section begins with the state of play of the AMIF as a whole, across all fund components, and then delves deeper into the state of play of the national programmes under shared management, which received the majority of the resources. The data presented covers the EU contribution over the entire programming period 2014-2020 (i.e. the data covers to the end of December 2024).

3.1 Overall description of the implementation set-up

The budgetary appropriations for the AMIF Regulation amounted to EUR 3 137 million.[31] This was further divided into:

- EUR 2 752 million for the national programmes of the Member States;
- EUR 385 million for Union Actions, EMAS, EMN and technical assistance of the Commission.

In the end, contributions to the AMIF for the period 2014-20 exceeded the original allocated budget and amounted to over **EUR 7.7 billion**. Of the total budget allocated to the AMIF, **EUR 7.4 billion had been committed to concrete operations and declared eligible expenditure** (resources spent)[32], resulting in a final absorption rate[33] of 96.3%.

[31] Article 14(1) of the AMIF Regulation.
[32] For direct and indirect management components, namely EMAS, UA and EMN, committed resources are considered spent.
[33] This corresponds to the ratio between the costs declared and the allocations. It measures the effective implementation of activities.

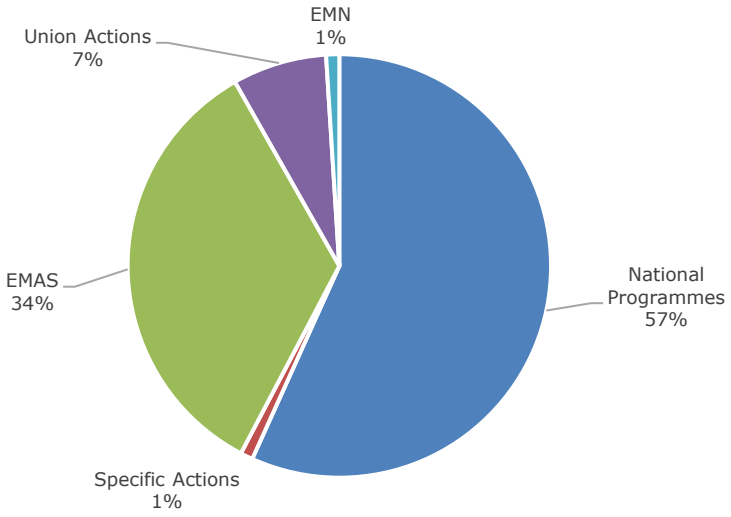
Table 1: Allocated and spent resources by 31/12/2024 (EUR; AMIF 2014-2020)

	Allocated	Spent
Resources	7 720 864 571	7 435 819 502
Share of the allocated resources	100%	96.3%

Source: Preparatory study based on System for Fund Management in the European Union (SFC)2014 (December 2024); EMN Work Programmes (2014-2020); EMAS and UA data from and outside of COMPASS.

The largest share of resources spent went to the national programmes (including specific actions) and EMAS, representing respectively 58% and 34% of the budget paid. The remainder of resources paid went to Union Actions (7%) and the EMN (1%).

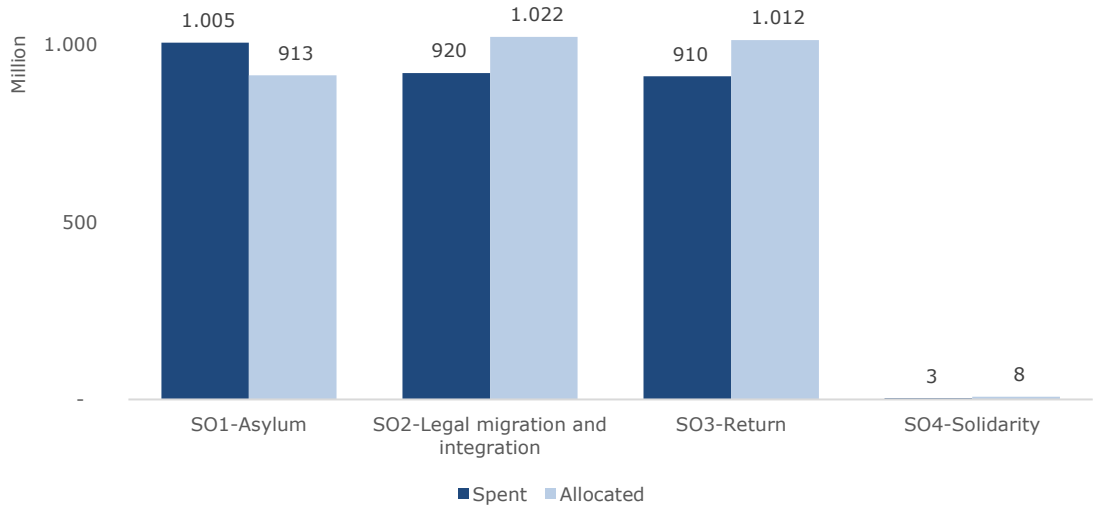
Figure 7: Distribution of spent resources by fund component (by 31/12/2024)



3.2 Shared Management

Within shared management, the resources were concentrated under the first three specific objectives. All resources allocated to SO1 were exhausted, SO2 and SO3 have similar absorption rates of 90% and SO4 had both the least amount of resources allocated and the lowest absorption rate (37%).

Figure 8: Overall allocated and spent resources by specific objective (EUR million, shared management, AMIF 2014-2020)[34]



Source: SFC2014 (December 2024)

The distribution of resources can also be seen through the lens of the final beneficiaries (i.e. target groups)[35]. The following figure shows the allocation of the Fund by target group. The target group asylum seekers and refugees were the primary target group with 56% of the total budget allocated (including both via specific objectives and special cases)[36]. The distribution of the allocation across target groups is consistent with the allocation of resources across SO discussed above where most resources are concentrated on SO1, SO2 and SO3 that deal with asylum seekers, their integration and returns in cases of asylum denial. The very few resources allocated to "children and persons with special and procedural needs, including victims of THB", this may suggest this target group was of a

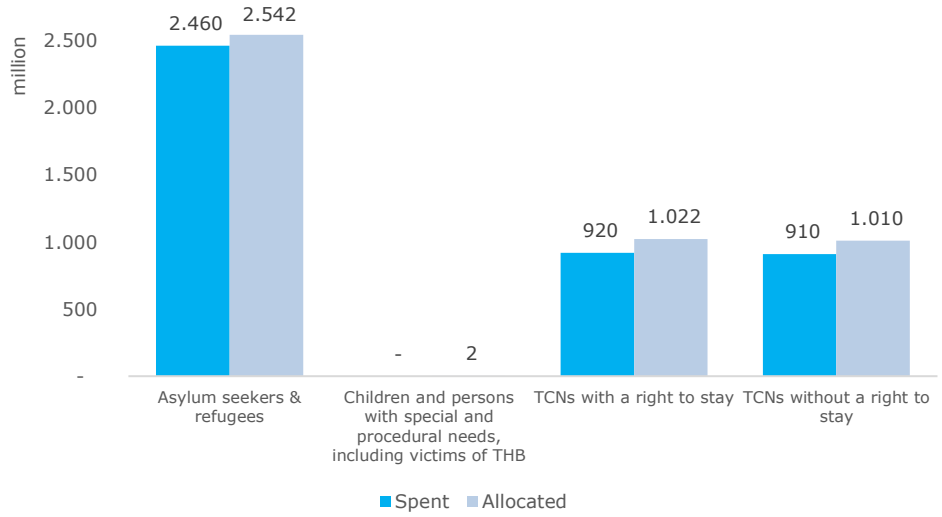
[34] This graph excludes Special Cases and Technical Assistance absorption rates that are respectively 88% (out of 1.5 billion) and 104% (out of 0.16 billion).

[35] The assignment of target groups to AMIF-funded projects was carried out through a pragmatic, multi-step approach designed to ensure consistency and clarity across a large and diverse project portfolio. Recognising the practical limitations of manually reviewing the full corpus of over one hundred project documents which were not available to the Study Team at time of analysis, the initial categorisation was primarily guided by project titles, supported by agreed principles for thematic grouping. Wherever feasible, the team cross-referenced titles with available descriptions and procurement details to refine the alignment with the established target group typology. Specific sub-categories — such as projects under the EMN, Horizontal Categories, Operating Support and External Dimension — were further validated through targeted discussions within the team, drawing on expert judgement to resolve cases where projects did not fit neatly within the pre-defined categories. In these instances, a consistent approach was applied: for example, procurement contracts under 'Legal Pathways' that did not correspond directly with the mapped target groups were flagged and, where appropriate, reassigned to 'Policy Makers' to better reflect their function. Throughout, the guiding principle was to balance methodological rigour with the need for practical feasibility, ensuring that all target group labels remained meaningful and coherent within the overall taxonomy. In cases of overlap or ambiguity — for example, where a project's activities could plausibly serve multiple groups — the dominant or most directly impacted group was prioritised. This approach ensured a transparent, replicable process, anchored in the agreed typology, while allowing for the necessary nuance when working with complex or cross-cutting project objectives.

[36] Special cases include specific support not falling under any other SO. They include some Member State relocation and resettlement operations.

lower priority or could be the result of the methodology used for determining the target groups of projects.

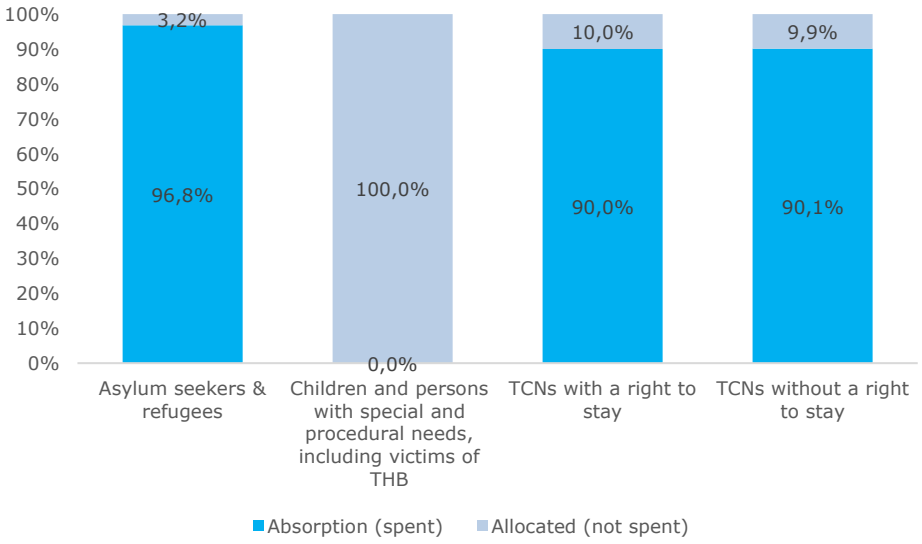
Figure 9:Overall allocated resources by target group (EUR million, shared management, AMIF 2014-2020)



Source: Based on SFC2014 (December 2024)

The resources spent by target group as presented in the below figure, consistently match spending across the specific objectives. About 97% of the budget allocated to asylum seekers and refugees had been spent (respectively 110% and 90% for SO1 and SO2, and 90% for SO3). Moreover, a similar absorption rate (90%) can be observed between legal migration and integration objective (SO2) and the primary target group of interest in that objective, the TCNs with a right to stay. The same applies to the absorption rate of resources allocated to returns management and enforcement objective (SO3) and the corresponding target group (TCNs without the right to stay). The data show there was no claimed spending from national programmes related to "children and persons with special and procedural needs, including victims of THB".

Figure 10: Absorption rate by target group under shared management by 31/12/2024



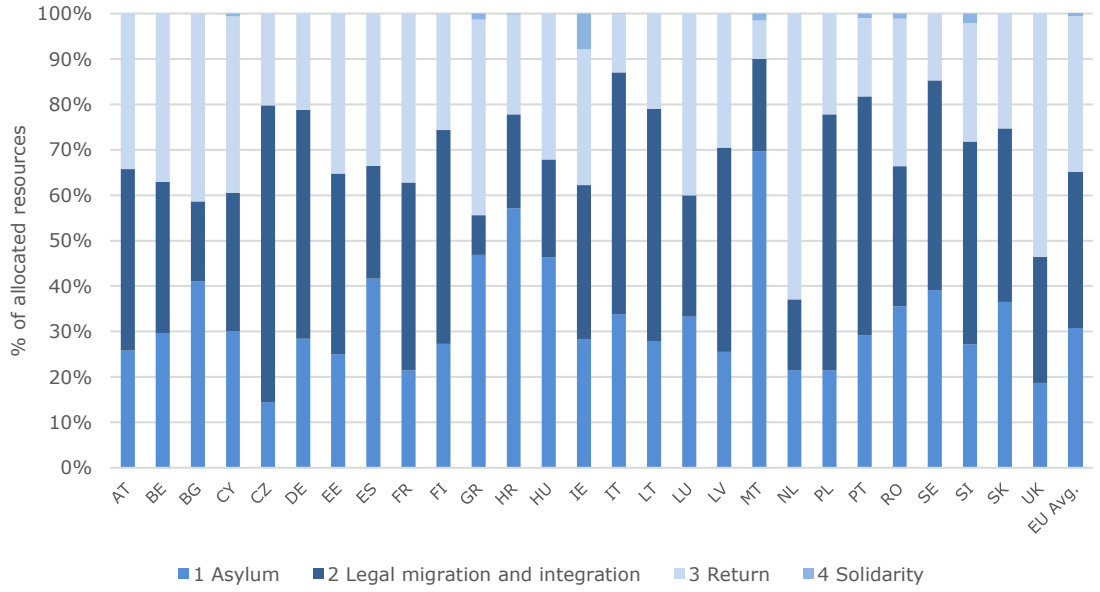
Source: Based on SFC2014 (December 2024)

3.3 Implementation at the national programme level

The largest shares of allocated resources went to Germany (EUR 625.42 million; 14% of allocated resources), the United Kingdom (EUR 596.23 million; 13% of allocated resources) and France (EUR 570.74 million; 12% of allocated resources), together accounting for more than one third (about 39%) of all resources allocated to the 27 Member States (including the UK).

On average, the 27 Member States allocated about 34% of resources respectively to SO2 (Legal migration and integration) and SO3 (Return), 31% to SO1 (Asylum) and about 1% to SO4 (Solidarity).

Figure 11: Allocated resources per specific objective by Member State national programmes (AMIF 2014-2020)

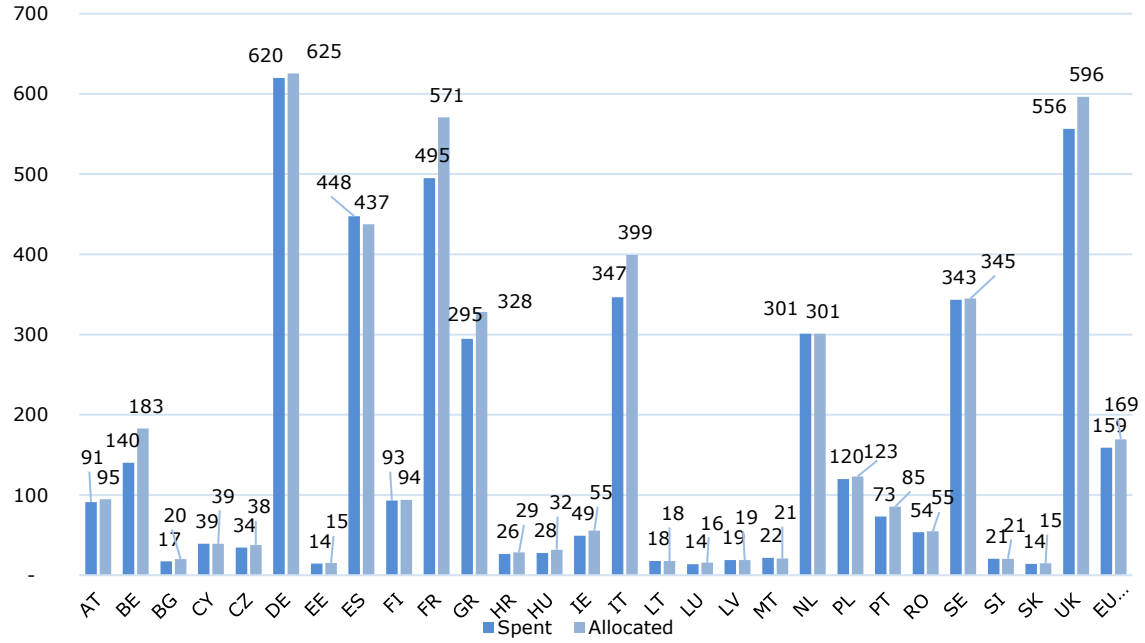


Source: based on SFC2014 (December 2024)

The financial resources allocated and spent (across all SOs, including Technical Assistance and Special Cases support[37]) by Member State are displayed in the figure below.

[37] Special cases include specific support not falling under any other specific objectives. They include some Member State relocation and resettlement operations.

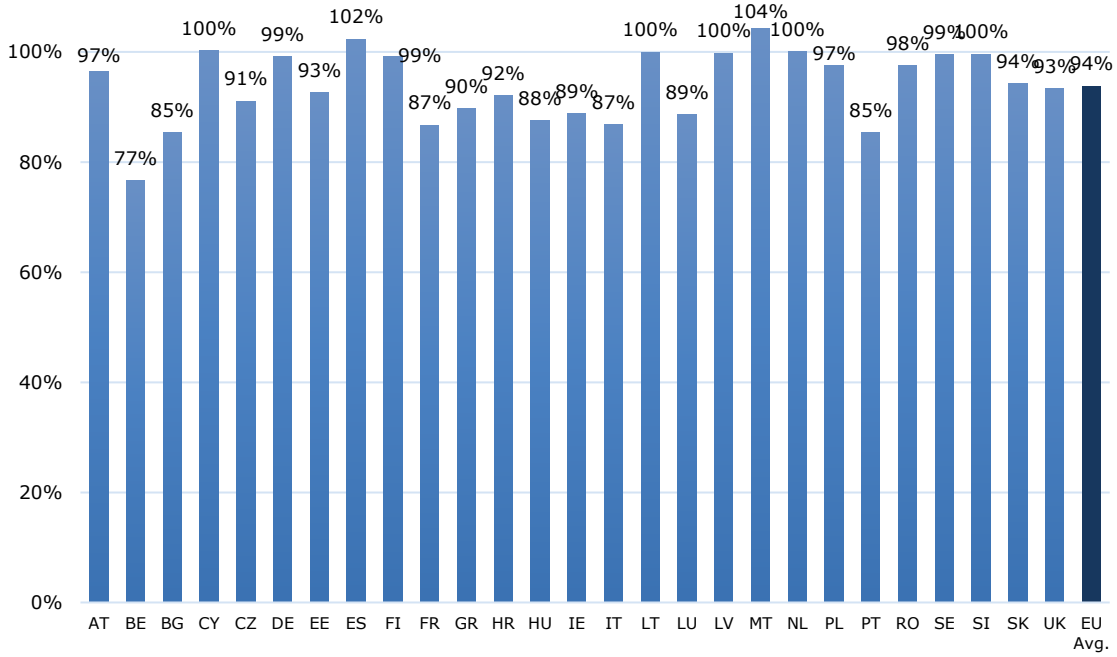
Figure 12: Allocated and spent resources by Member State, shared management only (EUR million AMIF 2014-2020



Source: Based on SFC2014 (December 2024)

The following figure demonstrates the absorption rate per Member State. Belgium had the lowest absorption rate (77%), while several Member States achieved an absorption rate of 100% or greater (BG, ES, LT, LV, MT, NL, SI). Absorption rates over 100% are possible in cases where Member States committed to operations above the initial funding ceilings, using additional national resources to cover the expenses. Overall, the average absorption rate is 94%.

Figure 13: Absorption rate by national programmes on the basis of amounts declared for clearance in the final accounts, shared management only (AMIF 2014-2020)



Source: Based on SFC2014 (December 2024)

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 To what extent was the intervention successful and why?

4.1.1 Effectiveness

The assessment of effectiveness evaluates the extent to which the AMIF objectives have been achieved and provides a basis for judging the role of EU action in driving the observed changes. The analysis identifies the extent of success as well as the factors contributing to the lack of success or delay. Furthermore, it examines the drivers and barriers to achievement and explores their connection to EU intervention.

*How did the Fund contribute to strengthening and developing all aspects of the **CEAS**, including its external dimension?*

During the 2014-2020 programming period, a substantial number of asylum applications were filed across the EU[38], resulting in pressure on reception capacity and asylum systems. In response, Member States made significant effort in expanding reception capacity and overall created and/or improved in line with Union *acquis* 47 695 places in reception accommodation with support of the Fund (reaching 93% of the set target), however progress varied across Member States. Of the Member States that set targets for new or

[38] From 2014-2022, the Member States bound by the AMIF Regulation received a total of 6,022,450 first time asylum applications. Eurostat (2025), *Asylum applicants by type, citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_asyappctza/default/table?lang=en.

renovated reception accommodation within their national programmes, 11 Member States (EE, ES, FR, HR, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI) reached or overachieved their target, 4 Member States (BG, CY, CZ, IT) partially achieved their target, and 7 (EL, FI, IE, LU, NL, SE, UK) did not demonstrate any progress.[39] In Sweden, underachievement is attributed to not receiving any applications for the calls on accommodation provision.[40] While in the UK, underachievement is attributed to the case-by-case housing model that did not include the establishment of dedicated reception centres and resulted in no projects being supported under the AMIF.[41] In some Member States, the creation and renovation of reception accommodation was also supported by EMAS. This is particularly true for Greece, where EMAS heavily supported increasing reception accommodation capacity with both temporary and longer-term accommodation, for a total of approximately 80 000[42] places created and/or renovated during the programming period.

Overall, Member States performed less well in their aim to increase total reception accommodation capacity. Only Spain overachieved their target and 13 Member States (BG, CY, CZ, EE, HR, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI) partly achieved their target by 21% on average (average target was to increase capacity by 62.32%).[43] The remaining Member States neither set a target nor implemented such projects under their AMIF programme. Reasons for underachievement of the target include project cancellations[44], failure to meet grant agreement conditions and implementation delays[45], and strategic decisions prioritise service quality over reception accommodation expansion[46].

The **AMIF significantly contributed to supporting the number of TCNs receiving assistance in the field of reception and asylum systems**, with an EU total of about 5.2 million people who were provided assistance. This means that of all asylum applicants during this period, 70% received assistance from AMIF resources.[47] Twenty-three of the Member States overachieved their target to assist TCNs and the remaining four Member States (CZ, HU, NL, SE) partly achieved their target.[48] The types of assistance provided was further broken down into information and assistance throughout the asylum process, legal assistance, and assistance to vulnerable persons. Of these, information and assistance in the asylum process was provided the most.[49] This assistance helped TCNs understand their rights and the asylum process.

When asked to what extent the AMIF contributed to providing individualised support to TCNs in the targeted survey for national authorities, 40% of respondents stated it contributed to a high extent, 45% stated it contributed to some extent, and the remaining 15% chose not to answer the question. Similarly, in the public consultation, of the

[39] Member State final implementation reports.
[40] Sweden's national ex-post evaluation of AMIF 2014-2020.
[41] UK's national ex-post evaluation of AMIF 2014-2020.
[42] These approximate 80 000 places cover accommodation such as apartments and hotels. In addition to this, EMAS also supported the creation of temporary structures for reception accommodation in Greece at the height of the refugee crisis.
[43] Member State final implementation reports.
[44] *Final Implementation Report* – Cyprus, 2024.
[45] *Final Implementation Report* – Greece, 2024.
[46] *Final Implementation Report* – Finland, 2024.
[47] Member State final implementation reports. Eurostat (2025), *Asylum applicants by type, citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_asyappctza/default/table?lang=en.
[48] Member State final implementation reports.
[49] Almost 4 million people in total.

organisations that provided support to TCNs, the majority agreed the support was effective.[50]

With no figures available on the total reception accommodation capacity across the EU nor the total number of TCNs considered vulnerable, it is difficult to assess the extent to which these needs were met overall. Nonetheless, it is clear the AMIF contributed to positive developments in the realms of reception accommodation and support to TCNs.

AMIF funding also contributed to 86 400 staff members being trained in area of asylum and reception. Overall, this amounts to about 20% of the total amount of staff trained in asylum and reception, suggesting other sources of funding, such as national funds, were primarily used for staff training.[51]

During the 2014-2020 programming period, Member States had the option to finance resettlement under SO1. AMIF supported the resettlement of 61 836 people, for an overall EU implementation rate of 126%. Overachievements are attributed to established resettlement programmes and collaboration by political agreements, as well as long-standing commitments and increased capacities (e.g. through trainings).[52] Underachievement of resettlement in several Member States may be attributed to the reallocation of funds to address urgent needs (e.g. migration crisis in 2015 and 2016, Russian war of aggression against Ukraine as of 2022), and administrative delays and contractual issues with beneficiaries[53].

Regarding direct and indirect management, **both EMAS and Union Actions played a substantial role in developing and reinforcing the CEAS**. With over half of the EMAS funding (EUR c.a. 1 323 312 714), the largest share of EMAS funding went to supporting reception conditions.[54] Under EMAS, a range of projects focused on improving asylum procedures, increasing reception capacity, improving reception conditions, and addressing the specific needs of vulnerable TNCs. For example, projects included the expansion of reception capacities in Sweden, the creation of integrated protection hubs in Greece, and institutional capacity-building initiatives in Bulgaria. Union Actions also contributed to the achievement of the SO by promoting transnational cooperation and targeted support across Member States. For example, the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) enhanced operational capacities of third countries in the areas of border management and asylum systems, enhanced migration governance and supported labour mobility schemes. The FA.B! project[55] strengthened family-based care systems for unaccompanied minors. Union actions also contributed significantly to the external dimension of CEAS, particularly through projects and long-term cooperation frameworks (facilities) with international actors.

[50] Results of the public consultation where 32% of organisations responding provided support to vulnerable TCNs.
[51] Member State final implementation reports.
[52] Ex-post evaluation reports of AT, IT, NL, BE, ES, FI, and SE.
[53] *Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) – Ex-post evaluation report* (2025) – Romania.
[54] EMAS case study.
[55] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/31077795/958056/AMIF.

*How did the Fund contribute to supporting **legal migration** to the Member States in accordance with their economic and social needs, such as labour market needs, while safeguarding the integrity of the immigration systems of Member States, and to promoting the effective **integration** of TCNs?*

The AMIF contributed to supporting legal migration and the integration of TCNs (SO2) through variety of projects including pre-departure measures, language courses, vocational training, and health and counselling assistance.

Over the course of the programming period, over 10 million TCNs supported by the Fund.[56] Integration projects included, for example:

- In Austria, the "Culture School" project by MTOP (More Than One Perspective) enhanced intercultural competencies through training and workshops, fostering understanding and reducing prejudices in the workplace. Additionally, numerous initiatives funded under the AMIF focused on language acquisition, vocational training, and educational programmes;

- In Bulgaria, initiatives included early skills assessments, orientation and skills development programmes, and cultural exchange events that fostered interaction between TCNs and the host society;

- Estonia focused on increasing the capacity of schools and local authorities to provide services to TCNs, alongside social integration and awareness-raising projects; and

- In Sweden, the "VIDA" project aimed to enhance social inclusion and labour market access for TCNs by integrating association activities into individual action plans, fostering collaboration between relevant actors.

The number of TCNs participating in integration measures under AMIF far exceeded the target. Reasons for the overachievement include: (1) increased needs and pressures resulting from the 2015-2016 migration crisis and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine; (2) efforts to reduce structural disparities between urban and rural areas to promote comprehensive integration measures[57]; and (3) the implementation of diverse projects targeting a wide variety of individuals and needs[58]. The analysis shows a wide range of integration strategies and measures were developed and implemented under AMIF; however, it is important to note that according to the stakeholders interviewed, many of the projects focused on integrating applicants for international protection.

Over 300 projects aimed at developing, monitoring and evaluating integration policies were supported by the AMIF. Excluding Portugal, which far surpassed their target for the number of projects supported under the Fund to develop, monitor and evaluate integration policies, the EU achieved an average implementation rate of 96% for this indicator. The main reasons for underachievement are the disruption of planned activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and shifting priorities[59] and resources as a response to the Russian

[56] Double counting is possible if a person participated in multiple programmes.
[57] *AMIF Evaluation Report* – Cyprus, 2024.
[58] Openfield (2024), *Ex-post evaluation of the National Programme of Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) 2014-2020 – Poland*.
[59] *Final Implementation Report* – Ireland, 2024.

war of aggression against Ukraine[60]. The main reasons for overachievement in several Member States are the increased focus on enhancing institutional capacities for integration and a strong political and institutional commitment to integration, such as by establishing particular units to coordinate integration efforts.

Despite these efforts to support TCNs early integration, the improvement of TCNs access to the labour market yielded mixed results. Overall, the EU27 average employment gap between TCNs and host-country nationals decreased from 2014 to 2022, implying TCNs better access to the labour market.[61] However, interviewed stakeholders perceived the labour market integration as not fully successful.

Two examples of projects in the field of labour market integration are:

- The *Employment Support Services for Migrants project* in Malta aimed to enhance the integration of migrants into the local labour market by addressing employment barriers through tailored support, such as by providing guidance services, job brokerage, and specialised training courses in English and Maltese. The project facilitated job placements for 3 347 TCNs and trained 260 individuals.

- The *Rafael III project in* Slovakia which aimed to enhance the labour market integration and self-sufficiency of beneficiaries of international protection by providing targeted support such as job-search assistance, job counselling, and language training to facilitate employment opportunities.

Regarding legal migration, Member States did not prioritise using the AMIF to support legal migration, and the support to legal migration results varied across the Member States. Throughout the 2014-2020 AMIF programming period, legal migration consistently outpaced irregular migration.[62] The period also observed an increase in the share of TCNs having received long-term residence status, from 33.59% in 2014 to 43.49% in 2022.[63] This demonstrates the persistent demand for legal migration pathways and the growing utilisation of legal migration options. However, such trends cannot be solely attributed to the AMIF.

Fifteen Member States[64] allocated resources to legal migration measures in their national programme. Furthermore, the amount of resources allocated to legal migration was consistently lower than the amount allocated to other measures under SO2 (primarily integration). In total, only 6% of the SO2 allocation was dedicated to legal migration measures. The absorption rate for legal migration measures is 76%, signaling that Member States who allocated resources to legal migration carried out the measures at a good rate.

Pre-departure support is provided to TCNs prior to their entry in the EU to facilitate their integration in a Member State. Examples of pre-departure measures include, assessments of skills and qualifications, civic orientation courses and language courses. The results of pre-departure measures varied across Member States. Bulgaria far exceeded their target

[60] *Final Implementation Report* – Czech Republic, 2024.
[61] Eurostat (2025). Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%).
[62] European Commission (2024), *Statistics on migration to Europe*, available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_en#migration-to-and-from-the-eu.
[63] Member State final implementation reports.
[64] BG, CY, CZ, DE, FR, EL, HR, HU, IT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, and SI.

due to underestimated targets and unexpected increase in migration flows.[65] Besides Bulgaria, 3 Member States achieved or overachieved their target (CY, DE, PL), another 4 partially achieved their target (FR, HU, IT, PT), and 7 others set targets but did not implement any activities (CZ, EL, FI, HR, LU, NL, SE). Reasons for underachievement include a lack of interest in pre-departure measures among TCNs[66] and choosing to fund pre-departure activities with national funds rather than AMIF for administrative reasons[67].

In the country case studies, Germany, France and Italy emphasised the positive outcomes legal migration measures in improving TCNs communication skills and employability, and supporting family reunification. The AMIF did not include an indicator measuring support to family reunification, however according to the country case studies where these measures were supported, they were viewed as helpful and supportive.

EMAS and Union Actions also contributed to advancing integration and legal migration. Under EMAS, initiatives such as Greece's ESTIA housing programme exemplify how targeted support, including financial assistance and accommodation, can foster integration by promoting self-sufficiency and encouraging local economic participation. A categorization of Union Action projects based on broad types of support reveals that over half of the Union Action projects are integration measures. Of the projects supporting integration measures, the greatest number of projects supported capacity building and then support to vulnerable people and women. EMAS also contributed significantly to integration measures with almost 23% (c.a. EUR 562 609 994) of EMAS funding going towards such measures. Under Union Actions, MPF promoted labour mobility and created economic opportunities through tailored pilot projects that encouraged partnerships between the EU and its external partners. Moreover, projects like Mums at Work specifically targeted the social and economic integration of migrant mothers, offering employability training, job placements, and social support.

*How did the Fund contribute to enhancing fair and effective **return** strategies in the Member States which contribute to combating illegal immigration, with an emphasis on sustainability of return and effective readmission in the countries of origin and transit?*

AMIF aims to support effective return strategies and contributes to combating illegal immigration through various activities, including by funding returns, reintegration assistance, and information campaigns.

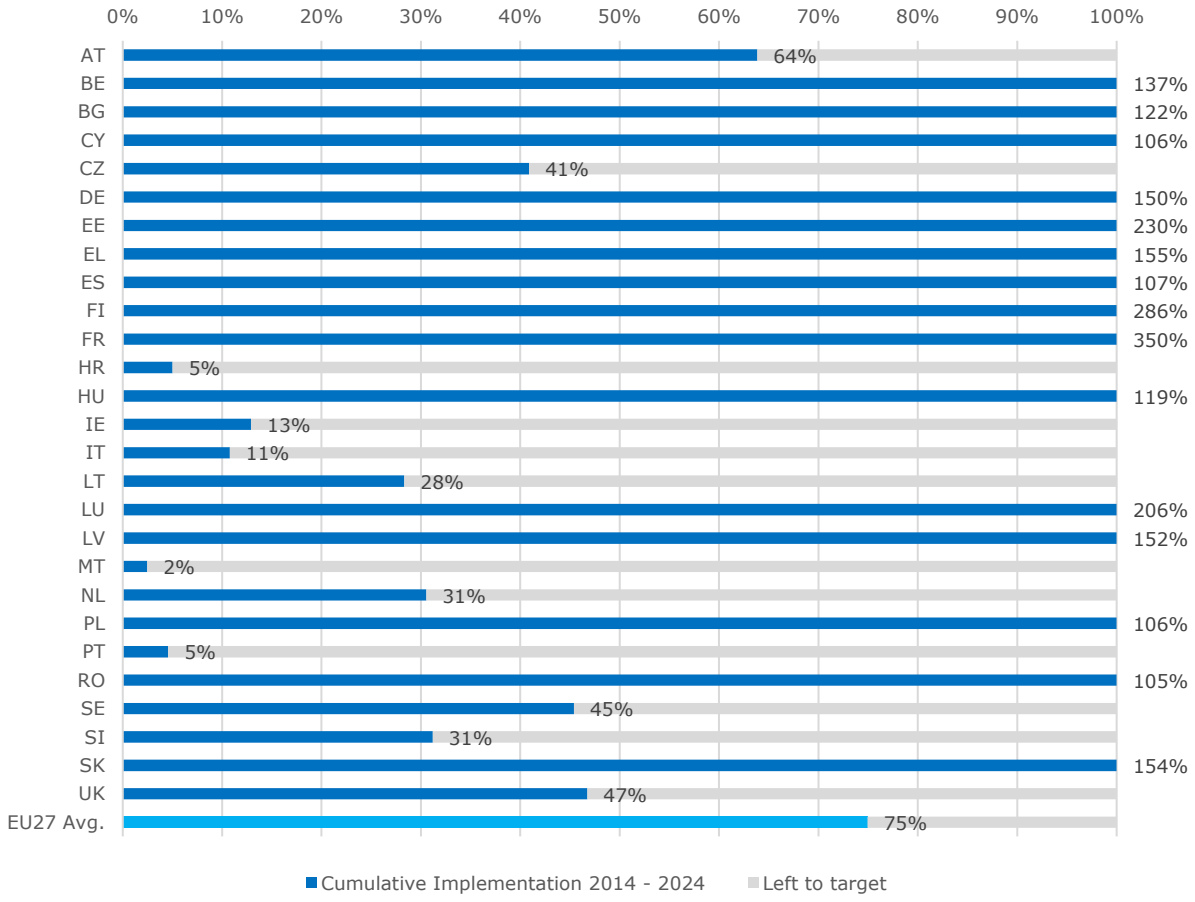
Conducting returns is inherently difficult as it depends on national policies, administrative capabilities, and the cooperation of third countries and their willingness to readmit their citizens. Returns occurred in all Member States between 2014-2020.[68] Of the returns conducted with AMIF support, the majority is represented by voluntarily returns. Stakeholders confirmed the focus on supporting voluntary returns in targeted interviews. In total, 215 754 individuals were voluntarily returned with AMIF support, with an EU

[65] Ecorys (2024), *Ex-post evaluation of the implementation of actions towards achieving the objectives of the national programme under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for 2014-2020 period – Bulgaria*.
[66] *Final Implementation Report* – Finland, 2024.
[67] *Final Implementation Report* – Czech Republic, 2024.
[68] Eurostat (2024), *Third country nationals returned following an order to leave - annual data (rounded)*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_eirtn/default/table?lang=en. The dataset excludes DK and only includes the UK data through 2019.

average implementation rate of 69%. Forced returns with AMIF support had a similar implementation rate of 65%, for an EU total of 192 790 individuals forcibly returned.

Reintegration assistance is another important aspect of SO3 as it contributes to effective returns.[69] During the 2014-2020 programming period, an EU total of 149 871 TCNs received reintegration assistance from AMIF support (implementation rate of 75%). Therefore, about 37% of TCNs returned with AMIF support also received reintegration assistance. While all Member States provided reintegration assistance, the support varied across Member States as demonstrated in the figure below.

Figure 14: Implementation of Common Indicator Number of returnees who received pre or post return reintegration assistance co-financed by the Fund



Source: SFC2014 (December 2024). Cumulative implementation by the end of 2024 against the target value. EU Avg.: Average of implemented values against the average of target values across all 27 Member States, including zeros.

With the aim to improve policies related to return and combating irregular migration, Member States supported 65 projects to develop, monitor, and evaluate return policies.[70] However, this was not evenly implemented across the Member States. The 65 projects were implemented by 11 Member States (BE, BG, EE, EL, HR, IT, MT, PT, RO, SE, SI), while another seven Member States (ES, HU, IE, LU, NL, PL, SK) set targets but did not report any projects.

[69] European Parliament Research Service (2017), *Reintegration of returning migrants*, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/608779/EPRS_BRI(2017)608779_EN.pdf.
[70] Final implementation reports.

Furthermore, to improve return policy and enhance transnational cooperation, the analysis of documentation (i.e. national ex-post evaluations, FIRs and AIRs) shows that 17 Member States (AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, EE, ES, FI, IT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, UK) implemented projects or supported partnerships in the area of return. This included strengthening return cooperation by establishing direct contacts with relevant third countries. Transnational projects supported mutual learning and exchange of knowledge and skills. Efforts to improve return policies have had a positive impact, most beneficiaries that participated in the targeted survey agreed the AMIF contributed to the enhancement of reception and return policies.[71]

When examining the AMIF's effectiveness in supporting return and reintegration, 80% of the targeted survey respondents deemed it effective to a high or moderate extent.[72]

EMAS and Union Actions also contributed to the achievements under SO3. In Bulgaria, an EMAS project took a holistic approach to returning TCNs thereby enabling more effective reintegration. The project provided pre-departure assistance, humanitarian aid, legal and psychological services, and a safe space for minors. Under Union Actions, MPF is a unique project designed to enhance cooperation with third countries on migration management through technical assistance, knowledge sharing practices, trainings to improve the capacity of third country authorities, providing policy recommendations and more. Receiving an EU contribution of over EUR 76 million in the 2014-2020 programming period, it is one of the largest projects funded under Union Actions. MPF promoted cooperation between the EU and third countries to reinforce return and readmission processes.

*How did the Fund contribute to enhancing **solidarity** and **responsibility-sharing** between the Member States, in particular towards those most affected by migration and asylum flows, including through practical cooperation?*

Activities under SO4 included the transfer of applicants and/or beneficiaries of international protection from one Member State to another (also known as relocation), resettlement of TCNs falling within the categories defined in the Union Resettlement Programme, and cooperation projects aimed at enhancing solidarity and responsibility sharing. As detailed in Section 3, SO4 was the least prioritized SO in the national programmes and received the lowest amount of allocated resources. In line with this, many Member States did not set targets for the indicators under SO4 in their national programmes.

Over the entire programming period, nine Member States (BG, CY, HR, IE, IT, LT, PT, SE, SI) transferred 7 390 individuals from one Member State to another (91% implementation rate) under their national programmes. Stakeholders found the framework to be effective, however many felt that more targeted outreach and training could enhance understanding of and participation in the relocation process.[73] Even fewer Member States conducted cooperation projects to enhance solidarity and responsibility-sharing under their

[71] 34 out of 291 (11%) respondents of the targeted survey for beneficiaries considered the AMIF's contribution to be very high, while 98 (35%) considered it to be high. 53 respondents (18%) considered the AMIF's contribution to be low while 36 (12%) considered it to be very low. The remaining 70 respondents (24%) preferred not to answer.
[72] 16 out of 20 respondents of the targeted survey with National Authorities.
[73] Interviews with 10 stakeholders.

national programmes, a total of six projects were carried out by three Member States (CY, IT, and PT).

In addition to resettlement planned in the national programmes under SO1, Member States received an additional lump sum payment for every person resettled in accordance with the common Union resettlement priorities in Annex III of the AMIF.[74] To participate, Member States would voluntarily pledge how many persons they aimed to resettle according to the Union priorities and an additional allocation would be added to their national programme. Twenty-three Member States[75] resettled persons under the Union resettlement priorities, for a total of 912 264 000 persons resettled (85% implementation rate).

EMAS also contributed to solidarity and responsibility sharing between Member States, for a total allocation of about EUR 165 million for projects supporting relocation and complementary measures. These projects supported the relocation of TCNs from Greece, Italy, Malta and Cyprus to other Member States.

Challenges and remedy strategies

Member States faced a number of challenges during implementation of their programmes. SO1 was particularly impacted by the migration crisis of 2015 and 2016, the large increase in asylum seekers placed pressure on national asylum and reception systems. In the targeted survey, more than half (12 of 20) of the responding national authorities replied that the sudden influx, and later long-term inflow of migrants, as well as crises outside the EU had a clear negative impact on the implementation of the AMIF.[76] Similarly, a triangulation of data demonstrated that 20 Member States faced significant challenges due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the corresponding influx of Ukrainians seeking protection in the EU.[77] In response to the Russian war of aggression towards Ukraine, the implementation period of the 2014-2020 programming period was extended by one year, allowing Member States to amend their national programmes and make use of unused funds to meet emerging needs. Lithuania also reported on the challenges resulting from the political crisis in Belarus and resulting influx of migrants.[78] Each increase in migrants seeking international protection entering the EU caused challenges such as a strain on resources and overcrowded reception centres. Member States responded to these challenges in a variety of ways:

- In response to the 2015 and 2016 migration crisis, Sweden introduced a temporary law in June 2016 to enhance its asylum processing capacity and implement stricter rules for family reunification. Sweden also allocated more resources to asylum processing.

- Lithuania implemented a strategy to expand and improve reception facilities, including the construction of a Foreigners Registration Centre and a dormitory specifically for vulnerable persons.

[74] Article 17 of the AMIF Regulation.
[75] AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI and UK.
[76] Four out of the remaining eight respondents assessed the impact as neutral while the other four assessed the impact as positive.
[77] AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, NL, PL, RO, SE, SK, UK. The remaining Member States did not report on such challenges.
[78] Lithuanian annual implementation reports and final implementation report.

- Austria launched a call for projects for Ukrainian displaced persons in key areas such as language, education, and labour market integration.

Another challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic, which especially affected measures under SO2, SO3 and SO4. All 27 Member States reported that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the implementation of their projects under AMIF. Restrictions disrupted migration processes and limited in-person gatherings. Travel restrictions, less regular air and rail connections, and sanitary requirements for travel complicated return measures[79] and the transfer of applicants and/or beneficiaries of international protection from one Member State to another.

Thirteen Member States[80] reported on coping mechanisms in response to challenges posed by the pandemic, these included:

- *Moving in-person activities such as consultations and training sessions to a virtual environment*. For example, in a number of Member States consultations with TCNs were conducted by telephone and various services were provided remotely. These adaptive measures ensured the continuity of essential support and integration efforts despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic;

- *Adopting digital tools and online services to facilitate remote access* to consultations, and support services for TCNs. This included enhanced digital infrastructure and the development of online platforms for language training and cultural orientation;

- *Using flexible funding approaches*, such as a combination of AMIF and national funds to finance specific projects aimed at supporting TCNs, particularly in response to the needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic; and

- *Allocating additional resources and making policy adjustments* to streamline asylum processes and improve system efficiency, while also making necessary adjustments to migration policies to cope with the increased burden.

*How did the Fund contribute to supporting the Member States in duly substantiated **emergency situations** requiring urgent action?*

As mentioned above, Member States encountered several challenges during the 2014-2020 programming period. EMAS was critical in assisting the most affected Member States, especially those most impacted by the migration crisis of 2015 and 2016. The AMIF Regulation indicated an initial EUR 385 million for EMAS, Union Actions and EMN.[81] In response to the emergency situations that occurred, the Annual Work Programmes were amended several times to allocate further resources to EMAS.

[79] AIRs for IE, MT, PT and RO.
[80] AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, FI, FR, IE, LT, PL, RO, SE, SK
[81] Article 14(6)(b).

Table 2: Development in funding allocations for emergency actions

Annual Work Programme	Initial allocation	Final allocation	Increase in %
2014	€25 million	€25 million[82]	0%
2015	€25 million[83]	€131.5 million[84]	426%
2016	€133 million[85]	€415 million[86]	145%
2017	€175 million[87]	€402.5 million[88]	130%
2018	€126 million	€126 million[89]	0%
2019	€25 million[90]	€617 million	2.368%
2020	€740 million	€740 million[91]	0%
Total	**€1.25 billion**	**€2.5 billion**	**100%**

Source: Based on available Annual Work Programmes.

In total, 106 EMAS projects were supported for about EUR 2.5 billion. The largest share of this went to Greece (almost EUR 1.9 billion), Italy (about EUR 191 million) and Spain (almost EUR 90 million). The other Member States where EMAS projects were implemented were Germany, Finland, France, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Slovenia.

An analysis of the projects supported shows funding was allocated to seven main areas of support. The majority of projects fell under "reception conditions" (54%), followed by "integration measures" (23%).[92] The large amount of resources dedicated to reception conditions falls was due to the urgent need to expand reception infrastructure during the migration crisis of 2015 and 2016. Other types of projects included the development of a hotspot/relocation scheme in Greece, early recovery interventions in Italy, providing healthcare and catering services in accommodation facilities in Greece, and promoting voluntary returns and providing reintegration assistance in Bulgaria.

Table 3: Allocation of EMAS financing per topic

Topic area	% of EMAS funding received
Asylum procedures	6.49%
Integration measures	22.89%
Legal pathways	2.02%

[82] C(2014) 5652 final.
[83] C(2015) 653.
[84] C(2015) 8480 final.
[85] C(2015) 9534 final.
[86] C(2016) 1568 final.
[87] C(2017) 3045 final.
[88] C(2018) 8903 final.
[89] C(2018) 8902 final.
[90] C(2018) 8899 final.
[91] C(2020) 8958 final.
[92] The analysis of EMAS financing per topic was completed for the EMAS case study which was done in conjunction with the EMAS case study for the mid-term evaluation of the AMIF for the programming period 2021-2027. Therefore, the data used in the case study covered 1 January 2014 through 30 June 2024.

Other/ residual	2.11%
Reception conditions	53.84%
Relocation and support to another MS	6.72%
Return and reintegration	1.00%
Grand Total	**100%**

Source: Based on direct and indirect management outside COMPASS 14-20

The ability of EMAS projects to adapt to changing needs varied. Smaller projects had an easier time adjusting, while larger projects had more difficulty and faced delays adjusting due to bureaucratic procedures, complex financial reporting, and political considerations. Some beneficiaries reported that at times, needing to report to both the European Commission and national authorities created administrative burden and the documentation and paperwork required for requesting adjustments made it difficult to adapt in real time to new developments.

Despite these challenges, the majority of beneficiaries responding to the targeted survey reported the EMAS projects they implemented achieved the intended results to a high extent.[93] Beneficiaries also reported that without EMAS support, projects would have been significantly constrained in both scope and quality.[94]

4.1.2 Efficiency

To evaluate the efficiency of the Fund, the analysis focused on: the extent to which the results of the Fund were achieved as a reasonable cost and the extent to which the AMIF was cost-effective in comparison to similar funds from the perspective of the administrative requirements. Evaluating the efficiency of the Fund was a challenge as Member States were not required to report on the administrative costs of the Fund. The analysis relied on the data available and qualitative evidence gathered during consultations with stakeholders.

As described in the analysis of effectiveness, a number of indicators (12 in total) achieved overperformance, particularly indicators under SO2 and SO4. This suggests these activities were cost-effective as Member States achieved more than the target with the same amount of financial resources.

The AMIF supported a range of cost-effective interventions, in line with evidence-based practices identified in EU benchmarking studies.[95] For example, integration measures such

[93] Of the replies to the targeted survey for beneficiaries, 74% (17 out of 23) of the beneficiaries stated that their implemented projects had achieved the intended results to a high extent, 13% (three respondents) indicated that the results were only achieved to a low extent, and the other 13% (three respondents) preferred not to answer.
[94] Targeted survey or beneficiaries; one interview with EMAS beneficiary.
[95] Bertelsmann Stiftung (2008), Benchmarking Integration in the EU: Analysing the debate on integration indicators and moving it forward;

as social orientation, language learning, employment services and vocational training reduce dependency on social services. Importantly, nine Member States (AT, CZ, EE, FI, FR, IT, MT, PL, SE) include cost-effectiveness as a selection criterion in calls for proposals. Seven other Member States (BG, DE, HU, LT, LU, SI, SK) reported arrangements to ensure cost-effectiveness outside of the selection process.[96]

Concerning human resources, according to DG HOME's Annual Activity Reports, Member States increased the efficiency of their human resources with the ratio of costs of control and payments requested by Member States[97] decreasing from 5% in 2017 to 2.87% in 2020.[98]

Table 4: Efficiency of use of human resources for EU Member States 2014-2020 (AMIF and ISF)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ratio of costs/ payments	No data available	No data available	No data available	5%	2.88%	2.85%	2.87%

Source: DG HOME's Annual Activity Reports

Compliance costs incurred by national authorities, in terms of the human resources spent in preparing calls for proposals/direct awards ranged from 6 to 30 man-days per call/award. While the compliance costs for reviewing applications received ranged from 9 to 30 man-days per call.[99] On the side of beneficiaries, over 50% of respondents to the targeted survey perceived regulatory requirements and procurement procedures as a challenge.

Enforcement costs entail the time spent for monitoring, reporting and auditing of the projects. Monitoring requires about one to eight man-days per year/Member State. Reporting requires about 20-100 man-days per year/Member State. While the auditing of

NIEM (2019), The European benchmark for refugee integration: a comparative analysis of the national integration evaluation mechanism in 14 EU countries;
World Bank & International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2017). Migrating to Opportunity: Overcoming Barriers to Labor Mobility in Southeast Asia. World Bank. OECD (2021), Making Integration Work: Language Training for Adult Migrants. OECD Publishing.
Han Entzinger and Renske Biezeveld (2008), Benchmarking in Immigrant Integration.
RAND Corporation (2018). The Economic and Fiscal Effects of Granting Refugees Formal Labor Market Access. RAND Corporation.
European Commission (2021), Communication from the Commission on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum (COM/2021/120 final).
ReliefWeb. (n.d.), *Comparative reintegration outcomes between forced and voluntary return and through*. ReliefWeb. Retrieved November 5, 2024.

[96] National ex-post evaluations. Seven EU Member States (BE, CY, ES, IE, NL, PT, UK) did not specify any arrangements. Four national ex-post evaluations have not been delivered at the time of drafting of this report (EL, HR, LV, RO).

[97] National authorities were asked to calculate their costs of controls based on the following types of expenditure: i) Supervision to ensure compliance with the designation criteria (Body referred to in Article 26 of the Horizontal Regulation); ii) Audit Authority staff costs; iii) Audit Authority other costs (such as overheads, training courses, travel); iv) Responsible Authority (and Delegated Authority) staff costs; v) Responsible Authority (and Delegated Authority) other costs (such as overheads, training courses, travel).

[98] This data is an aggregate of data from both AMIF and ISF, data was not disaggregated by Member State or fund.

[99] Targeted survey; verified through interviews with national authorities.

projects requires around two man-days per control/Member State. In response to the targeted survey, 55% of beneficiaries reported monitoring requirements posed a significant challenge.

The evidence gathered on the cost-effectiveness of the AMIF in comparison to similar funds provided mixed results and no definitive answer. The majority of Responsible Authorities responding to the targeted survey stated the administrative burden of the AMIF was perceived as proportionate to its benefits and comparable to other EU funds, however it was not proportionate in comparison with similar national funds. Thirteen Member States (AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FR, IE, IT, MT, SE, SI, UK) reported administrative burden was high.[100] With DE, FR, IE and UK stating administrative burden is most difficult and unproportionate for small project holders. Administrative burden was perceived to be caused by stricter regulatory monitoring and reporting requirements, control/audit systems to prevent and irregularities, set-up of activities including procurement procedures, IT issues, and project promoters' limited capacities to follow up. In contrast, five Member States (EE, HU, LT, NL, SK) reported the administrative burden to be proportionate, with Estonia reporting it was more proportionate than in the previous programming period.

Regarding management and control systems, Member States implemented several measures to monitor and identify fraud and irregularities within their national programmes, primarily:

- A clear allocation of roles and responsibilities. All Member States have designated authorities as Responsible Authorities and Audit Authorities. The Responsible Authority coordinate programme implementation, monitors compliance, and evaluates progress. The Audit Authority was responsible for auditing the programme and ensuring compliance with the financial regulations.
- The Monitoring Committees could be used to prevent fraud and irregularities through its role to check funding, ensure coherence and complementarity between funds, and avoid double funding.
- Monitoring through project reports; beneficiaries report on project performance, including by assessing progress to target indicators and goals.
- Operational and financial on-site checks, visits and inspections were conducted in accordance with the Horizontal Regulation. These checks serve to monitor project execution and compliance.

A lack of systematic reporting on efforts to prevent and identify fraud and other irregularities at the Member State level led to insufficient information available to assess the cost-effectiveness of the measures to prevent, detect and remedy fraud and irregularities.

4.1.3 Simplification and reduction of administrative burden

Administrative burden refers to a disproportionate number of obligations and activities required to comply with regulations or funding rules, resulting in a significant amount of time, effort, and resources needed to fulfil compliance requirements. The AMIF introduced

[100] National ex-post evaluations and annual implementation reports.

several changes in comparison with the SOLID funds (2007-2013) aimed at simplifying the Fund's management and reducing administrative burden.

First, AMIF streamlined the fund structure with one fund dedicated to migration management and also established a single set of rules for the Home Affairs Funds to improve coordination and harmonize procedures. Secondly, AMIF introduced multi-annual programming and a single seven-year funding cycle which increased flexibility and adaptability by allowing funds to roll over across years, enabled projects with longer life cycles, and removed the need to draft annual programmes. In addition, AMIF introduced simplified cost options (SCOs) and national rules on expenditure eligibility. SCOs reduce administrative burden by simplifying the control and audit process. While the introduction of national rules on expenditure eligibility aimed to increase the flexibility of the national programmes to adapt to national contexts.

Table 5: Summary of differences affecting administrative burden between SOLID and AMIF

	SOLID Funds 2007-2013	AMIF 2014-2020
Fund(s) structure	Three funds addressing migration management	One fund
Programming cycle	Two strategic cycles (2007-2010 and 2011-2013)	A singular seven-year cycle and multi-annual programming
Implementation measures	/	National rules on expenditure eligibility and SCOs

Nine national ex-post evaluations provided input on stakeholder's perceptions of the simplification measures introduced by AMIF[101]. In Ireland, stakeholders held a negative opinion of simplification measures with 88% of organisations disagreeing that the Fund's procedures reduced administrative burden. Stakeholders from France and Spain also widely reported high administrative burden under AMIF. Stakeholder opinions were more positive in other Member States. In Malta, over 45% agreed simplification measures led to improvements. In Italy, 53% of stakeholders agreed the structural changes led to simplification, however only 10% agreed that these processes led to simplification of project documentation processes.

Overall, the simplification measures introduced were welcomed by stakeholders, however their effectiveness yielded mixed results and administrative burden remained high, particularly for smaller beneficiaries.

Multi-annual programming

The shift to multi-annual programming and a singular seven-year cycle allowed for long-term planning and removed the need for annual renewal applications and paperwork. Of the beneficiaries who responded to the targeted survey, 53% (14 respondents) agreed multi-annual programming reduced administrative burden to a high or very high extent. Ten Member States addressed the shift to multi-annual programming in their national ex-post evaluations and stated stakeholders generally viewed it as a positive development[102]. Lithuania, Italy, Malta and Ireland highlighted in their ex-post evaluation reports that multi-annual programming led to more effective planning and the ability to adapt projects

[101] EE, ES, FR, IE, IT, MT, NL, SI, UK
[102] CZ, CY, ES, LT, IE, FI, IT, MT, SI, SK

to evolving needs, as well as simplified administrative procedures. Italy and Malta also highlighted its impact on the facilitation of long-term interventions by allowing for longer term planning and thereby improving beneficiaries experience. In Slovenia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, stakeholders acknowledged the benefits of multi-annual planning but felt it did not do enough to increase flexible implementation and adaptation to emerging needs.

National rules on expenditure eligibility and simplified cost options (SCOs)

The introduction of national eligibility rules created a more flexible framework that was adaptable to national specificities. The impact of national eligibility rules is inconclusive due to limited evidence available and mixed results reported in the national ex-post evaluations. Only four Member States discussed national eligibility rules in their national ex-post evaluation reports (ES, MT, PL, SI).[103] Stakeholders in Poland viewed national rules positively thanks to increased flexibility. However, in Slovenia, additional reporting requirements limited the flexibility. In Spain and Malta, stakeholders noted the positive effects, however there remained concerned over eligibility gaps, for example the exclusion of stateless people.

Under the framework of national expenditure eligibility rules, Member States had the option to adopt SCOs. Of the beneficiaries who responded to the targeted survey, 65% (17 respondents out of 26) agreed SCOs contributed to simplification and/or reduction of administrative burden to a "high" or "very high" extent. Examples of the use of SCOs were gathered through the targeted consultation activities, such as interviews with Responsible Authorities. Germany made use SCOs with standardised hourly rates and flat personnel costs, thereby streamlining administrative procedures and allowing more time to focus on project implementation[104]. Greece developed unit costs to ease payment processing and save time by removing the need to verify individual payments. The use of standard costs and flat-rate costs aided Lithuania in creating more accurate budgets and reduced the administrative burden for beneficiaries. Italy made use of SCOs in a limited number of projects. Where used in Italy, SCOs administrative burden decreased, and stakeholders confirmed their effectiveness.

Despite interest in SCOs and their benefits, the application of SCOs was challenging for some Member States and resulted in its limited application.

4.1.4 Coherence and Complementarity

The examination of coherence served to assess the extent to which the objectives set in the AMIF were consistent, mutually reinforcing and effectively integrated within the broader context of EU funding. It evaluated both the internal coherence – the consistency and reinforcement of the AMIF within the Fund itself – and the external coherence – the relationship with other EU programmes.

Internal coherence

[103] At the time the preparatory work of the evaluation was conducted 23 national ex-post evaluation reports had been received. EL, HR, LV and RO were missing.

The AMIF is made up of several funding components which support complementary objectives and deliver synergies.

The AMIF has national programmes, which are delivered through shared management and support long-term structural needs at the national level. Support for these programmes account for the majority of funding (57% of the budget spent or committed). Union Actions (UAs) responded to emerging needs and financed transnational actions or actions of particular interest to the Union. EMAS addressed urgent and specific needs in emergency situations. EMN provided information and knowledge on emerging issues relating to asylum and migration to support a well-informed approach to migration and asylum policies.

The table below outlines the complementary purposes of the AMIF components and management modes according to the Regulation. It confirms how they work to address different needs (long-term or shorter-term/ more urgent or emerging needs), and at different levels (national or transnational level).

Table 6: Management modes and funding components in the AMIF according to legal base illustrating the complementary purpose of the different components

Purpose	Shared management	Direct management	Indirect management
Primarily serve internal Union policy in accordance with the specific objectives of the AMIF (Art. 19) *in the national context*	National programmes	/	/
Transnational projects or projects of particular interest to the Union (Art. 20)	/	Union actions	
Address urgent and specific needs in the event of emergency situations following Art 2.k (Art. 21)	/	Emergency assistance	
European Migration Network (Art. 22)	/	/	EMN

Formal mechanisms are in place to ensure EMAS and Union Actions (delivered through Annual Work Programmes developed by the European Commission) complement the support delivered through the national programmes (developed by Member States in consultation with the European Commission at the start of the programming period) at the EU and national level.

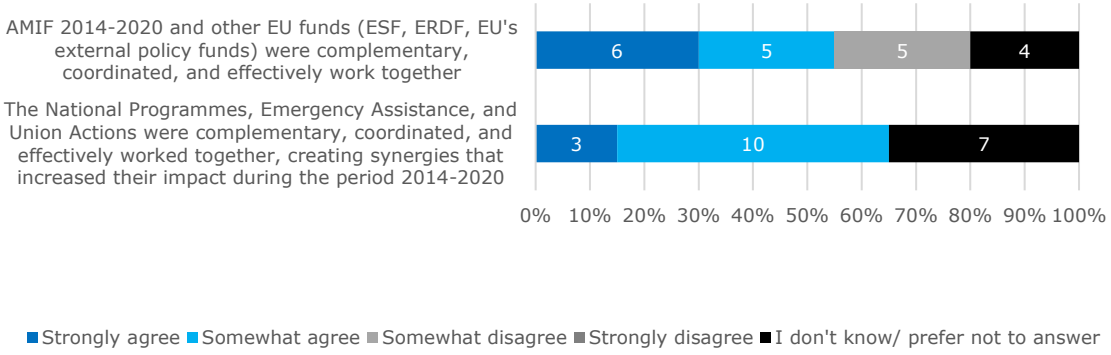
At the EU level the internal procedures ensured that financial and policy units within DG HOME, as well as other Commission services where appropriate, feed into the decision-making processes (i.e. drawing up the Annual Work Programmes) meaning that possible complementarities across funding provided through different components and management modes should be ensured from the outset. For the delivery of EMAS specifically, before funding is agreed, there is an informal and formal process of review to avoid duplication or overlaps.[105]

[105] Applicants need to demonstrate that the funding is not available through other means (for example support from DG ECHO), and the review process and assessment of applications involves relevant units in DG HOME.

The interim evaluation of the AMIF[106] concluded the funding components of AMIF were coherent to varying degrees. More specifically, national programmes and EMAS were viewed as highly coherent. Union Actions and national programmes were moderately coherent. While EMN had limited coherence with the other AMIF funding components.

The result of the targeted survey confirms the notion of a broad sense of coherence between the AMIF funding components. In the targeted survey, 65% of the National Authorities that responded agreed or somewhat agreed that the components of AMIF were coherent and effectively worked together, the other 35% of respondents did not know or preferred not to answer the question.

Figure 15: Evaluation of complementarity according to National Authorities (N=20)



Only six Member States (FI, FR, MT, SE, SI, UK) reported on internal coherence in their national ex-post evaluations and specified ensuring internal coherence through coordination committees/groups, engaging stakeholders through dialogue/consultations, ensuring transparency, information sharing and coordination councils. These mechanisms are very similar to the mechanisms used to ensure external coherence described further below. There is no recorded instance of double funding, therefore providing evidence that the internal coordination mechanisms in place are functioning.

External coherence

AMIF interlinks with a number of other EU funds, and mechanisms exist to ensure duplications are avoided and that synergies are created. The following funds have complementary objectives to the AMIF's objectives:

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD): The EAFRD aimed to support rural development and improve the quality of life in rural areas across the EU. Its primary focus was to enhance the competitiveness of agriculture, ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and promoting balanced territorial development. Complementarities and synergies may have been achieved due to addressing different aspects of rural and social development, as EAFRD measures were designed to improve rural infrastructure and create job

[106] COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Interim Evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2017 Accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Internal Security Fund.

opportunities, which could have indirectly supported the integration of migrants in rural areas.

- European Social Fund (ESF): The ESF was the EU's main instrument for investing in people, i.e. measures regarding employment, social, education and skills policies as well as structural reforms in these areas. Both the ESF and AMIF aimed to promote social inclusion and integration, supporting vulnerable groups including migrants and refugees, with the ESF focusing broadly on employment, education, and social inclusion for all EU citizens, while the AMIF specifically targeted asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants, focusing on migration management and integration.

- Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD): The primary goal of FEAD was to support EU countries' actions to provide food and basic material assistance to the most deprived individuals, including the homeless and children in poverty. Both FEAD and AMIF aimed to support vulnerable groups and promote social inclusion as part of the EU's strategy to address disparities, but FEAD provided immediate material assistance while AMIF focused on the longer-term integration measures for TCNs and asylum seekers.

- Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI): The main policy objective of the DCI was to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in developing countries. While both the DCI and the AMIF aimed to address issues related to migration, DCI operated primarily in the external dimension with a broader development agenda, whereas AMIF was more focused on internal EU migration, asylum policies and a limited external dimension.

- EU Trust Funds[107] (EUTF): The main policy objective of the EUTF was to provide a flexible and swift response to emergency situations and to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement, and irregular migration by promoting resilience, economic and equal opportunities, security, and development. Compared to the AMIF, both funds aimed to address migration and asylum challenges, but EUTF focused more on external actions and addressing root causes in third countries.

- Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visa (ISF-BV): The ISF-BV aimed to ensure a high level of security within the EU while facilitating legitimate travel and safeguarding the external borders. Compared to AMIF, ISF-BV focused specifically on border management and visa policy.

- Cohesion Fund (CF): The primary goal of the CF was to reduce economic and social disparities and promote sustainable development in the least developed

[107] In 2014-2020, there were two relevant Trust Funds dealing with migration and displacement matters: the EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of migration and displaced persons in Africa (EU Trust Fund for Africa, Valletta Summit on migration, 11-12/11/2015 - Consilium,) as well as the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (also known as the Madad Fund, Constitutive Agreement | EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis). Another worth-mentioning coordination mechanism is the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey (COMMISSION DECISION of 24.11.2015 on the coordination of the actions of the Union and of the Member States through a coordination mechanism – the Refugee Facility for Turkey).

regions of the EU. Compared to the AMIF, the CF focused on infrastructure projects, environmental sustainability, and transport networks.

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): The ERDF aimed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the EU by correcting imbalances between regions, focusing on innovation, digital agenda, support for SMEs, and low-carbon economy. The AMIF complemented the ERDF by addressing the integration of migrants and refugees, which could have contributed to regional development and social cohesion targeted by ERDF.

Member States were required to address coherence and complementarity in their national programmes. **During the programming and early implementation stages, 26 Member States conducted an explicit assessment of coherence and complementarity through either an impact assessment or early coordination**.[108]

The ESF was viewed as particularly relevant for coherence and complementarity. Within the national programmes, 25 Member States assessed the coherence and complementarity of their national programme with the ESF. This reflects the importance of the connections between AMIF and the ESF in the AMIF regulation which states in Article 9(4) that Member States shall include the authorities designated for the purpose of the management of the interventions of the ESF in the partnership as set out in Horizontal Regulation[109]. While viewed as generally coherent by stakeholders, the delimitation of the scope between the ESF and AMIF was not specifically defined. Often Member States were left to make implementing decisions on the differences in scope.[110] In addition, although it was possible to coordinate integration interventions so that early integration supported by the AMIF would be followed by medium integration initiatives supported by the ESF, no cases of continuity of integration initiatives with EU funds was found. Rather Member States relied on national funding to continue integration of TCNs in employment.[111] These findings suggest that while the AMIF and the ESF were generally coherent, this could be further reinforced.

The ISF and ERDF were also seen as highly relevant funds with eleven and eight Member States assessing their coherence and complementarity within their national programmes, respectively. Six Member States referred to the European Structural and Investment Funds as a whole. The DCI and EDF were mentioned by one Member State (MT).

As far as coherence with external spending programmes is concerned, enhanced cooperation and coordination on programming both between the Commission services and with Member States are needed. Several challenges in the current funding architecture have been identified, including notably: the insufficient alignment of the Union's external migration and security funding with the Union policies in these areas; the persistent challenge to use all existing (policy, funding, investment and other) tools, both at the disposal of the EU and its Member States, in a Team Europe spirit, to use strategically and

[108] According to the findings of the 2018 interim evaluation already collected and the national ex-post evaluations of the Member States.
[109] Article 12
[110] Special report 26/2024 (OJ C, C/2024/7395, 5.12.2024), ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/7395/oj Integration of third-country nationals in the EU – Relevant support from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund but its impact could not yet be demonstrated.
[111] Ibid.

timely leverage in relation to partner countries in order to improve cooperation on migration and security; the limitations for funding migration- and security-related actions in third countries, given that most of spending in the external dimension must comply with the criteria for development assistance[112] eligibility.

Mechanisms for coordination

All Member States established coordination mechanisms to ensure coherence and complementarity between AMIF and other EU funds. The most common coordination mechanisms used by Member States were coordination meetings with the Responsible Authorities of other funds, Interministerial monitoring Committees, coordination and cooperation groups, shared responsibilities on EU funds, and cross-participation in the Monitoring Committees of other funds. The distribution of these coordination mechanisms across the Member States is displayed in the figure below.

Figure 16: Member States coordination mechanisms

MS	Coordination meetings with other funds	Interministerial Monitoring Committees	Shared responsibilities on EU funds	Implementation of coordination groups	Cross-participation in Monitoring Committees
AT					
BE					
BG					
CY					
CZ					
DE					
EE					
EL					
ES					
FI					
FR					
HR					
HU					
IE					
IT					
LT					
LU					
LV					
MT					
NL					
PL					
PT					
RO					
SE					
SI					
SK					
UK					
Total	18	13	8	9	5

[112] Official development assistance eligibility criteria are set by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

In the targeted survey for National Authorities, 55% agreed that AMIF is complementary, coordinated, and effectively worked with other Funds.[113] The results of the public consultation confirm this perception, with 11 out of 20 respondents agree the AMIF was complementary, coordinated, and worked effectively with other EU funds.

Furthermore, **all Member States established mechanisms to prevent potential overlaps**.[114] Prevention of overlaps was a task of the Monitoring Committee in 15 Member States.[115] Member States also relied upon consultations and discussions with other Responsible Authorities to prevent overlaps.[116] In nine Member States, beneficiaries need to provide evidence that they were not benefitting from other EU funds that may overlap with AMIF when applying for funding.[117] Eight Member States ensured the absence of overlaps through financial audits.[118] To a lesser degree, Member States also provided clarity on what direct and indirect costs are eligible under different EU funds, developed guidance documents outlining AMIF interventions along with Regional Development Plans and developed IT tools to automate the verification process and prevent double funding. For example, in Spain calls for proposals indicated when projects could be supported by either AMIF, the ESF or national funding. Beneficiaries could then apply for financing by one of the three options. It was also obligatory for beneficiaries to stamp the original documents with the identification of the project financed, the year of the call, the amount of the project and a reference to either AMIF or the ESF depending on its source of funding.[119]

Based on the triangulation of available data, 23 Member States[120] indicated AMIF to be fully coherent and not overlapping with the interventions of the other EU funds. Three Member States (CZ, HR, HU) reported on a coherence broadly and one MS (PT) did not report on coherence in this regard. **Nevertheless, no evidence of double funding was found**.

4.2 How did the EU intervention make a difference and to whom?

4.2.1 EU added value

The EU added value of AMIF is examined under the scope of three main aspects: whether the implementation of AMIF resulted in a higher volume of services offered (volume effect), whether additional targets were addressed or new types of intervention were offered (scope effect) and whether the capacities of Member States and public authorities

[113] Six out of 20 (30%) respondents of the targeted survey with National Authorities strongly agreed, five (25%) somewhat agreed and another five (25%) somewhat disagreed. The remaining four (20%) respondents preferred not to answer.
[114] Evidence came from national ex-post evaluations, AIRs, FIRs, and the 2018 interim evaluation of the AMIF.
[115] Indicated by AT, BG, CY, CZ, EE, EL, HR, IE, LU, LV, MT, RO, SE, SI, SK
[116] Indicated by CY, DE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK
[117] Indicated by AT, BE, DE, EE, IE, LT, LV, NL, UK
[118] Indicated by BE, BG, CY, IE, LT, LV, PT, UK
[119] Special report 26/2024 (OJ C, C/2024/7395, 5.12.2024), ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/7395/oj Integration of third-country nationals in the EU – Relevant support from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund but its impact could not yet be demonstrated.
[120] Indicated by (AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK).

to manage the provision of public support increased (role and process effect). Several interviews[121], national evaluations[122] and the majority (31 out of 44) of the responses to the public consultation[123] suggest that there is strong evidence of volume effects, as AMIF allowed Member States to offer more services and address a broader range of beneficiaries. According to the 2014-2020 mid-term evaluation, AMIF allowed Member States to implement actions that would not have been possible without its support, such as addressing specific vulnerabilities of TCNs, providing legal, medical and psychological assistance and more.[124] One of the main tools that produced this volume effect was the EMAS.[125] In Austria, Sweden and Germany, EMAS was used to rapidly deploy teams, provide legal aid, establish temporary shelters and address high volumes of migrants.

AMIF has also demonstrated to have scope effects by enabling the introduction of new interventions to address emerging needs in 18 Member States.[126] The new initiatives included, for example, welcoming programmes, return counselling, psychological support, cultural and sports events. Furthermore, the needs of various vulnerable groups were better addressed thanks to AMIF.[127] The majority of respondents to the survey for national authorities agreed that AMIF contributed to extending benefits to additional target groups beyond those addressed at the national level from a moderate to a very high extent.[128] Regarding role effects, evidence suggests that AMIF contributed strongly to fostering innovation in individual Member States, but only in a limited manner to the sharing of ideas and best practices across Member States, with the exception of the EMN.[129] EMN promoted the transfer of ideas and best practices through the provision of high-quality, objective, and evidence-based information that supported policymakers across Member States.[130] Examples of the innovation supported by the Fund included new approached to mental health provision to vulnerable people in Luxembourg and in Sweden a project documented individuals experiences with asylum and return to contribute to enhancing conditions for dignified and sustainable returns.[131] Regarding process effects, AMIF had a considerable effect on migration, asylum, reception and return policies at the national level.

[121] Targeted interviews with 18 Responsible Authorities.
[122] Based on 17 National Ex-post Evaluations (AT, BG, CY, DE, EE, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MT, NL, PL, SI, SK, UK)
[123] Four out of 44 respondents to the public consultation considered AMIF's contribution to increasing resources for asylum, migration, and integration to be effective to a low extent, and two considered it not to contribute at all. The remaining seven respondents preferred not to answer.
[124] European Commission (2018), *Interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – Final report*, available at: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2837/709901. 12 Ex-post National Evaluations (AT, BG, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, MT, NL, PL, SI, SK).
[125] Ibid.
[126] Based on 18 national ex-post evaluations (AT, BE, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, LT, LV, LU, MT, PL, SE, SK, and the UK).
[127] Based on 18 national ex-post evaluations (AT, BE, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, LT, LV, LU, MT, PL, SE, SK, and the UK).
[128] Targeted survey with National Authorities: 13 out of 20 respondents to Q16.3 "To what extent do you consider AMIF 2014 - 2020 contributed to: Extending of benefits generated by AMIF to additional target groups beyond those addressed at the national level".
[129] European Commission (2018), *Interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – Final report*, available at: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2837/709901. Targeted interviews with 11 Responsible Authorities.
[130] European Commission (2018), *Interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – Final report*, available at: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2837/709901. Targeted interviews with 11 Responsible Authorities.
[131] National ex-post evaluations of Luxembourg and Sweden.

In fact, AMIF contributed to the improvement of the organisation and governance of these policies, especially through the establishment of cooperation of stakeholders.[132]

Most Member States reported that actions would have been carried out to some extent even

in the absence of the Fund's support, however, the interventions would have been minimal,

of a smaller scale, and/or of a lower quality, therefore highlighting AMIF's value.[133] Eight Member States reported certain actions, particularly in the fields of reception conditions, asylum, and integration, would not have been possible without funding from AMIF, as there was no national source of funding available.[134]

Interrupting AMIF support to Member States would lead to migration and asylum-related activities being greatly undermined. This was expressed in the majority of ex-post evaluations conducted by Member States, as well as in stakeholder consultations.[135] The effects would be felt specifically by beneficiaries of the programmes, especially those that are already vulnerable.[136] An interruption of AMIF funding would also have an impact on the development of innovative projects, which would not have been developed without AMIF contribution.[137]

The evidence concerning the benefit brought to transnational cooperation, solidarity and burden sharing was mixed. In the targeted survey with national authorities, 30% of respondents stated AMIF only contributed to ensuring solidarity and burden sharing between a very low to low extent, 40% said it contributed to moderate extent and 20% rated it as high to very high.[138] Nonetheless, the EMN and the implementation of Union Action projects are examples of projects that fostered practical cooperation amongst Member States.[139]

4.2.2 Sustainability

To evaluate sustainability is to measure whether the effects of funded projects are probable to endure once the support of the Fund would end. This evaluation study has focused on evaluating the adequacy of arrangements for evaluating the sustainability of project

[132] Targeted interviews with eight Responsible Authorities. Based on 18 national ex-post evaluations (AT, BE, BG, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, HU, IE, IT, LV, LU, MT, PL, RO, SE, SK).
[133] Targeted interviews with 10 Responsible Authorities. National ex-post evaluations (ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK).
[134] Based on 17 national ex-post evaluations (AT, BE, BG, CZ, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, SE, SI, SK).
[135] Based on 20 national ex-post evaluations (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK). Targeted interviews with 14 Responsible Authorities, five beneficiaries and one international organisation. Country case studies: DE, LT, PL, RO, EL, IT, FR.
[136] European Commission (2018), *Interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – Final report*, available at: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2837/709901. National ex-post evaluations: FR, LU, LV, UK. Targeted interview with one Responsible Authority.
[137] Targeted interviews with: one beneficiary, one research centre. Thematic case study: Union Actions.
[138] Targeted survey with National Authorities. Out of the 20 respondents, four rated AMIF's contribution to solidarity and burden sharing as very high or high, eight considered it moderate, five rated it as low, one as very low, and two preferred not to answer.
[139] European Commission (2018), *Interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – Final report*, available at: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2837/709901. Targeted interviews with seven Responsible Authorities. Thematic case study: Union Actions.

proposals; on evidence of innovative projects being transferred, replicated or upscaled; and on the absence of dependency from EU funds.

In the area of direct management, the establishment of Steering Committees (who ensured coordination, monitoring and provided strategic guidance) and the addition of sustainability as one of the award criteria of the projects in 2017 contributed to greater sustainability, but the results were still mixed.[140] Projects on capacity building, labour market integration and long-term reintegration solutions have long-term impacts. However, there is limited evidence of projects being transferred, replicated or scaled up using national resources, which would indicate more continuity of project benefits.

At the same time, Member States introduced various mechanisms to ensure sustainability in their national programmes. Twelve Member States (DE, PL, LT, BG, FL, IT, LU, MT, FR, HU, NL, SL) included sustainability as a specific selection criteria in the Call for Proposal for projects, while others (AT, BG, DE, PL, IE, CY, LU, MT, HU, SL, CZ, SE) added sustainability as one of the elements of the monitoring process of their programmes. For example, Poland conducted sustainability checks during the implementation phase and after project completion. This is still not a universal approach, and some gaps remain in how sustainability is ensured.

At the project level, other elements of sustainability can be found. For example, four Member States (BG, CZ, HU, SK) focused on counselling and tailored support in the context of dignified returns, to ensure long-term impacts, others (IT, PT, LT) integrated national funds with EU funds, creating multi-faceted solutions to migration challenges.

When analysing Stakeholder consultations, they affirm that some elements of sustainability can be found in AMIF projects. Beneficiaries and National Authorities generally believe in the enduring impact of AMIF funded projects. In response to the targeted survey, 80% of beneficiaries (i.e. 235 out of 291) stated they believe the benefits produced by AMIF funded projects will remain after the projects' end. Similarly, 80% of the representatives of national authorities completing the targeted survey stated they consider the effects of the AMIF will continue after the programme has ended. Beneficiaries, local communities and local volunteer networks played a crucial role in guaranteeing sustainability. An example of this have been International Organisations that have continued the projected activities with their own resources during financial gaps.[141]

Finally, the information on nationally funded programmes who have similar objectives as AMIF is lacking.[142] There is the example of Sweden, where AMIF funded activities have been incorporated into regular national operations.[143] However, this does not appear to be the norm which could indicate that dependency on EU funds is still too high.

[140] Source: AWP 2017, Award criteria: In accordance with Article 132 of the Financial Regulation and Article 203 of the Rules of Application, proposals will be evaluated on the basis of relevance; quality; European added value; expected results, dissemination, sustainability and long-term impact; and cost-effectiveness.

[141] This information is derived from interviews with the Responsible Authorities, who provided qualitative information regarding the sustainability of AMIF-funded projects. Due to the limited information, no systematic or quantitative evidence on sustainability was identified.

[142] Information available only for Italy: the national ex-post evaluation mentions that the Italian national budget allocated approximately EUR 3.2 billion for "Immigration, reception and respect of rights" in 2023.

[143] Ramboll (2024), *Ex-post evaluation of the National Programme of Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) 2014-2020 – Final report*.

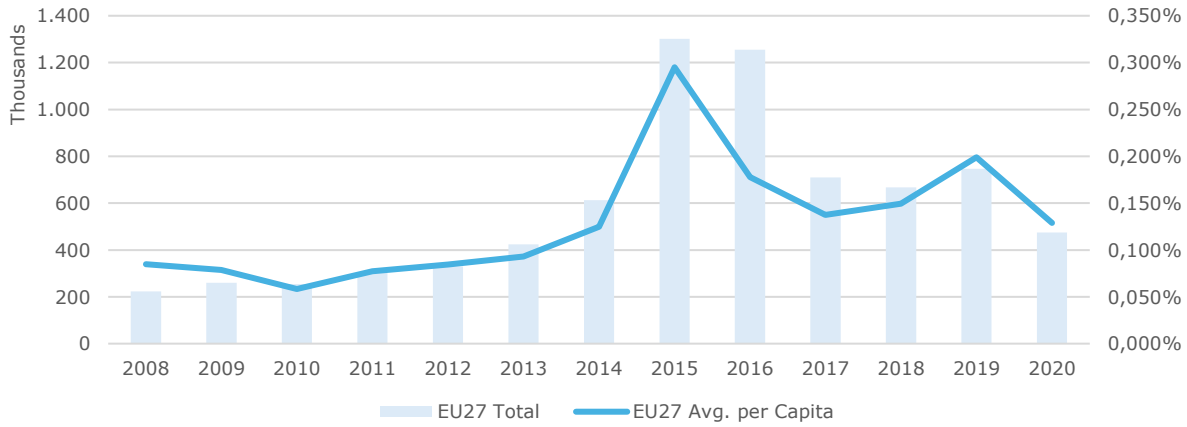
4.3 Is the intervention still relevant?

4.3.1 Relevance

In this evaluation, relevance has been measured as the extent to which AMIF's objectives correspond to actual needs of the Member States, and how AMIF actions adapt when these needs evolve.

In the programming period 2014-2020, the needs of Member States related to migration and asylum operations evolved in unprecedented ways. For example, the number of applications for international protection in EU Member States, while it was already steadily increasing in 2013 and 2014[144], reached a record (at the time) number of 1 392 155 in 2015. This sharp and unprecedented increase in asylum requests (which then also caused an increase of residence permit requests[145], and the number of relocations), increased significantly the amount of pressure Member States were under.

Figure 17: Number of asylum applicants (EU27 total and EU27 average per capita)



Source: Eurostat[146].

The gathered data has shown that in the majority of Member States[147], the objectives of AMIF national programmes addressed the actual needs of the Member States, and were able to adapt to face the evolving needs.[148] This has been confirmed by most of the Responsible Authorities and beneficiaries responding to the targeted surveys[149], as well as

[144] EASO (2013), Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union. EASO (2014) Annual Eurostat (2024), *First permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_resfirst__custom_13556995/default/table?lang=en

[145] Eurostat (2024), First permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship, available at: https://e Eurostat (2024), *First permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_resfirst__custom_13556995/default/table?lang=en.

[146] Eurostat (2025), *Asylum applicants by type, citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_asyappctza__custom_13556398/default/table?lang=en .

[147] AT, BE, CY, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK

[148] European Commission (2018), *Interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – Final report*, available at: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2837/709901.

[149] Targeted survey with National Authorities. Targeted survey with beneficiaries.

by the majority of the respondents to the public consultations.[150] There are limited examples of needs that have not been or have partially been addressed due to the resources being invested in managing the increase of asylum requests, such as providing access to programmes to irregular migrants or continuing the support to migrants after they are no longer minors.[151]

The majority of Responsible Authorities responding to the targeted survey reported completing a needs assessment before drafting AMIF programmes or on a SWOT or equivalent analysis.[152] This greatly contributed to the alignment between the needs identified by the Member States and the objectives of the programmes responding to those needs. However, only seven Member States (DE, BG, CZ, ES, IT, LT, RO) updated their needs assessment throughout the programming period.[153] Three Member States (CY, IT, ES) have, on the other hand, affirmed that they were able to gauge the change of needs through other, non-formal methods such as stakeholder consultations.[154]

National authorities largely agree that, in the same way, the objectives of the Annual Work Programme (Union Actions and EMAS) are aligned with the actual needs and are flexible enough to adapt to emerging circumstances.[155] Regarding Union Actions, beneficiaries asserted that they addressed common needs of Member States, such as the systematisation and collection of data on returns and more. The EMAS Work Programme also addressed actual needs.[156] For example, through ad-hoc humanitarian admission programmes for temporary stays after a humanitarian crisis in a third country and the enhancement of solidarity, the EMAS Work Programme was able to address actual needs.

Most Member States recognised the important role of monitoring committees in providing input for the identification of relevant needs.[157] These committees, through providing recommendations for AMIF project implementation[158], managed to strengthen the focus of AMIF interventions on specific groups such as applicants for international protection and returnees, to address evolving needs.[159] Some Member States have reported that there are still some obstacles to the implementation of the recommendations of monitoring committees, undermining their effectiveness at times.[160]

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[150] 34 out of 44 respondents to the public consultation consider strengthening and developing a CEAS as a very important AMIF objective in view of EU's needs. 33 out of 44 respondents to the public consultation consider legal migration as a very important AMIF objective in view of EU's needs. 32 out of 44 respondents to the public consultation consider enhancing solidarity as a very important AMIF objective in view of EU's needs. 31 out of 44 respondents to the public consultation consider strengthening the capacity of Member States to address urgent and specific needs in the event of an emergency situation as a very important AMIF objective in view of EU's needs.

[151] European Commission (2018), *Interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – Final report*, available at: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2837/709901. Targeted interviews with five Responsible Authorities. Two national ex-post evaluations (BG, PL).

[152] Targeted survey national authorities. Interview with Lithuanian national authorities.

[153] Targeted survey with National Authorities.

[154] Targeted interviews with three Responsible Authorities. Three national ex-post evaluations (CY, IT, ES).

[155] European Commission (2018), *Interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund – Final report*, available at: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2837/709901. Thematic case studies: Union Actions, EMAS. Targeted interview with two Responsible Authorities. Targeted interview with one beneficiary.

[156] Targeted interviews with eleven Responsible Authorities.

[157] Targeted survey with National Authorities.

[158] Targeted survey with National Authorities.

[159] Targeted interviews with eight Responsible Authorities

[160] Targeted survey with National Authorities.

Overall, AMIF funded projects were flexible enough to adapt to changing needs, in all of its aspects (design, calls for proposals and procurement). Most Member States highlighted this in their ex-post evaluations.[161] In several Member States (AT, CZ, DE, FR, IE, PT), AMIF programmes demonstrated flexibility through the creation of local and central programmes for humanitarian admission in response to the Syrian migration crisis.[162] Likewise, after the increase of displaced persons from Ukraine due to Russia's War of aggression, Member States were able to access fast-tracked funding to address the needs of refugees, significantly contributing to the strengthening of CEAS.[163]

Finally, another example of the flexibility and adaptability of AMIF funded national programmes, has been the fact that both substantial and non-substantial amendments were easily introduced.[164] Responsible Authorities affirmed that, concerning non-substantial amendments, the programme management allows for timely adjustments, without bureaucratic delays, which was a crucial aspect during the 2015-2016 migration crisis.[165] At the same time, substantial amendments are designed to require more formal and burdensome changes, as they are those amendments that modify the more structural aspects of the programmes (projects' scopes, reallocation of funds, etc.). Overall, Responsible Authorities have indicated that the rules and procedures are sufficient to respond to emerging needs.[166]

5. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?

5.1 Conclusions

Effectiveness

The evidence demonstrates AMIF significantly contributed to strengthening the CEAS, including in its external dimension. While the achievements varied across Member States, overall AMIF was particularly successful in supporting the creation and renovation of reception accommodation and providing assistance to TCNs. Under SO1, AMIF also supported the resettlement of more than 61 000 TCNs and the training of over 86 000 staff in the area of asylum and reception. However, more staff was trained with funding sources other than the AMIF. Due to the migration crisis in 2015 and 2016, EMAS significantly contributed to strengthening the CEAS, with over half of EMAS funding supporting reception conditions. For example, EMAS projects addressed the needs of vulnerable TCNs, improved and expanded reception capacities, and supported improving asylum policies. Union Actions also contributed to the objectives of SO1 through a variety of projects and contributed to strengthening the external dimension of the CEAS through long-term cooperation frameworks with international actors.

[161] 20 national ex-post evaluations (AT, BG, CY, CZ, DE, PL, EE, ES, IT, HU, LT, UK, IE, FI, FR, MT, NL, SE, SI, SK).
[162] European Commission, Annual Work Programme for 2015 for support to Union Actions under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.
[163] Thematic Case Study: Ukraine.
[164] Targeted interviews with nine Responsible Authorities. Three national ex-post evaluations (BG, DE, UK).
[165] Targeted interviews with two Responsible Authorities.
[166] Targeted interviews with eleven Responsible Authorities.

AMIF substantially contributed to the effective integration of TCNs and to some degree contributed to legal migration measures. Over 10 million TCNs participated in integration measures supported by the Fund, far exceeding the target set by Member States. Over half of Union Action projects contributed to the integration of TCNs, with the highest number of projects in capacity building and then support to vulnerable people and women. EMAS substantially contributed to integration measures, receiving almost a quarter of the EMAS funding. Member States prioritized using their allocation under SO2 for integration measures over legal migration interventions. Where legal migration interventions took place, stakeholders viewed them as successful.

AMIF successfully contributed to fair and effective return strategies. As with SO1 the achievements under SO3 varied across Member States. Over the programming period, stakeholders focused on supporting voluntary returns over forced returns, and indeed more TCNs were voluntarily returned with AMIF support than forcibly returned. To contribute to effective returns all Member States, to varying degrees, used AMIF to finance reintegration measures. The majority of Member States also made use of AMIF to implemented projects or supported partnerships in the area of return to improve return policy and enhance transnational cooperation. MPF is one of the largest Union Action projects and directly contributed to combatting irregular migration and enhancing cooperation with third countries to reinforce return and readmission processes. EMAS contributed to SO3 to a lesser extent, for example with a project that supported a holistic approach to returns through pre-departure assistance and psychological services.

To a lesser extent the AMIF contributed to enhancing solidarity and responsibility sharing through relocation, resettlement, and cooperation projects. Across the board, Member States allocated significantly less resources to SO4 than the other SOs. Resettlement in accordance with the common Union priorities was by far the most common intervention under SO4, with a total EU resettlement of 912 264 000 individuals. Modest achievements were made in relocation, with an EU total of 7 390 individuals transferred from one Member State to another. Cooperation projects to enhance solidarity and responsibility-sharing were minimally supported, with a total of six projects implemented by three Member States.

Across the specific objectives, serval key challenges appeared. First, the migration crisis of 2015 and 2016, and later a long-term inflow of migrants put a strain on some Member States reception and asylum systems. Later in the programming period, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine caused a sudden flow of Ukrainians seeking protection in the EU. Member States adapted to these challenges in a variety of ways including, expanding and improving reception facilities, enhancing asylum processing capabilities and launching calls for projects specific to Ukrainian displaced individuals. Another large challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic. All Member States reported the pandemic negatively impacted the implementation of their national programmes. Once again, Member States adopted remedy strategies including moving service online adopting digital tools and launching projects to support TCNs needs arising from the pandemic.

AMIF successfully contributed to supporting Member States in emergency situations. Throughout the programming period the EMAS allocation significantly increase in response to the various challenges mentioned above. In total, 106 EMAS projects were implemented for about EUR 2.5 billion. The largest shared of EMAS funding went to Greece, Italy and Spain. The majority of EMAS funding went to supporting reception conditions. The ability of EMAS to adapt to evolving needs varied, with some beneficiaries

stating the procedures in place for amending projects made it difficult to adapt to changing needs in real time.

Efficiency

AMIF supported actions that are viewed as cost-effective in EU benchmarking studies, such as language learning and vocational training. Member States also increased the efficiency of their human resources.

The evidence gathered on the cost-effectiveness of the AMIF in comparison to similar funds provided mixed results and no conclusive result. The administrative burden of the AMIF was generally viewed as proportionate to its benefits and similar to the of other EU funds. However, it was generally not viewed as proportionate in comparison to national funds. Furthermore, about half of the Member States reported a high administrative burden.

Member States implemented measures to monitor and identify fraud and irregularities. Limited reporting on such measures led to insufficient information to assess and reach conclusions of the cost-effectiveness of measures to prevent, detect and remedy fraud and irregularities.

Simplification and reduction of administrative burden

AMIF introduced several changes aimed at simplifying procedures and reducing administrative burden. First, AMIF created one fund dedicated to migration management and a single set of rules was adopted for the Home Affairs Funds to improve coordination and harmonise procedures. Secondly, AMIF introduced a single seven-year funding cycle and multi-annual programming. This allowed Member States to plan long term interventions, better adapt to evolving needs, and simplified procedures by removing annual renewal processes. Finally, AMIF introduced national rules on expenditure eligibility to provide flexibility for national contexts and the option to use SCOs. Where SCOs were implemented, they were viewed positively by stakeholders, however some Member States found it challenging to implement SCOs and their overall their use was limited. Generally, the simplification measures established under the AMIF were welcomed by stakeholders, however, there were mixed views on their effectiveness.

Coherence and complementarity

The various components of the AMIF (national programmes, Union Actions, EMAS, and EMN) are coherent and complimentary. At the level of the Commission procedures, were in place in the drafting of the Union Action and EMAS Annual Work Programmes ensuring coherence from the outset. As reporting on internal coherence was not a part of the AIR/FIR, reporting on internal coherence is limited. However, several Member States did describe the mechanisms they established to ensure coherence and complementarity at the national level. These mechanisms included engaging stakeholders, coordination groups, and information sharing.

The AMIF was also viewed as sufficiently coherent with other EU programmes. All but one Member State conducted an assessment of coherence and complementarity during the programming or early implementation stages. Overall, the ESF was viewed as the most relevant for coherence and complementarity, however coherence could be further reinforced by coordinating integration interventions and better demarcating the differences

between their scope of support. The ISF and ERDF were also viewed as particularly coherent with AMIF.

As far as coherence with external spending programmes is concerned, enhanced cooperation and coordination on programming both between the Commission services and with Member States are needed. There are several challenges in the current funding architecture that should be addressed , including notably: the insufficient alignment of the Union's external migration and security funding with the Union policies in these areas; the persistent challenge to use all existing (policy, funding, investment and other) tools, both at the disposal of the EU and its Member States, in a Team Europe spirit, to use strategically and timely leverage in relation to partner countries in order to improve cooperation on migration and security; the limitations for funding migration- and security-related actions in third countries, given that most of spending in the external dimension must comply with the criteria for development assistance[167] eligibility.

All Member States established mechanisms to ensure coherence and complementarity between the AMIF and other EU funds and prevent potential overlaps. Importantly, no evidence of double funding was found between AMIF fund components, nor between AMIF and other EU programmes.

EU added value

AMIF contributed to the EU added value by allowing Member States to offer more services and reach a broader audience than would have been possible without AMIF support. EMAS was particularly important in expanding services and their reach during emergency situations. AMIF also allowed Member States to introduce new interventions to address evolving needs, extend activities and benefits to additional target groups, and strongly contributed to innovation.

Most Member States reported that actions would have been carried out to some extent even

in the absence of the Fund's support, however, the interventions would have been minimal,

of a smaller scale, and/or of a lower quality, therefore highlighting AMIF's value.

On AMIF's contribution to transnational cooperation, solidarity and burden sharing, stakeholder's perception was mixed. AMIF supported relocation and resettlement efforts both through EMAS and the national programmes, though Member States carried out these interventions at varying rates. While there was limited evidence of transnational cooperation in the national programmes, EMN and Union Actions supported transnational projects and foster cooperation between Member States.

Sustainability

While there were efforts to ensure sustainability, such as the inclusion of sustainability in the award criteria of calls for proposals, there is limited evidence of projects being transferred, replicated or scaled up with national resources. More commonly, sustainability is ensured through the selection of activities that have long-term impacts, such as capacity

[167] Official development assistance eligibility criteria is set by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

building or labour market integration. In addition, some Member States included sustainability as an element of the monitoring process. Stakeholders described the importance of beneficiaries, local communities and volunteer networks in ensuring sustainability, however dependency on EU funds remained high and further efforts to ensure sustainability could be made.

Relevance

In regard to the national programmes, the objectives of the AMIF were strongly aligned with the needs in Member States and the structure of the AMIF allowed for sufficient ability to adapt to evolving needs. A needs assessment was conducted in most Member States before drafting the AMIF national programmes, however fewer Member States updated their needs assessment during implementation of the programme. Rather, during implementation more Member States relied upon the monitoring committee to provide feedback on relevant needs. The Responsible Authorities also affirmed that the processes involved in amending the national programmes were sufficient to respond to emerging needs.

The Union Action and EMAS Annual Work Programmes were also found to be aligned with actual needs and flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances.

While stakeholders largely agreed on the relevance of the AMIF, several stakeholders highlighted areas of support that were not met or only partially met (i.e. assistance to irregular migrants and continuing the support to migrants after they are no longer minors).

5.2 Lessons learned

Stakeholders agreed the AMIF's design allowed for sufficient flexibility to adapt to emerging needs. Furthermore, the adaption of the EMAS Work Programme throughout the programming period greatly impacted Member States ability to adapt to emergency situations. Future funds should retain the flexibility to respond to changing needs and external events.

Reception capacity and infrastructure was under pressure at several points during the programming period due to increases in the number of asylum seekers. It is worth considering how to develop adaptable reception systems that can be scaled up, when necessary. This may include establishing contingency plans and flexible mechanisms.

This evaluation was hindered by the limited amount of feedback from TCNs available. It would be useful to launch a general reflection on how to gather more feedback from TCNs regarding the assistance they receive, this could help improve the quality of support provided and feed into needs assessments.

Member States made limited use of the AMIF to develop or support alternatives to detention. There is potential to further advance alternatives to detention through capacity building, sharing of best practices, and support to pilot projects. The EUAA has developed guidelines on alternatives to detention which can be a starting point for enhancing alternatives to detention.

The implementation of both voluntary return and forced return varied across Member States. For voluntary return, Member States could explore methods to raise awareness about voluntary return, such as through communication campaigns or return counselling, and also increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of voluntary returns by providing more TCNs with reintegration assistance. In the area of forced returns, efforts to establish cooperation with third countries to facilitate forced returns should continue. Whereas Member States may consider enhancing the capacity of their return departments and/or making further use of Frontex's support in facilitating returns.

Member States did not significantly contribute to solidarity projects in the 2014-2020 period (e.g. relocation). There is potential to further encourage Member States participation in relocation, particularly in line with the developments foreseen by the Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Efforts introduced by the AMIF to reduce administrative burden, particularly the introduction of multi-annual programming and the introduction of SCOs were generally viewed positively by stakeholders. Further efforts could be made to continue these positive developments, including expanding the use of SCOs both by the Commission and Member States. Beneficiaries may also benefit from further guidance support, and feedback.

Reporting on internal coherence was limited with only some Member States explicitly reporting on their efforts to ensure internal coherence, this may be because reporting on internal coherence was not a requirement in the AIRs. To ensure internal coherence and increase transparency, it is worth considering adding reporting on the mechanisms in place to ensure internal coherence to regular reporting.

To better assess efficiency in the future, it would be useful to consider how Member States could collect and share data on efficiency (e.g. unit costs, full time equivalents, irregularities) in a more standardised approach without adding a burden to beneficiaries and Responsible Authorities.

To ensure the relevance of the AMIF national programmes in a constantly evolving policy area, the Member States could be encouraged to update their needs assessment during the implementation period.

ANNEX I: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

This evaluation has been carried out by DG HOME, as responsible for the implementation of AMIF in the Commission. The evaluation was launched in May 2023.

The evaluation has been carried out in accordance with the rules of Better Regulation, by applying the methods and requirements established in the Toolbox. The evaluation was also based on the requirements set in the monitoring and evaluation framework for the 2014-2020 Home Affair Funds, as defined in the Commission Delegated Regulation 2017/207. In this regard, the five standard criteria for evaluation defined Better Regulation (Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance, Coherence, and EU Added Value) were complemented by three additional ones: sustainability, complementarity and simplification and reduction of administrative burden.

The evaluation was also based on the orientations provided by DG HOME to the Member States regarding the ex-post evaluation, in particular, the evaluation questions with indicative judgment criteria presented to the Managing Authorities during a webinar on 20 July 2023. Both the programmes' and the Commission's ex-post evaluations are based on the same set of questions and indicative methodological elements.

The evaluation has been steered by an Interservice Group, with the participation of the operational and policy units in DG HOME, as well as the following DGs and services: SG, DG BUDG, DG INTPA, DG JUST, DG REGIO, DG RTD, DG DEFIS, DG TRADE, JRC, SJ, DG ECHO, DG EMPL, and OLAF.

The first meeting of the Interservice Group was held on 30 June 2023, where the group discussed the actions for the preparatory study to be carried out with the assistance of external consultants. Additional meetings of the Interservice group took place to discuss the deliverables of the preparatory study on 8 March 2024, 3 May 2024, 9 September 2024 and 18 November 2024. The draft version of this Staff Working Document was submitted to the group for consultation on 1 July 2025, and the final meeting with the Interservice Group took place on 11 July 2025.

The preparatory study was confided to a consortium made up of EY Germany and Technopolis Group following an open call for tender launched on 3 October 2023. The contract was signed on 7 March 2024.

The evaluation is mostly based on the work done during the preparatory study, as explained in Annex II and III, in line with the requests in the Specifications drafted by the Commission.

ANNEX II. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL MODELS USED

This chapter presents the methodology employed for the ex-post evaluation of AMIF 2014-2020 and the limitations encountered.

Methodology

The evaluation was supported by an external study that was divided into four phases: inception, data collection, analysis and finalisation.

The inception phase was characterised by preparing the work to be done. This included preliminary desk research, scoping interviews with officials from the Commission, stakeholder mapping, and the refinement of the methodological approach to be used. The inception phase concluded with the production of an inception report which was discussed during a meeting of the Steering Group, revised by the contractors to incorporate the Commission's feedback, and later the final inception report was accepted.

The data collection phase focused on gathering data by by synthesising and analysing the annual implementation reports and the final implementation reports, a review of the ex-post evaluations of the national programmes, reviewing a sample of target setting methodologies, mapping the allocations by type of intervention and target group, launching a targeted survey and public consultation, and conducting semi-structured interviews and a focus group. This phase concluded with an interim report which was discussed with the Steering Group, revised and then accepted. During this phase, work on the thematic and country case studies began.

During the analysis phase the contractors focused on analysing the data collected to draw conclusions to the evaluation questions. During this phase the contractors held an EU level focus group to validate the evaluation findings and develop lessons learned. The contractors delivered a draft final report which was discussed in a meeting with the Steering Group.

The draft staff working document was then shared with the Steering Group and discussed in a meeting.

Regarding the data collection methods, the **desk research** relied upon reviewing approximately 125 documents including evaluation reports at the EU and national level, AMIF national programmes, the annual implementation reports and final implementation reports, notes to the Home Affairs Funds Committee, regulatory and policy frameworks, grey literature and academic publications.

Furthermore, data on financial allocations, financial progress and implementation progress was extracted from SFC2014. The data was reviewed by management mode, specific objective and by Member State to develop the state of play.

Regarding the **consultation activities**, 68 **interviews** were completed during the course of the study. The interviews included scoping interviews and semi-structured interviews to gather data for the analysis, including the country case studies and thematic case studies.

Two EU level focus groups were held during the study. The first EU level **focus group** was held in person on the 25 June 2024. The focus group consisted of Managing Authorities and project beneficiaries. The focus group focused on understanding the challenges encountered, good practices, and policy issues affecting the achievement of the AMIF specific objectives.

The second level focus group was held online on 27 March 2025 and consisted of Commission officials, Managing Authorities, and the EUAA and Frontex. The objective of the focus group was to validate the evaluation findings and further develop the lessons learned.

In addition to the focus groups, four **targeted surveys** were launched to target various stakeholders. Of the 419 surveys completed, 37 were from National/Managing Authorities and 382 were from beneficiaries. The results of the survey fed into the main analysis.

The study included seven **country case studies** (DE, FR, IT, EL, PL, RO, and LT) to dive deeper into the implementation of AMIF to identify challenges encountered, specific processes, and best practices. The study also included four **thematic case studies** on Union Actions, EMAS, the impact of the Russian war of aggression towards Ukraine, and Specific Actions. The thematic case studies allowed for deep-dives into certain aspects of the AMIF and specific topics by reviewing specific projects.

Based on the work described above, the final report for the mid-term evaluation was drafted and approved.

Limitations and mitigation measures

The study encountered several limitations that were mitigated to the greatest extent possible.

The mapping of allocations was a challenge as at times the data provided is insufficient (i.e. titles or descriptions are to narrow for precise tagging).

For the quantitative analysis, the intervention fields and output indicators are not directly linked, therefore analysis was done based on logical links between the two.

To not overwhelm respondents and dissuade them from completing the surveys, the length of the public consultation and targeted survey questionnaires were reduced. As a result, the public consultation and targeted surveys did not cover all evaluation criteria and data was collected via other means to fill these gaps. To reach the largest audience possible, invitations for the surveys were sent to national authorities with a request to forward the survey links to stakeholders.

The analysis of efficiency was constrained by the limited data on costs and benefits. This stemmed from the absence of mandatory reporting on administrative costs by the Member States. Therefore, the evaluation relied heavily upon qualitative input from the surveys and interviews.

The high turnover of staff within key stakeholders and Responsible Authorities impacted the continuity of information in certain cases. To mitigate this, the collected data was cross-checked and triangulated.

ANNEX III. EVALUATION MATRIX

Effectiveness

Table 7: Evaluation matrix for Effectiveness

EQ	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
EQ14: How did the Fund contribute to strengthening and developing all aspects of the CEAS, including its external dimension? EQ15: How did the Fund contribute to supporting legal migration to the Member States in accordance with their economic and social needs, such as labour market needs, while safeguarding the	What progress was made towards strengthening and developing the asylum procedures, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress? What progress was made towards strengthening and developing the reception conditions, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress? What progress was made towards the achievement of a successful implementation of the legal framework of the qualification directive (and its subsequent modifications), and how did the Fund contribute to	Output and result indicators have achieved their targets, being correctly defined and in line with evolving needs	Percentage of output and results indicators that have achieved their targets		AIRs Final implementation reports SFC 2014
			Percentage of consulted stakeholders that consider the targets for result and output indicators have been defined in accordance with evolving needs	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies	
		Normative judgements from the stakeholders, including where relevant counterfactual self-estimation and retrospectives pretest, confirm that the Fund contributed to the objectives identified in the sub questions	Percentage of consulted stakeholders that consider the Fund contributes to the following: - strengthening and developing the asylum procedures; - successful implementation of the legal framework of the qualification directive; - capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate their asylum policies and procedures - establishment, development and implementation of national resettlement Programmes and strategies, and other humanitarian admission Programmes; - supporting legal migration to the Member States in accordance with	Targeted survey Public consultation	

EQ	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
integrity of the immigration systems of Member States, and to promoting the effective integration of TCNs? EQ16: How did the Fund contribute to enhancing fair and effective return strategies in the Member States which contribute to combating illegal immigration, with an emphasis on sustainability of return and effective readmission in the	achieving this progress? What progress was made towards enhancing Member State capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate their asylum policies and procedures, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress? What progress was made towards the establishment, development and implementation of national resettlement programmes and strategies, and other humanitarian admission programmes, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress? What progress was made towards supporting legal migration to the Member States in accordance		their economic and social needs; - supporting cooperation among the Member States, with a view to safeguarding the integrity of the immigration systems of Member States; - building capacity on integration and legal migration within the Member State; - effective implementation of return measures; - enhancing practical cooperation between Member States; - improving the cooperation with third countries compared with the past - building capacity on return.		
		Challenges that affected implementation and the progress towards the objectives of the Fund were duly identified and linked with effective remedy strategies	The extent to which challenges faced during the Fund implementation (considering the interventions thought the shared, direct and indirect management) had an important or very important impact on the implementation of the Fund	Targeted survey Semi-structured interviews Country case studies Thematic case studies Public consultation	AIRs Final implementation reports Ex-post national evaluations
			Extent to which remedy strategies were identified (considering the interventions thought the shared, direct and indirect	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies	AIRs Ex-post national evaluations

EQ	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
countries of origin and transit?	with their economic and social needs, such as labour market needs, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress? What progress was made towards promoting the effective integration of third-country nationals, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress? What progress was made towards supporting cooperation among the Member States, with a view to safeguarding the integrity of the immigration systems of Member States, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress? What progress was made towards building capacity on integration and legal		management), including evidence based on stakeholders' view	Thematic case study	
		The Fund supported types of interventions that are known to be effective as per the available evidence (including, e.g., relevant academic literature, the interim evaluation of the Fund, etc.)	Share of results indicators that achieved the planned milestones and targets		SFC2014 Final implementation reports
			Share of projects implemented under direct and indirect management for which results are aligned with the planned milestones and targets	Thematic case studies	SFC2014
			Reasons /justifications for delays relating to the implementation of selected operations Share of consulted stakeholders that consider the type of interventions supported by the Fund were effective	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies Thematic case studies Targeted survey	Ex-post national evaluations
		The Fund embedded available good practices in its implementation where relevant and possible	The extent to which the national programmes, UAs, Specific actions, EMAS embedded good practices	Semi-structured interviews Targeted survey Country case studies Thematic case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
		There is appropriate evidence of a positive contribution of the Fund to the trend of any impact indicators, once	Descriptive statistics, trend analyses and correlation analyses for the 2014 – 2020 period on • Inputs in terms of financial resources allocated to AMIF		SFC2014 Quantitative analysis

EQ	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
	migration within the Member States, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	controlled for confounding factors	activities and their absorption by Member States. • Their associated achievements: outputs (12 variables in total); results (4 variables). impacts (8 variables).[168]		
	What progress was made towards supporting the measures accompanying return procedures, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	There is evidence of unintended effects and/ or spillovers effects	Share of consulted stakeholders that consider AMIF produced unintended effects and/or spillovers effects	Targeted survey	
	What progress was made towards effective implementation of return measures (voluntary and forced), and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	All actions supported under the Fund were implemented in full compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU	The extent to which the national programmes supported actions that were implemented in full compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
			The extent to which Union Actions supported actions were implemented in full compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU	Thematic case studies	
	What progress was made towards enhancing practical cooperation between Member States and/or with authorities of third		The extent to which EMAS supported actions were implemented in full compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU	Thematic case studies	
		There is evidence of improved cooperation with third countries where relevant to the objectives of the Fund	Geographical coverage of financing supported by the AMIF (broken down by type of management, type		SFC2014 Final implementation reports

[168] See section **Error! Reference source not found.** for further details.

EQ	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
	countries on return measures, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress? What progress was made towards building capacity on return, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?		of actions, countries involved) - Number of countries (Member States and third countries) covered by actions - Resources decided by broad areas of support and fund component per country (Member State and third country)		
			Number of cooperation projects with other Member States on integration of TCN and enhancing solidarity and responsibility sharing	Country case studies	National programmes Ex-post national evaluations
			Number of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection transferred from one Member State to another with support of the Fund		SFC2014 AIRs Final implementation reports Ex-post national evaluations
			Number of Member States with return agreements with third countries		Return statistics
			Convergence of first instance/final instance recognition rates by Member States for asylum applicants from a same third country.		Eurostat
			Number of new partnerships or agreements with third countries, signed during a reporting period / number of joint initiatives and actions implemented between EU	Country case studies	Literature review

EQ	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
			Member States and third countries to tackle irregular migration and support sustainable development in the countries of origin.		
			The extent to which the consulted stakeholders consider the Union Actions improved the cooperation with third countries compared with the past	Thematic case studies Targeted survey	
			The extent to which the consulted stakeholders consider the Emergency Assistance increased the cooperation with third countries compared with the past	Thematic case studies	
		There is evidence of mutual learning and positive spillovers for participants in transnational and / or innovative actions	The extent to which the actions included in the NPs, EMAS, UAs produced spillovers effects	Targeted survey Country case studies Thematic case studies	Ex-post national evaluations Project reporting (union actions and emergency actions) additional studies and literature review
EQ18: How did the Fund contribute to supporting the Member States in duly substantiated emergency	What type of emergency actions was implemented ? How did the emergency actions implemented under the Fund contribute to addressing	There is evidence of emergency support provided that addressed urgent and specific needs	Number of urgent needs faced during the Fund implementation	Semi-structured interviews	additional studies and literature review
			Number of urgent needs for which emergency support has been provided	Thematic case studies Semi-structured interviews	SFC2014 Annual Work Programmes
			Number of target group population supported with funding from emergency actions		

EQ	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
situations requiring urgent action?	the urgent needs of the Member State? What were the main results of the emergency actions?		Allocation per type of emergency action, per Member State and overall		SFC2014
			Percentage of consulted stakeholders who perceived the emergency support provided addressed urgent and specific needs	Semi-structured interviews Targeted survey Public consultation	

Efficiency

Table 8: Evaluation matrix for Efficiency

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
EQ19: Were the general objectives of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost?	To what extent were the results of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost in terms of deployed financial and human resources?	The Fund supported types of interventions that are known to be cost-effective, based on available evidence, including relevant literature or the ex-post evaluation of the previous Programme Appropriate arrangements were used to select cost-effective operations The evidence coming from the operations indicates that the cost per unit is in line or below existing benchmarks and estimates The differences in the cost per unit	Stakeholder perception on the Level of cost-effectiveness of national programmes, Union Actions, Emergency Assistance	Targeted survey Public consultation Semi-structured interviews	Ex-post national evaluations
			Extent to which appropriate arrangements were used to select cost-effective operations	Country case studies Thematic case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
			Financial allocation per Member State per types of actions Absorption rate of funds (planned, decided, spent), per Member States and overall	Country case studies	Final implementation reports SFC2014
			Technical assistance cost of projects as compared to the amount of funds		Final implementation reports Ex-post national evaluations

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
		among similar operations within the Fund can be explained and justified (e.g. by differences in the intensity or quality of the support offered, innovativeness, purchase power, emergency context etc.)	claimed for the financial year;		SFC2014
			Number of Full Time Equivalent in the Responsible Authority, the Delegated Authority and the Audit Authority working on the implementation of AMIF and paid by the technical assistance or national budgets as compared to: (i) the Number of projects implemented and (ii) the amount of the funds claimed for the financial year;	Country case studies	AIRs Ex-post national evaluations SFC2014
		The administrative burden is proportionate for all implementing actors (Responsible Authorities and other delegated authorities), compared to the previous programming period/ similar services offered to comparable target population without the support of the Programme	Identification for each category of stakeholders (i.e. Responsible Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, national Audit Authorities, beneficiaries and end-users) the following: - source of costs (activities for which they are responsible based on the Regulations); - costs to comply with the Regulation.	Country case studies Targeted survey	Ex-post national evaluations
		The administrative burden is proportionate for all beneficiaries, compared to the previous programming period/ similar	The extent to which the stakeholders consider the administrative burden is proportionate, compared to the similar programmes/ their role/level of funding received	Country case studies Targeted survey Public consultation	Final implementation reports Ex-post national evaluations

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
		services offered to comparable target population without the support of the Programme The administrative burden is proportionate for all end-users, e.g. compared to the previous programming period/ similar services offered to comparable target population without the support of the Programme Absence of 'gold-plating' at the national level (e.g. from Responsible Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, national Audit Authorities), i.e. requirements are not interpreted more restrictively than the legal basis or relevant documents providing methodological advice to the Member States and unless a justified reason exists Absence of 'gold-plating' at the EU level, i.e. requirements are not interpreted more restrictively			

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
		then in the legal basis and unless a justified reason exists			
	What measures were put in place to prevent, detect, report and follow up on cases of fraud and other irregularities, and how did they perform?	The management and control system of the Member States, described as per the legal basis, ensures quality of the implementation of national programmes and the prevention, detection and correction of irregularities, including fraud, and the recovery of amounts unduly paid, together with any interest on late payments	Types of fraud or other irregularities/ country as reported by Member States	Targeted survey Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
			Number of mechanisms in place at Member States level to report, detect and prevent fraud and irregularities (where possible, analysed by country)	Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
			Number of follow up cases of fraud and other irregularities (where possible, analysed by country)	Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations

Simplification and reduction of administrative burden

Table 9: Evaluation matrix for simplification and reduction of administrative burden

Evaluation question	Sub-question	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
EQ26: Were the Fund management procedures simplified, and the administrative burden reduced for its beneficiaries?)	Did the innovative procedures introduced by the Fund (simplified cost option, multiannual programming, national eligibility rules, more comprehensive national programmes	Simplified cost options have been used were relevant and created simplification for the different stakeholders concerned	Identification for each category of stakeholders (i.e. Responsible Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, national Audit Authorities, beneficiaries) the following: - source of costs (activities for which they are responsible based on the Regulations);	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies Targeted survey	Ex-post national evaluations

Evaluation question	Sub-question	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
	allowing for flexibility) bring about simplification for the beneficiaries of the Fund?		- costs to comply with the Regulation.		
			The extent to which simplification measures were used (e.g., simplified cost options or other simplification measures not linked to costs) into the National programmes	Semi-structured interviews Targeted survey Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
			The extent to which consulted stakeholders consider the simplification measures used in the implementation of National programmes were effective	Country case studies Semi-structured interviews	
		Multi-annual programming has been used and created simplification for the different stakeholders concerned	The extent to which stakeholders consider multi-annual programming supported flexible implementation adapted to actual needs	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
		National eligibility rules have been used and created simplification for the different stakeholders concerned	The extent to which stakeholders consider national eligibility rules supported flexible implementation adapted to actual needs	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
		Flexibility of a more comprehensive National programme has been used and created simplification for the different stakeholder concerned	The extent to which stakeholders consider supported flexible implementation adapted to actual needs	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations

Evaluation question	Sub-question	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
		Administrative burden has been proportionated for the stakeholders involved in the implementation of interventions	The extent to which the stakeholders consider the administrative burden is proportionate to their role/ level of funding received	Country case studies Semi-structured interviews	Ex-post national evaluations
		The National programmes allowed steering resources towards new and emerging needs at a low administrative cost	The extent to which the consulted stakeholders consider the implemented actions under National programmes are flexible enough at the level of administrative costs, considering new and emerging needs	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations

Coherence

Table 10: Evaluation matrix for Coherence

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
EQ20: Were the objectives set in the national programme Fund coherent with the ones set in other Programmes funded by EU resources and applying to similar areas of work? EQ21: Was the coherence ensured also during the implementati	Was an assessment of other interventions with similar objectives carried out and considered during the programming stage?	A relevant[169] number of Member States performed a coherence analysis between national programme's objectives and the current policy agendas at EU and national level.	Number of Member States that assessed the coherence of the national programmes with other National and EU funds	Semi-structured Interviews	National programmes, Ex-post national evaluations AIRs
	Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other intervention	Structures, organizational arrangements or coordination mechanisms have been in place ensuring	Percentage of Member States that have in place coordination and/or organizational mechanisms between the National	Semi-structured interviews	Ex-post national evaluations AIRs

[169] The relevancy will be considered with respect to two dimensions: total number of Member States out of the total; overall funds allocated to those Member States that conducted a coherence analysis.

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
on of the Fund?	s with similar objectives established for the implementing period?	coordination, complementarities and, where relevant, synergies between the Fund and other European funds	programmes and other national or European funds		
	Were the actions implemented through the Fund coherent with and non-contradictory to other interventions with similar objectives?	The existing organizational arrangements or coordination mechanisms facilitate coordination, complementarities and, where relevant, synergies between the Fund and other European funds	Percentage of consulted stakeholders who considered that the existing organizational arrangements and coordination mechanisms facilitates coordination, complementarities and, where relevant, synergies between the Fund and other European funds	Targeted survey Semi-structured interviews	Ex-post national evaluations
		Alleged overlaps have been justified on objective grounds (e.g., same target group but different type of measure/ different need addressed/ different readiness of the type of funding support chosen)	Percentage of consulted stakeholders who considered that existing overlaps have been justified on objective grounds	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies	

Complementarity

Table 11: Evaluation matrix for Complementarity

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
EQ23: Were the objectives set in the	Was an assessment of other interventions	The complementarity between National	Number of Member States that assessed the complementarity of		National programmes

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
National programme and the corresponding implemented actions complementary to those set in the framework of other policies, in particular those pursued by the Member State?	with complementary objectives carried out and considered during the programming stage?	programmes and other EU funds was done in the programming phase	the Fund with other National and EU funds		Ex-post national evaluations AIRs Final implementation reports
	Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other interventions with similar objectives established to ensure their complementarity for the implementing period?	Structures, organisational arrangements or coordination mechanisms have been in place which ensuring coordination, complementarities and, where relevant, synergies across other EU funds, in particular cohesion policy and EU's external action Coordination mechanisms and arrangements are used regularly and ensure the interventions do not overlap	Number of Member States that have in place coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other national or European funds	Country case studies	AIRs Final implementation reports Ex-post national evaluations
			Share of consulted stakeholders that consider the coordination mechanism as adequate to generate synergies across other EU funds Share of consulted stakeholders that assessed the complementarity of the Fund with other national and EU funds	Targeted survey Semi-structured interviews Public consultation	
	Were mechanisms aimed to prevent overlapping of financial instruments put in place?	Mechanisms have been in place preventing overlapping of financial instruments The existing mechanisms prevented overlapping of financial instruments Alleged overlaps have been justified on objective grounds (e.g., same target	The extent to which the National programmes, Union Actions, Emergency Assistance are complementary with other interventions at national level and other EU policy Percentage of consulted stakeholders who considered that existing overlaps have been justified	Semi-structured interviews Targeted survey Country case studies	National programmes Annual Work Programmes Ex-post national evaluations

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
		group but different type of measure/ different need addressed/ different readiness of the type of funding support chosen	on objective grounds		

EU added value

Table 12: Evaluation matrix for EU added value

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
EQ24: Was any value added brought about by the EU support?	What are the main types of added value resulting from the Fund support (volume, scope, role, process)?	There is evidence of scope effects, i.e., of additional target population addressed or additional types of intervention offered	Types of additional target population compared with the initial targeted groups, if possible, at the level of all National programmes, Union Actions and Emergency Assistance	Targeted survey Country case studies Thematic case studies	Ex-post National evaluations
		There is evidence of scale effects, i.e., of a higher volume of services offered/end-users addressed	Types of additional actions per target group, compared with the initial targeted actions, if possible, at the level of all National programmes, Union Actions and Emergency Assistance		
		There is evidence of role and process effects, i.e., of learning and increased capacity to manage the provision of public support within the administrations involved	Share of stakeholders that are aware of actions supporting transfer of ideas, introduction of innovations and structural reforms such as the development of national or transnational strategies related to	targeted survey (for beneficiaries) Public Consultation	

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
			the migration management or the rolling-out of new approaches related to the asylum and integration, and major structural investments. (role effects)		
			Examples of best practices related to supporting transfer of ideas, introduction of innovations and structural reforms such as the development of national or transnational strategies related to the migration management or the rolling-out of new approaches related to the asylum and integration; and major structural investments	Country case studies Thematic case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
			Evidence of process effects: the extent to which improvements to governance and organisation of migration, asylum, reception and return policies were visible, e.g. establishing closer links and cooperation between beneficiaries and other stakeholders at national level; improving the management of migration flows	Country case studies Thematic case studies targeted survey (for beneficiaries)	Ex-post national evaluations
	Would the Member State have carried out the actions required to implement the EU policies in	The knowledge generated by the Programme provided feedback into the policy making	The extent to which stakeholders consider the results/ outputs/ impacts could not have been achieved without EU intervention (e.g. strengthen administrative	Public consultation Country case studies Thematic case studies	Ex-post national evaluations

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
	the Fund areas without the financial support of the Fund?		structures and systems of local authorities in order to deal with a high number of applicants; enhance the capacity to monitor and evaluate return policies in the Member States, enhance solidarity and responsibility-sharing thought cooperation projects fostered and carried out between Member States) Amount of national funds available for policy related to migration and asylum, for same objective		
	What would be the most likely consequences of an interruption of the support provided by the Fund?	The interruption of the support provided by the Fund would have a negative impact on aspects such as: asylum procedures, integration programmes, reception capacity and inter-state cooperation	The extent to which stakeholders consider the interruption of the support provided by the Fund will have consequences such as (i) longer processing times due to reduced funding for staffing and resources (ii) significant reduction in the quality and availability of reception facilities for asylum seekers	Country case studies Thematic case studies Targeted survey	

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
			and refugees (iii) more unilateral actions and less cohesive policy at EU level (iv) higher direct and indirect costs for Member States reduced capacity of Member States to comply with international and EU legal standards for the treatment of migrants and asylum seekers		
	To which extent have actions supported by the Fund resulted in a benefit at the Union level?	The knowledge generated by the Fund: - provided feedback into the policy making, creating a common framework at EU level - Increased the cooperation between the Member States	Extent to which national policies regarding asylum, return policy and migration changed during the programming period as a consequence to the AMIF interventions	Country case studies Semi-structured interviews	Research and Studies, grey and academic literature
			The extent to which stakeholders consider the main interventions of the Fund: increased cooperation between the Member States	Targeted survey	

Sustainability

Table 13: Evaluation matrix for sustainability

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
EQ25: Are the positive effects of the projects	What were the main measures adopted by the Member State to ensure the sustainability of	Adequate arrangements existed and were used to check the sustainability of	The extent to which the call for proposals includes selection criteria that focus on the sustainability of projects (as	Targeted survey Country case studies	Final implementation reports Ex-post national evaluations

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
supported by the Fund likely to last when the support from AMIF will be over?	the results of the projects implemented with the Fund support (both at programming and implementation stage)? Were mechanisms put in place to ensure a sustainability check at programming and implementation stage?	the project proposals	evidenced by a selection of country-specific case studies) The extent to which sustainability has been considered in the monitoring mechanisms for the National programmes The extent to which stakeholders consider in the design of the project the sustainability of the projects		National programmes Annual Work Programmes Sample of call for proposals (from country case studies)
			Measures in place at Union level to ensure and check the sustainability of Union Actions, specific actions, interventions including e.g. based on selection criteria for projects, monitoring mechanisms, stakeholders' assessment	Semi-structured interviews Thematic case studies	
		There is evidence of innovative projects transferred, replicated or upscaled	The extent to which the Fund supported the transfer or upscale of innovative projects, e.g. based on selection criteria for projects, monitoring mechanisms, stakeholders' assessment	Targeted survey Thematic case studies Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations
	To what extent are the outcomes/benefits of the actions sustained by the Fund expected to continue thereafter?	There is no evidence of dependency, i.e., of systematic lack of investment based on national resources for relevant services that are provided entirely through	Amount of national funds available for similar objectives (as evidenced by a selection of country-specific case studies)	Country case studies	Ex-post national evaluations

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
		support from EU funds.			

Relevance

Table 14: Evaluation matrix for Relevance

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
EQ22: Did the objectives of the interventions funded by the Fund correspond to the actual needs?	Did the objectives set by the Member State in the National programme respond to the identified needs?	The objectives set by Member States in the National programmes address the relevant needs of the targeted population	The extent to which stakeholders consider the objectives under the National programme has been aligned with the identified needs The extent to which at Member States level update of need assessments has been performed and updated following relevant contextual changes	Semi-structured interviews Country case studies Targeted survey Public Consultation	National programmes Ex-post National evaluations
	Which measures did the Member State put in place to address changing needs?	The partnership / monitoring committee has been able to provide timely input on evolving needs and relevant developments on the ground	The extent to which the consulted stakeholders consider the monitoring committee has been able to provide inputs on evolving needs and relevant developments on the ground	Targeted survey Country case studies	Ex-post National evaluations
		The input provided were used to address changing needs	Types of inputs provided by the committee and share of inputs that have been implemented Share of Member States that keep track of the level of implementation of the inputs provided by the committee		Ex-post National evaluations AIRs

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
		There has been an adequate degree of flexibility in the design of the projects, call for proposals, procurement	Types of measures taken to ensure flexibility Share of consulted stakeholders that consider the implemented measures were effective in ensuring flexibility in the design of the projects, call for proposals, procurement	Targeted survey Country case studies	Ex-post National evaluations
		Non substantial changes to the National programme were applied swiftly	Number of changes to the National programmes Share of consulted stakeholder that consider that non substantial changes were applied swiftly	Country case studies	National programmes Ex-post national evaluations
		Rules and procedures have been established to ensure that substantial adjustments to National Programmes can be implemented in a timely manner should new needs arise	Types of existing rules and procedures that ensure that substantial changes can be implemented Share of consulted stakeholder that consider substantial changes can be implemented should new needs arises	Semi-structure interviews Country case studies	National programmes Ex-post National evaluations
	Did the objectives set in the Annual Work Programme (Union actions) address the actual needs? Did the objectives set in the Annual Work Programme	The objectives set in the AWP for the UAs are addressing all relevant transnational current needs related with knowledge sharing, transnational cooperation and communication, fostering research and innovation, research The objectives set in the AWP for	The extent to which actual needs (as emerged from stakeholder consultation and literature review) are addressed by the objectives as defined in the Annual Work Programme for Union Actions and EMAS	Thematic case studies	Annual Work Programmes; Literature review

Evaluation question	Sub-questions	Judgment criteria	Indicator / Descriptor	Primary source	Secondary source
	(Emergency Assistance) address the actual needs?	EMAS are addressing all current urgent and specific needs of Member States deriving from emergency situations			
		Non substantial changes to the AWPs were applied swiftly	Number of changes to AWPs Share of consulted stakeholder that consider that non substantial changes were applied swiftly		
		Rules and procedures have been established to ensure that substantial adjustments to AWPs can be implemented in a timely manner should new needs arise	Types of existing rules and procedures that ensure that substantial changes can be implemented Share of consulted stakeholder that consider substantial changes can be implemented should new needs arises		

ANNEX IV. OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS

Consistent with the Better Regulation Toolbox[170] #56 and #57, Table 2 provides a **proportionate overview of the costs and benefits entailed by the Fund**. This table has been completed based on the information gathered during the study supporting the ex-post evaluation of the AMIF 2014-2020.

The **quantitative data on AMIF funding, including national contributions** stems from the transmission of data from SFC2014 (as of 31 December 2024), EMN Work Programmes as well as data on Union Actions and EMAS from outside of COMPASS (as of 31 December 2024).

Quantitative estimates for direct compliance costs and enforcement costs for administrations and for beneficiaries of the AMIF are based on responses to the targeted survey, as well as on anecdotal evidence from semi-structured interviews with stakeholders.

Costs and benefits can be divided into three categories: those that can be monetised, those that can be quantified, and those that are purely qualitative and cannot be measured. Illustrative examples of these costs are provided below:

- **Direct Compliance Costs:** The European Commission had to establish a comprehensive IT system to manage and monitor the distribution and compliance of AMIF funds across all Member States. This included significant investment in software development, staff hiring, remuneration, and training, as well as ongoing maintenance to ensure the system's effectiveness and security. Additionally, Responsible Authorities had to align their local systems with this centralised platform, incurring further adjustment costs.
- **Enforcement Costs:** The European Commission conducts regular inspections and audits of AMIF-funded projects across Member States to ensure compliance with EU regulations. This involves conducting site visits and reviewing extensive documentation. The costs associated with these activities include personnel costs, and the development of detailed compliance reports. Furthermore, the Commission must handle any legal disputes or adjudication processes that arise from non-compliance, adding to the enforcement costs.
- **Indirect Costs:** Member States incur indirect costs related to the compliance with AMIF regulation, such as the need to maintain detailed financial records and documentation for audits. These costs also include translating AMIF guidelines and documentation into multiple languages to ensure all stakeholders understand the requirements. Additionally, the administrative burden of managing the application process and the ongoing reporting requirements can lead to increased operational costs for organisations involved in AMIF-funded projects.
- **Direct Benefits:** AMIF funding has enabled the construction of new reception centres and shelters for asylum seekers across the EU, directly improving living conditions and providing essential services such as healthcare, legal assistance, and language training. These facilities have significantly enhanced the capacity of Member States to manage

[170] European Commission (2023), *'Better regulation' toolbox – July 2023 edition*, available at: https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en

asylum applications and provide immediate support to migrants and refugees, contributing to a more humane and efficient asylum process.

- **Indirect Benefits:** AMIF-funded integration projects have led to greater social cohesion and reduced xenophobia across the EU. These projects include public awareness campaigns, community-building activities, and educational initiatives that promote understanding and acceptance of migrants and refugees. As a result, local communities have become more inclusive, and the overall perception of migrants has improved, leading to long-term positive impacts on social harmony and economic integration.

Notably, the overview of benefits and costs of the Fund is constrained by the limited availability of both qualitative and quantitative data regarding costs and benefits which makes it challenging to infer comprehensive conclusions. This is due to the fact that Member States are not obligated to collect or report data on administrative costs as part of the Fund's reporting requirements.

Consequently, the analysis relies primarily on qualitative evidence, as even in the context of the targeted survey and country case studies the Member States have provided heterogeneous input. A more extensive and detailed examination would likely have been disproportionate to the scope of the supporting study for the Commission's evaluation.

The below table contains information based on the best data available. This includes using qualitative evidence to illustrate larger issues, evidence-based assumptions for estimates, proxy values and ranges, as well as anecdotal evidence.

Figure 18: Overview of costs and benefits for the AMIF 2014-2020

Cost or benefit		Citizens / Consumers		Businesses		Administrations		Other	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
AMIF funding[171]	One-off					Appr. 7.4 billion EUR	AMIF budget (incl. Member States contributions) spent for operations under shared, direct and indirect management.		
Direct compliance costs[172]	One-off					Appr. 124 to 165 million EUR	The estimate is based on the AMIF budget spent for Technical Assistance, as an approximation for direct		

[171] Spent resources, i.e. final EU payment made to cover eligible expenditure of actual ended/closed operations. Source: TOD from SFC2014 (December 2024); EMN Work Programmes (2014-2020); EMAS and UA data from and outside of COMPASS (December 2024).

[172] Adjustment costs, administrative costs, regulatory charges.

Cost or benefit		Citizens / Consumers		Businesses		Administrations		Other	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
							compliance costs.[173]		
	Recurrent					**Preparation of direct awards and calls:** appr. 6 to 30 man-days per award/ call per MS **Screening of applications:** appr. 9 to 30 man-days per call per MS	Evidence on the direct compliance costs for authorities is very limited, based on responses to the targeted survey provided by 11 National Authorities.[174]		*Direct compliance costs for beneficiaries:* Regulatory requirements as well as procurement procedures were each perceived as a challenge by >50% of

[173] The spent resources for Technical Assistance of around 165 million EUR (Source: TOD from SFC2014, December 2024) are taken as a ceiling estimate for direct compliance costs of National Authorities. The lower bound estimate of 124 million EUR represents a best estimate which could not be verified. While EU contributions for Technical Assistance can be used for more than adjustment costs and administrative costs, there are likely to be additional direct costs borne by National Authorities for which no data is available. Funding for Technical Assistance, as defined in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 514/2014, is allocated to actions necessary for the effective administration and use of AMIF funds, including project preparation, institutional capacity building, technical equipment, monitoring, evaluation, and the establishment of control systems, as well as actions to enhance communication and cooperation among stakeholders.

[174] Quantitative estimates were made based on the responses provided for the time spent on the preparation of funding and the screening of applications, which varied significantly across respondents.

Cost or benefit		Citizens / Consumers		Businesses		Administrations		Other	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
									surveyed beneficiaries.[175]
Enforcement costs[176]	One-off	n/a							
	Recurrent					**Monitoring:** appr. 1 to 8 man-days per year per MS **Reporting:** appr. 20 to 100 man-days per reporting year per MS **Auditing:** appr. 2 man-days for one on-the-spot	Evidence on the enforcement costs for authorities is very limited, based on responses to the targeted survey provided by 12 National Authorities.[178]		*Enforcement costs for beneficiaries:* Monitoring requirements were perceived as a challenge by 55% of surveyed beneficiaries.[179]

[175] Survey questions: "To what extent were the following aspects perceived as a challenge by your institution / organisation / company in the implementation of the project(s) funded by the National Programme AMIF?: Procurement procedures" (Q30.1; N=110); "To what extent were the following aspects perceived as a challenge by your institution / organisation / company in the implementation of the project(s) funded by the National Programme AMIF?: Regulatory requirements" (Q30.1; N=111).

[176] Costs associated with activities linked to the implementation of an initiative such as monitoring, inspections, and adjudication/ litigation.

[178] Responses from other authorities suggest that more man-days were spent for auditing per on-the-spot control or per project, which is likely due to the varying sizes of projects.

[179] Survey question: "To what extent were the following aspects perceived as a challenge by your institution / organisation / company in the implementation of the project(s) funded by the National Programme AMIF?: Monitoring requirements" (Q30.3; N=111).

Cost or benefit		Citizens / Consumers		Businesses		Administrations		Other	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
						control per MS[177]			
Indirect costs[180]	One-off								*Indirect costs for beneficiaries:* According to information gathered from interviews with National Authorities from two Member States beneficiaries were granted around 10 to 15% for indirect costs (administrative expenses).
	Recurrent	n/a							
Direct benefits	-		Direct support				Direct support through AMIF		Direct support through the

[177] The responses of National Authorities regarding the time spent on auditing of projects varied considerably, ranging from 2 man-days to as high as 60 man-days per project. One authority mentioned that 3 man-days were spent per on-the-spot control, with a total of 90 such controls conducted.

[180] Compliance costs or other indirect costs such as transaction costs.

Cost or benefit		Citizens / Consumers		Businesses		Administrations		Other	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
			facilitates access to essential services for target groups.				funding via Union Actions, Emergency Assistance and Technical Assistance.		AMIF funding of projects in the field of asylum, migration and integration.
Indirect benefits	-		Actions aimed at enhancing the integration of migrants ultimately benefits social cohesion in Member States.		Actions aimed at the integration of migrants facilitate their entry into the labour force of EU Member States.		Support in the management of migration and the achievement of policy objectives in the field of asylum, migration and integration. It can further be assumed that there are efficiency gains in the delivery of funding for asylum, migration and integration in		Apart from direct support for the measures of beneficiaries, AMIF funding enables organisations to engage in the field of asylum, migration and integration, further contributing to societal acceptance national and EU policies.

Cost or benefit		Citizens / Consumers		Businesses		Administrations		Other	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
							Member States.		

ANNEX V. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION - SYNOPSIS REPORT

The consultation strategy for this ex-post evaluation included a call for evidence, semi-structured interviews, targeted surveys, a public consultation and a two focus groups. The objective of the consultations was to collect relevant information and insights on the effectiveness, efficiency, simplification and reduction of administrative burden, coherence, complementarity, EU added value, sustainability and relevance of the AMIF, as well as to collect inputs on lessons learned. To do so, a wide range of EU, international and national level stakeholders were consulted.

Call for evidence

Prior to the start of the evaluation, in line with the Better Regulation Provisions, a call for evidence was launched in the Have Your Say platform. Five contributions were received ([181]):

- The Sdružení pro integraci a migraci, o. p. s. from the Czech Republic provided a series of points concerning the difficulties NGOs have in accessing AMIF funding:
    - Due to national rules, NGOs can only participate in 2 out of 13 AMIF calls in the Czech Republic.
    - Support for smaller projects and instituting a maximum co-financing rate of 5% would increase NGOs participation.
    - AMIF funding is important as not all needs can be covered by European Social Fund (ESF) or the other European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).
- The Red Cross EU office provided a series of points regarding:
    - In a number of Member States, AMIF is a core funding instrument and this makes projects dependent on funding cycles, thereby affecting the sustainability of a project particularly in the period between funding cycles.
    - Greater flexibility in the target groups that benefit from the Fund would ease the Red Crosses ability to provide services.
    - Efforts should be made to improve civil societies and humanitarian organisations access to AMIF funds. In particular, by national governments either covering the co-financing rate or decreasing the amount beneficiary organisations are expected to cover.
    - Work Programmes should ensure predictability of regular calls for Union Actions, for example calls concerning the exchange of best practices.

([181]) Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) for 2014-2020 – ex post evaluation

- The need to allocate greater resources to EMAS under the 2021-2027 programming period.
- Possibilities to ease reporting requirements under AMIF should be explored.
- Calls for applications under Union Actions should consider longer deadlines.
- It is considered a good practice for the main AMIF implementing partners to be included in the Member State monitoring committees and should be further encouraged.

- The International Rescue Committee provided comments relating to:
  - Some issues of Efficiency regarding the semi-independent living accommodation for unaccompanied children project, as the current system is creating a funding gap. Also, they commented that the amount of resources needed to manage the process was more than what was funded by AMIF.
  - They found the implementation of AMIF somewhat coherent. The programme responded to real needs, but the complementarity with other programmes was lacking.
  - AMIF should be linked with other programmes focusing more on protection and integration.
  - Costs should be adjusted for inflation periodically by National Authorities.
  - Administrative burden was still perceived as an issue. From a programmatic perspective, organizations still need to take a lot of actions and perform many administrative tasks.
  - The National Authority managing AMIF or the relevant Ministry should facilitate horizontal exchange and learning between actors implementing AMIF funded project.

- The Konsorcium nevládních organizací pracujících s migranty v ČR from Czechia provided the following comments:
  - For the future period it is important to ensure complementarity to AMIIF. It could be done by strengthening complementarity between AMIF and ESF.
  - The beneficiaries and the National Authorities that manage AMIF programmes are developing a good relationship, and this should be maintained in the future.
  - There are issues of understaffing in national authorities.
  - Flexibility might be difficult to implement during the projects. They recommend increasing flexibility for projects. They also also recommend

continuing to allow the transfer of planned activities to an online format, as it was done during the COVID – 19 pandemic.

- They recommend continuing to consult with beneficiaries and other actors in the field of integration on the thematic setting of calls and the intended project parameters, and through them to adapt the calls to identified needs.

- For the existing integration measures, which have proved successful, they recommend increasing their capacity and regional accessibility specifically in terms of the capacity of language courses and legal advice.

- Oxfam Italia provided the following comments:

  - They encourage AMIF to provide more support to Asylum seekers securing the legal documentation they need to stay in the host country. This could be done through supporting legal aid and accompaniment.

  - AMIF proposals should valorise outreach activities more tailored to needs than focused on numbers.

  - The cooperation with local authorities and public bodies responsible for the social inclusion and labour integration of migrants and asylum seekers should continue to be an asset and the partnership among civil society and public authorities should be facilitated and encouraged within the AMIF program.

  - They suggest AMIF to introduce sub-granting funds to support small organizations working on the field as well as migrant-led organizations that can provide a peer-to-peer support for the social inclusion and labour integration of migrants and asylum seekers.

Interviews

Overall, 44 interviews were conducted for the evaluation. The interviews conducted during the data collection phase fed into answering the evaluation questions, as well as into the development of the country and thematic case studies.

The table below provides an overview of the number of interviews conducted by activity as well as the types of consulted stakeholders and the objectives of the different interviews conducted.

Table 16: An overview of the interviews conducted during the study

Interviews by activity	Type of consulted stakeholders	Objectives

Scoping interviews (7)	• DG HOME (6): AMIF fund coordinators (Unit E1, E2, E3); Union Actions (E4); Specific Actions (E3); Irregular Migration, Returns and Readmission sector (Unit C1), Legal Pathways and Integration (Unit C2), Asylum Policy (Unit C3) • Responsible Authority (1): IT	• To deepen the understanding of the functioning of the AMIF, and to finetune the methodological approach
Semi-structured interviews (14)	• National Responsible Authorities (12): AT, BG, EE, FI, HR, IE, LU, LV, MT, SI, SK, UK • International Organisation (1) • Research Centre (1)	• To gather strategic and operational information about the AMIF implementation, including considerations related to its impacts and added value
Country case studies (11)	• National Responsible Authorities (DE, EL, IT, LT, RO) • Project representatives and beneficiaries (EL, IT, RO) • Research centres (IT) • Target groups (RO)	• To identify and discuss potential specific factors and processes that were crucial for the success of the AMIF implementation • To identify how AMIF was implemented both by governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. • To investigate the extent to which and the reasons why the funding was particularly effective, efficient etc. (or not).
Thematic case	Beneficiaries and project representatives for:	• To gather granular evidence on the portfolio of projects under the specific types of the

studies (12)	• Union Actions (2) • EMAS (3) • Specific Actions (3) • Ukraine (4)	components and programmes of the Fund, identifying innovative approaches and projects, good practices, key drivers and barriers towards achieving specific objectives and results, and lessons learned

Overall, the interviews conducted during the study helped assess how effectively the AMIF framework has achieved its goals of enhancing national capacities and improving migration management. Consulted stakeholders provided a positive evaluation of the Fund's effectiveness and efficiency in meeting its objectives. They noted that AMIF was successful in addressing evolving needs, while aligning with both internal and external initiatives. In addition, consulted stakeholders highlighted the significant EU added value that AMIF brought in addressing issues and crises that national funds alone could not effectively tackle.

However, while acknowledging the Fund's effectiveness, the stakeholders interviewed expressed concerns about some challenges hindering and delaying AMIF's implementation. Among these challenges, unexpected crises (i.e. the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the 2015-2016 migration crises, the COVID-19 Pandemic), delays in the initial funding provision, and high dependence on EU funds hindering AMIF-funded projects' sustainability were highlighted. Lastly, while there was an administrative burden associated with performing changes to the AMIF projects in a timely manner, mainly due to lengthy approval processes, consulted stakeholders noted a high degree of flexibility within the AMIF framework. The following sections cluster the findings of the interviews according to the different evaluation criteria (e.g. effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance, complementarity, sustainability, EU added value, simplification and reduction of administrative burden).

Effectiveness

Overall, the Fund has achieved its operational and specific objectives. For instance, 24 consulted stakeholders (17 RA, six beneficiaries, and one IO) emphasised the achievement of objectives and targets for projects funded by AMIF during the 2014-2020 programming period. In particular, 19 stakeholders (16 RA, 2 beneficiaries and one IO) highlighted the effectiveness of AMIF in enhancing and supporting the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), while 20 stakeholders (14 RA, six beneficiaries) stressed its effectiveness in fostering legal migration and social integration of migrants (i.e. through language courses, assistance provision in finding housing, educational integration, integration in the labour market, cultural orientation and events, awareness campaigns, legal assistance). In addition, 11 RA highlighted AMIF's role in enhancing sustainable returns, while 14 stakeholders (11 RA and three beneficiaries) stressed the substantial role of AMIF enabling

of relocation and resettlement initiatives, contributing to strengthening solidarity among Member States.

Despite the overall positive assessment of AMIF's effectiveness, its implementation was not without challenges. In particular, some stakeholders highlighted the unexpected pressure caused by the migration crisis of 2015-2016 (nine RA, one beneficiary), the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent need to isolate vulnerable groups (six RA), and influx of refugees coming from Ukraine following the Russian aggression (eight RA, two beneficiaries). In this regard, stakeholders highlighted AMIF's effectiveness in supporting Member States in appropriately addressing these emergency situations, which required urgent action.

Efficiency

Mixed views emerged with regards to AMIF's efficiency. 26 consulted stakeholders (13 RA, 13 beneficiaries) believed that the measures funded by AMIF were cost-effective and achieved results at reasonable costs. Four Responsible Authorities highlighted specific measures to ensure cost-effectiveness including the use of unit costs and market values, AMIF's adherence to public procurement laws and competitive pricing, detailed selection processes, direct and open calls for projects, and external evaluation of project proposals by accounting experts. One Responsible Authority even stressed that AMIF maintained a good balance between costs encountered and results achieved despite the increase of personnel, and subsequently personnel's costs, over the course of the project. Despite the overall positive assessment by the majority of consulted stakeholders, four Responsible Authorities pointed out that resources were not sufficient, particularly with regards to human resources.

Consulted stakeholders were asked about the main direct and indirect costs encountered in AMIF 2014-2020 programming period. In terms of direct costs, stakeholders (eight RA) mainly highlighted staff costs (i.e. staff hiring, staff training) as the greatest costs for most stakeholders, service costs (e.g. food, medical, logistics), daily allowance (i.e. covered allowance for target groups and officials), and IT systems. Indirect costs mainly included monitoring (e.g. compliance costs with AMIF Regulation), reporting (e.g. financial reporting and auditing), administrative burden costs (e.g. detailed costs verification processes,) overhead expenses (e.g. infrastructure costs, utilities, document storage, licenses).

Coherence

According to 12 Responsible Authorities, one beneficiary, and one target group, AMIF enabled the establishment of good synergies and coherence among objectives set in the national programmes and other EU-funded programmes within the same policy domain, while avoiding duplication with national projects and initiatives. Eight stakeholders (five RA, one target group, two beneficiaries) highlighted that the consultation of the steering committees, internal consultation with local and regional authorities, as well as the shared management structure of AMIF allowed to avoid duplication and enabled joint programming (i.e. joint return programs) among Member States and collaboration with different funding streams.

Conversely, only two Responsible Authorities and one research centre highlighted the lack of synergy between AMIF and other EU funds (i.e. ESF) and between AMIF and other national initiatives.

Relevance

According to 34 consulted stakeholders (17 RA, 15 beneficiaries, one target group and one IO), the AMIF's objectives strongly aligned with the needs of the target groups. Among the most relevant needs addressed by AMIF, stakeholders identified housing and language skills, healthcare, vocational training and employment support, and support for beneficiaries with specific vulnerabilities including beneficiaries in protection (BIPs), and unaccompanied minors. However, stakeholders highlighted that some needs remained unmet, such as receptiveness at the city level, especially in schools (one target group) and specific vulnerabilities such as disabilities (one beneficiary). Moreover, gaps were identified in supporting unaccompanied minors leaving shelters upon turning 18, leading to increased difficulties in securing legal status and employment (one beneficiary). Finally, one research centre highlighted a gap with regards to the provision of support for irregular migrants.

Swift adjustments to address evolving needs and promptly respond to 2015-2016 migration crises were seen as effective, with positive feedback from 12 Responsible Authorities, one target group, and five beneficiaries. Particularly, two Responsible Authorities highlighted AMIF's flexibility in reallocating funds between specific objectives and extending deadlines to adapt to changing migration needs.

Complementarity

According to 11 RA and three beneficiaries, the objectives set in the national programme and the corresponding implemented actions were complementary with other initiatives and funding sources at the national level. Six RA highlighted complementarity between AMIF and other EU funds (e.g. ESF), while three RA and one beneficiary highlighted complementarity between AMIF and national migration policies (e.g. national resettlement programme, national return programme). Eight RA emphasised that mechanisms were put in place to ensure this complementarity, while one RA noted that an assessment of complementarity with other initiatives was not performed and that there were no mechanisms developed to ensure complementarity. The mechanisms highlighted ranged from the use of robust invoice tracking and other dedicated project management tools (one RA) to cooperation and dialogue with National Authorities involved with other EU funds and more broadly with stakeholders involved in the field of migration and asylum (six RA), to finally, the creation of an ad-hoc committee that promoted information sharing and synergy among different initiatives (one RA). However, two beneficiaries and one RA pointed out that navigating multiple funds and combining, as well as managing different programmes can be quite challenging. For this reason, one RA highlighted that it did not pursue joint calls with other funds (e.g. ESF).

Four RA emphasised that there was also complementarity between different AMIF fund components (e.g. EMAS, Union Actions), while one RA and one research centre noted some overlaps between Specific Actions and Union Actions. In particular, the research centre explained that there were cases where the same organisations applied for funding under both streams, which caused inefficiencies. Notably, to ensure complementarity, one RA implemented several mechanisms (e.g. creation of detailed project Gantt charts and robust invoice tracking mechanisms), while another had regular talks with all stakeholders

involved. Finally, one RA indicated that placing the RA within the Ministry of Interior (MoI) ensured seamless coordination among different fund components.

EU added value

The majority of consulted stakeholders agreed that the EU support through AMIF brought about significant added value (16 RA, 11 beneficiaries, one target group, one research centre). Notably, according to all consulted stakeholders except for one RA, without the EU support, it would have been difficult and in some cases impossible to achieve the same results and impacts. In particular, 13 RA, 11 beneficiaries, one IO, one research centre and one target group emphasised that AMIF funding has significantly enhanced available financial resources, alleviating the burden on national budgets and enabling the implementation of broader and more complex projects. Furthermore, stakeholders highlighted that AMIF supported capacity-building efforts, enhancing the skills and knowledge of personnel involved in managing asylum and migration (12 RA, 11 beneficiaries, one IO, one research centre). In addition, two beneficiaries and one research centre noted that AMIF implementation resulted in enhanced cross-border cooperation. Finally, according to two beneficiaries, implementing projects and initiatives through EU funding enabled them to better focus on their mission and endowed them with more legitimacy as well as leverage to address more "sensitive" issues (e.g. racism, childcare) that would not have been addressed otherwise.

Sustainability

Overall, the majority of consulted stakeholders agreed that the positive effects of the projects supported by the AMIF are likely to last even after the support from AMIF ends (12 RA, eight beneficiaries, one IO). In particular, six RA highlighted that the infrastructure improvements and development of IT systems achieved through AMIF remained even after the intervention ended and were sustained through national budgets. One RA and one beneficiary noted that the reception centres developed and strengthened through AMIF were then financed through national budgets or alternative funding sources, thus ensuring their sustainability. Moreover, two RA highlighted that the projects focused on integration of TCNs have continued to thrive even after the AMIF funding ended. Notably, consulted stakeholders highlighted the role played by NGOs and local communities in ensuring the sustainability of AMIF interventions, particularly through the development long-term networks built during project implementation that lasted beyond AMIF implementation (two RA, two beneficiaries, one research centre). Some projects were even replicated (two RA) or were directly integrated into local public services (one beneficiary). Nonetheless, two beneficiaries, one RA and one research centre pointed out that the long-term sustainability of AMIF projects is highly dependent on continued EU funding, which limits their overall sustainability.

Simplification and reduction of administrative burden

The AMIF management procedures were indeed simplified, and there has been a notable reduction in the administrative burden, as confirmed by the majority of RA (11 RA), and three beneficiaries. In particular, the introduction of Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) (six RA), the digitalisation of reporting and case management (two RA) and multi-annual planning (two RA), resulted in the overall reduction of administrative burden and streamlining of financial management. Nevertheless, beneficiaries shared a less positive perspective, with five beneficiaries, along with five RA and one research centre, finding the administrative burden to be quite challenging, highlighting a mismatch between the administrative burden and the benefits obtained. The challenges resulting from the

excessive administrative requirements were particularly pressing for NGOs and smaller organisations (two beneficiaries and one research centre).

Targeted surveys

Objectives and scope

The purpose of the targeted surveys conducted between August and September 2024 was to gather feedback from National/ Managing Authorities (NAs/MAs) involved in the planning, monitoring, and assessment of AMIF measures, as well as from organisations, institutions, or companies participating in their implementation (i.e., beneficiaries).

It concentrated on aspects such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, influencing factors, sustainability of observed effects, and the EU added value provided by the implemented measure. As the mid-term evaluation of the AMIF 2021-2027 and the ex-post evaluation of the AMIF 2014-2020 were carried out in concurrently, the targeted surveys covered both programming periods (2014-2020 and 2021-2027). Furthermore, the survey examined how eligible measures under all AMIF components (National/Member State programmes, Union Actions, and Emergency Assistance) are perceived in terms of promoting horizontal principles like gender equality, green transition, and digital transition. Specific details related to Union Actions and Emergency Assistance were also included, in order to be analysed separately in thematic case studies. The findings detailed in the dedicated section below were combined with conclusions from other sources as part of the overall evaluation exercise.

Methodology

The targeted surveys included a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions for beneficiaries and National/Managing Authorities. Additionally, the surveys' design enabled participants to concentrate on the specific programming period they were involved in and, if engaged in both periods, to compare them, emphasising potential improvements.

As defined in the inception phase, the survey encompassed the entire EU and utilised contact information from Member States representatives provided by the European Commission. Managing Authorities played a pivotal role in promoting survey participation among other stakeholders, including Audit Authorities, Delegated Authorities, Monitoring Committees, and beneficiaries.

The survey, available in English[182], was sent to 418 unique stakeholders: 143 contacts from National/Managing Authorities managing AMIF and 275 beneficiaries, of UA, and EMAS. Managing Authorities were requested to send the invitations to beneficiaries of National/Member State Programmes.

From an operational perspective, after DG HOME validated the survey questionnaires, they were distributed using the EU survey platform. Based on the contact list provided by the European Commission, the initial invitations were sent between 19 and 27 August

[182] Considering the request from beneficiaries, the survey for beneficiaries was also translated in French, Italian and German. Additionally, there were also particular cases where respondents provided answers in their language.

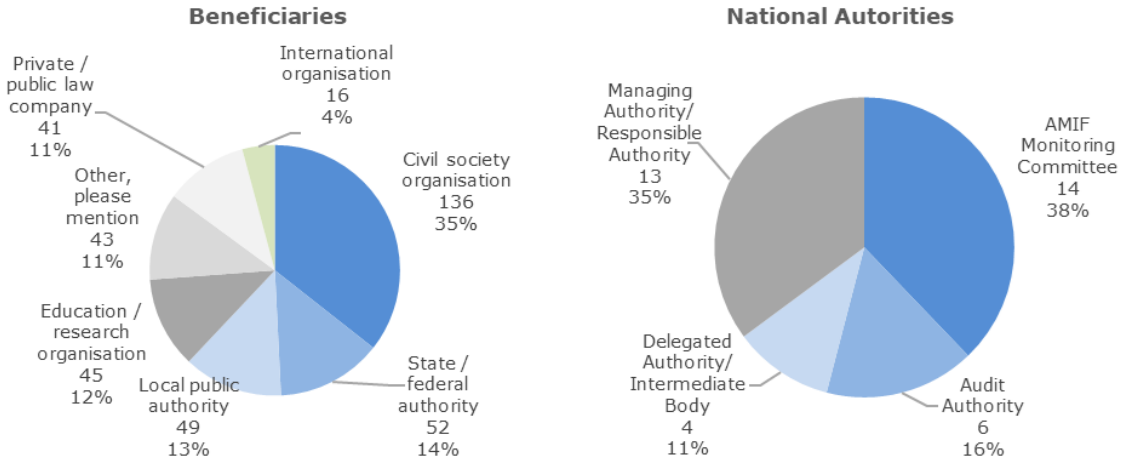
2024, followed by two reminders in the first week of September, and a final reminder informing about the extension by 20 September 2024.

Respondents profile

Out of a total of 474 respondents who accessed the surveys[183] (48 National/Managing Authorities and 426 Beneficiaries), 419 completed questionnaires were considered for the analysis of the results (37 questionnaires from National/Managing Authorities and 382 from AMIF beneficiaries[184]).

As indicated in the 19 below, the survey's reach was broad, encompassing a **diverse typology of stakeholders**, with the strongest response rates from civil society and public authorities, central and local. The varying response rates across categories may indicate differences in the size of these groups, their accessibility and eligibility, or their interest in the survey's subject matter.

Figure 19: National/Responsible Authorities and beneficiaries: distribution by typology



Source: Targeted survey with beneficiaries and National Authorities (August - September 2024)

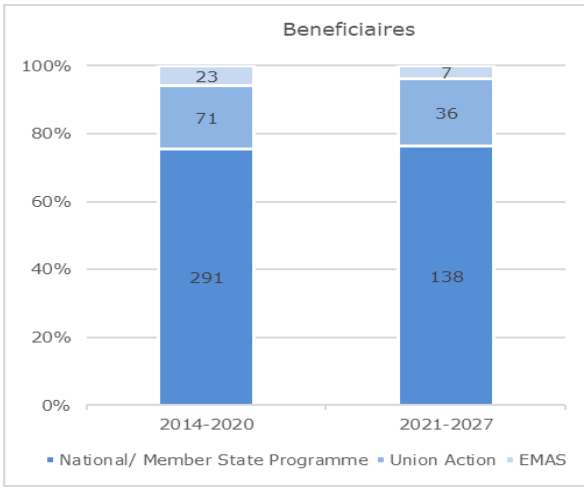
The survey successfully achieved a **broad coverage across all AMIF components** for both programming periods, as illustrated in Figure 20 below. The most significant level of participation was observed in the National programme for the 2014-2020 period. This predominance may be attributed to the incipient stage of the programmes for the current period and the larger financial allocations designated for National/Member State programmes compared to other AMIF components.

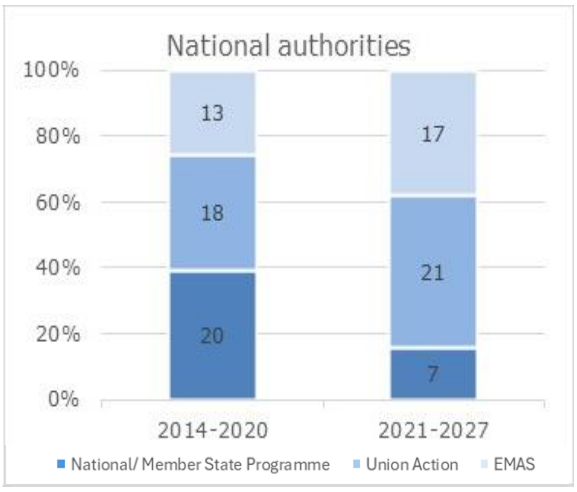
[183] The survey was sent to 418 unique stakeholders: 143 contacts from National Authorities managing AMIF and 275 beneficiaries, Union Actions, and EMAS. Management Authorities were requested to send the invitations to beneficiaries of National/Member State Programmes.

[184] 11 National Authorities did not complete the questionnaire, with 27 beneficiaries were not sure about their involvement in AMIF funded projects (i.e. indicating "I don't know" in the filtering questions) and 17 stating they were not AMIF beneficiaries. So, uncomplete or not relevant questionnaires were not considered in the analysis of the results.

The survey questions were generally posed in a broad context, and whenever feasible, respondents were asked about their perceptions across different fund components and programming periods. However, considering that respondents were often involved in multiple fund components and programming periods, their responses may reflect their overall experiences rather than specific aspects of any single component or period. Therefore, conclusions drawn across fund components and programming periods should be approached with caution, and it is advisable to consider overarching trends rather than focusing solely on individual numbers or percentages.

Figure 20: National/Responsible Authorities and beneficiaries: distribution by fund components and programming period

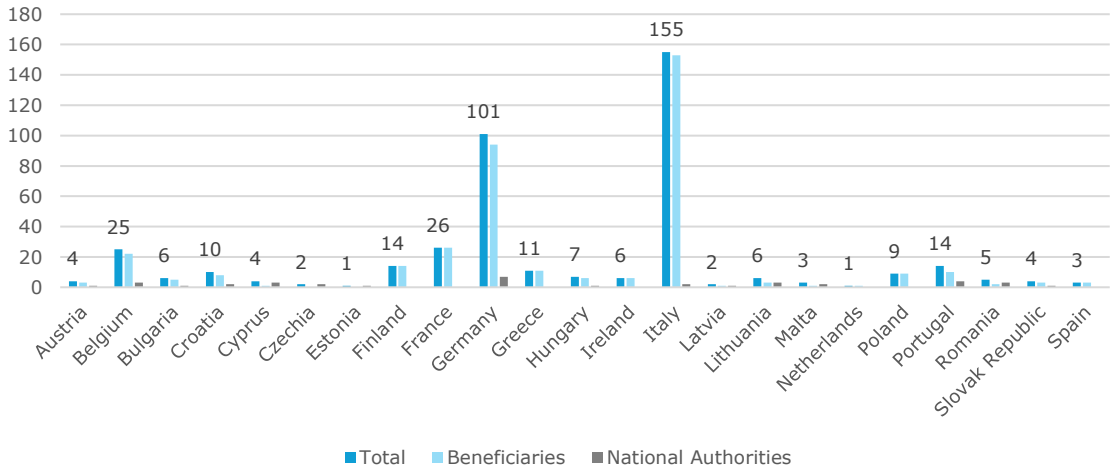




Source: Targeted survey, Beneficiaries and National Authorities (August - September 2024)

The survey's **distribution by Member State shows varying levels of coverage**, with some countries demonstrating a strong response rate while others have lower representation (see 21 below).

Figure 21: National/Responsible Authorities: distribution by country



Source: Targeted survey, National Authorities (August - September 2024)

Results

This section presents the main findings per evaluation criterion, where relevant distinguishing between findings emerging from the consultation of NAs and findings emerging from the consultation of beneficiaries.

Relevance

Upon analysing the survey findings, it is evident that there are some differences in perceptions between NAs/MAs and beneficiaries regarding the implementation and relevance of the AMIF.

NAs/MAs noted that the AMIF strategy planning used a diverse and inclusive approach at the national level. They positively assessed the Fund's flexibility and relevance for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027. Many NAs/MAs reported that AMIF programme strategies were adapted based on political changes and stakeholder input, with the Monitoring Committee playing a positive role through its recommendations. Despite this, authorities sometimes had difficulties implementing these suggestions. Many NAs/MAs saw an improvement over the time in the proportionality and adequacy of the resource allocated to address migration needs. The majority felt the budget limits posed by the AMIF Regulation were "slightly too low" or "adequate," hinting at support for more ambitious targets. For international protection transfer thresholds, only 40% found it adequate, with 25% of respondents seeing it as "slightly too high".

The survey indicates that there is general consensus among beneficiaries about the appropriateness of the support their organisations provided to TCNs, with this support meeting the needs of TCNs. Nonetheless, the agreement rate decreased from 88% to 63%, highlighting remaining challenges and obstacles in aiding TCNs.

Moreover, beneficiaries expressed concerns about the flexibility of Calls for proposals and procurement procedures. While during the 2014-2020 period both Calls for proposals and

procurement procedures flexibility was rated positively by the majority of respondent, the positive perception diminished somewhat in the subsequent period.

Survey findings indicate that, despite most beneficiaries giving high marks to the staff's expertise and the clarity of information available for TCNs when seeking support, several challenges persist. Only 45% reported no language barriers, and less than half were satisfied with the length of the processes TCNs must navigate to access support.

Consulted NAs/MAs consider that all components of the AMIF were complementary, coordinated, and effective, enhancing their impact during both the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 periods. This view is even stronger for the 2021-2027 period. MAs particularly appreciated the synergies generated between AMIF and ESF for 2014-2020 and with ESF+ for 2021-2027.

Effectiveness

NAs/MAs and beneficiaries **generally agreed that AMIF has achieved its goals**, successfully supporting reception conditions, aiding vulnerable non-EU nationals, and helping with the integration and return of TCNs. NAs/MAs also acknowledge AMIF's contribution to the development of national strategies and fostering transnational cooperation.

Additionally, AMIF has been effective in **enhancing the capabilities of beneficiaries** supporting TCNs. Organisation representatives benefiting from capacity-building programmes reported a range of positive outcomes. These included increased collaboration and networking with other professionals, agencies, and authorities, as well as strengthened organisational procedures and more efficient case-handling. Furthermore, the development of new programs or services for TCNs and improved soft and technical skills to better support and manage procedures related to TCNs were highlighted. Specifically, 63% of the beneficiaries stated they have extensively applied the knowledge gained. Moreover, 45% noticed some changes, while 38% observed **major improvements in how their organization supports TCNs due to the support received under AMIF**.

Nevertheless, **there is room for improvement**; MAs focus on pre-departure measures, family reunification, and TCN relocation, while beneficiaries emphasise reintegration and enhancements in the asylum process.

Both categories of consulted stakeholders agree that **other groups** (not targeted by AMIF) **have benefited from its implementation**. Specifically, civil society organizations, service providers, and government agencies. Their views diverge on additional groups: NAs believe irregular migrants and temporary protection beneficiaries have gained, whereas beneficiaries disagree.

Efficiency

The survey revealed that various methods are used by NAs/MAs to **select the most effective projects**. From 2014 to 2020, they relied on qualitative and quantitative

justifications from beneficiaries. The efficacy of these methods is further corroborated by feedback from beneficiaries: 60% of participants in AMIF 2014-2020 projects assisting TCNs reported delivering **efficient support at reasonable costs** relative to the positive outcomes achieved. A similar percentage regarded ongoing projects as cost-efficient, suggesting that the **expenses incurred so far provide significant value for money**.

Assessing the efficiency of **programme management** is challenging, as limited feedback and significant variability in estimates make it difficult to provide a single average figure for the time NAs/MAs spend on procurement procedures, monitoring, and reporting. However, the major finding is that collected estimates do not change between the two programming periods, indicating **no improvement in the effort required to manage tasks is perceived**.

The Fund's efficiency is perceived to be partially reduced by the **administrative burdens** associated with regulatory obligations, which stakeholders (NAs/MAs) indicated to only partly justify the benefits. These obligations are viewed as more burdensome compared to national programs, while EU programs have similar administrative demands. However, **simplification measures have largely improved program efficiency**, with most respondents finding them helpful except for project-level reporting. Additionally, some Member States reported not adopting the "financing not linked to cost" measures. It is important to note that this analysis is based on stakeholders' perceptions, and they were not able to quantify the burdens[185].

Furthermore, the majority of consulted NAs/MAs (16) reported **irregularities** during audit missions, including non-compliance with procurement procedures, ineligible expenses, and delayed reporting. Seven cited all three issues combined.

Factors that influenced AMIF implementation

Both NAs/MAs and beneficiaries agreed on the positive effects of AMIF resource allocation and the capabilities of both groups.

Additionally, NAs/MAs highlighted the positive impacts of implementing the Common European Asylum System and the Union Acquis.

However, opinions diverged on other factors: while NAs/MAs viewed the implementation of the Common European Asylum System and Union Acquis as beneficial, they considered external crises and migrant influxes, including COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, to negatively impact AMIF.

Conversely, most beneficiaries viewed the procedures required to start and manage an AMIF project as negative.

[185] The respondents were asked "to provide an estimate of the average time spent, in both programming periods, (number of man-days that a full-time employee spent) for the preparation of : a. Direct awards (i.e., info to applicants, preparing calls and guidelines, contractualization); b. Competitive awards (i.e., info to applicants, preparing calls and guidelines, contractualization); c. Evaluation of proposals/ projects (screening and selecting applications); d. Monitoring of programme implementation (meetings of monitoring committees and sub committees); e. Reporting; f. Auditing and on-the-spot controls of projects". 18 respondents answered at this question, but considering the high variance of the data collected and the different level of details it was not possible to aggregate the answers.

All other factors were seen as having neither a distinctly positive nor negative effect by all stakeholders consulted.

Notably, both NAs/MAs and beneficiaries concurred that the influencing factors for the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 periods were essentially identical.

Sustainability

Beneficiaries and NAs alike believe that the impacts produced by projects funded under all AMIF components are likely to endure beyond the Fund's active phase. Although the limited number of respondents specific to Union Actions or EMAS prevents drawing substantial conclusions for these individual components, it's plausible to connect stakeholder perceptions with their engagement in shared management projects—such as those within the National programmes funded by AMIF over the period 2014 – 2020.

EU added value

Although there is no consensus among NAs on the added value of AMIF 2014-2020, beneficiaries have a clearer perspective. They believe that AMIF 2014-2020 has been quite successful in implementing new and innovative approaches to asylum and integration while also enhancing cooperation among national stakeholders.

Public Consultation

Objectives and scope

The Public Consultations conducted between 30 August 2024 and 22 November 2024 aimed to gather feedback from a broad range of stakeholders. The key groups targeted included actors involved in fund management, such as Responsible Authorities, Delegated Authorities, and Audit Authorities; beneficiaries across all management modes; EU citizens; non-EU citizens (including those who received support from AMIF 2014-2020); public or private bodies responsible for initiating or both initiating and implementing operations (including, e.g., civil society organizations and international organizations that are beneficiaries of AMIF 2014-2020); national public authorities responsible for monitoring, coordination, and control of AMIF 2014-2020; individuals, be they staff, EU nationals, or non-EU nationals, who benefited from AMIF 2014-2020 support; and the general public. The goal was to ensure comprehensive input from all relevant parties to inform the consultation process.

The consultations focused on aspects such as relevance, complementarity, effectiveness, efficiency, and the EU added value, for the implemented measures under the programming period 2014-2020. The survey examined the extent to which the support met the needs of the target population and its accessibility. It assessed stakeholders' views on the Fund's contributions to strengthening asylum procedures, implementing legal frameworks, and developing national resettlement programs. The survey also evaluated support for legal migration, cooperation among Member States, and capacity building for integration and return measures. Additionally, the consultations explored the efficiency of interventions, the proportionality of the administrative burden, and the unique impact of EU intervention. The complementarity of the Fund with other programs and the challenges faced during implementation were also key areas of focus. Overall, the survey aimed to gather comprehensive feedback on the Fund's contributions and identify areas for improvement.

Methodology

The questionnaire was designed to collect relevant and comparable information primarily through closed-ended questions, accompanied by guidance on the expected inputs. Filtering questions categorised respondents by their country of origin, typology (e.g., institutions, associations, citizens), and familiarity with AMIF, ensuring the collection of relevant insights for assessing AMIF's impact and reach. Based on these responses, the questionnaire was customised for third-country nationals who had benefited from AMIF, individuals with working knowledge of AMIF, participants and staff engaged in AMIF-funded activities, and the general public. An introductory section provided information about AMIF, including its objectives, management modes, and beneficiaries, to clarify the objectives of the public consultation.

Respondents profile

The public consultation questionnaire received a total of **50 responses**, reflecting a diverse range of backgrounds and affiliations. However, given the limited number of respondents, the answers should be interpreted with caution.

Public authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were the most represented groups, indicating active participation in public consultations. Contributions from EU citizens, academic and research institutions, and businesses were less frequent, indicating a potential gap in broader stakeholder engagement.

The scope of work among public authority respondents varied, with representation at the national, local, and regional levels. This suggests that the consultation captured a range of perspectives, though the distribution indicates a stronger focus on national-level experiences.

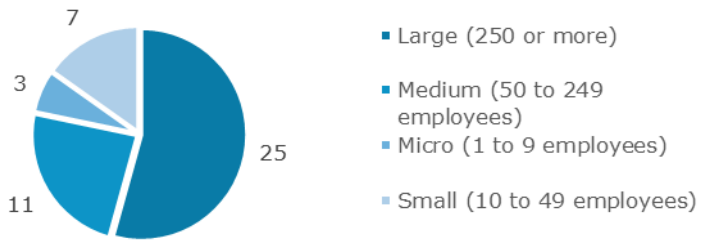
Figure 22: Survey respondents: distribution by typology



Source: Public consultation (August - November 2024)

Organisational size among respondents also showed diversity, with a notable number from large organizations, as well as representation from medium, small, and micro-organizations. This range ensures that the feedback includes experiences from entities of different sizes and capacities.

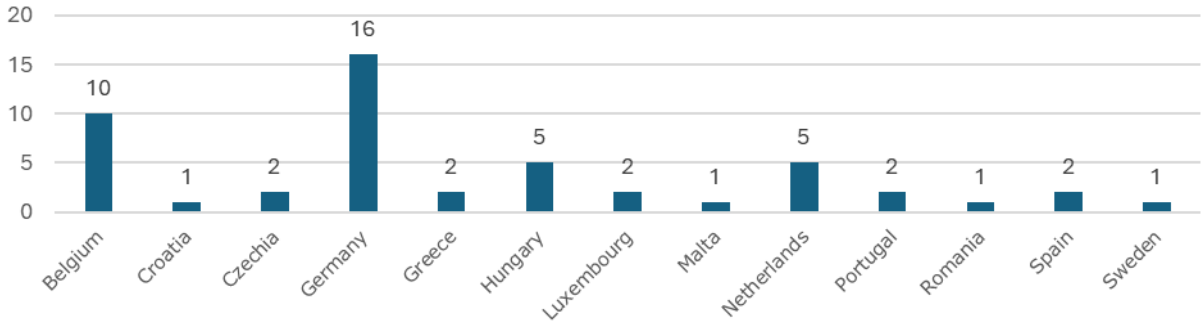
Figure 23: Survey respondents: distribution by size



Source: Public consultation (August - November 2024)

The geographical distribution indicates that the consultation included a variety of national contexts and experiences with AMIF, though some countries were more represented than others.

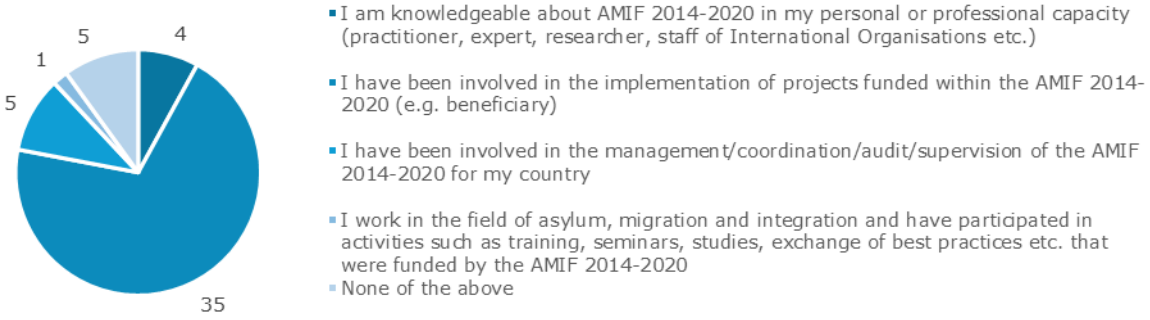
Figure 24: Survey respondents: geographical distribution



Source: Public Consultation (August - November 2024)

In terms of their relationship to the AMIF 2014-2020, the majority of respondents had direct involvement in the implementation of AMIF-funded projects, providing practical insights. There was also representation from those involved in the management and oversight of AMIF, as well as individuals with professional knowledge of the Fund. This mix of roles ensures that the evaluation includes both hands-on and strategic perspectives.

Figure 26: Survey respondents: role or relationship to the AMIF 2014-2020



Source: Public Consultation (August - November 2024)

Results

This section presents the main findings per evaluation criterion.

Relevance

Accessibility of the support

The accessibility of AMIF support is generally well-regarded, but improvements are needed to enhance its relevance. While accessibility and clarity of information and the competence of staff received positive feedback, survey responses indicate areas for improvement in language availability and simplification of procedures. Technical issues with application systems were not a major concern, as most respondents did not report significant problems.

Effectiveness

Extent to which the Fund contributes to its objectives

AMIF 2014-2020 made essential contributions to EU migration and asylum challenges, but its performance varied across objectives. Respondents widely recognised the programme's importance in supporting the Common European Asylum System, promoting the effective integration of third-country nationals, and supporting legal migration. Equally significant were efforts to enhance solidarity and responsibility-sharing among Member States and to strengthen Member States capacity during emergencies, highlighting a shared recognition of the need for coordinated EU-wide strategies.

Extent to which emergency support addressed urgent and specific needs

AMIF's ability to adapt to emergency situations received mixed feedback form respondents. While the Fund effectively supported urgent migration-related needs during crises, such as surges at the EU's external borders and the impacts of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, concerns were raised about delays in adjustments and insufficient mechanisms to empower subnational authorities. Centralised fund allocation processes also limited the flexibility needed for swift responses. Nonetheless, AMIF's targeted contributions in specific instances demonstrated its potential to address critical needs when effectively implemented.

Effectiveness of the support

The survey responses suggest that AMIF 2014-2020 was particularly effective in supporting early integration, such as language courses, healthcare, and employment assistance, and in addressing the needs of vulnerable non-EU nationals, including minors. It was also recognised for its contribution to developing strategies and fostering transnational cooperation related to reception, integration, and countering irregular migration.

However, there were mixed views on AMIF's effectiveness in supporting pre-departure measures and family reunification and in facilitating relocation and return programs. While some respondents acknowledged meaningful achievements, others noted gaps, such as limited flexibility and challenges in adapting to specific needs. Concerns were also raised

about delays in implementation, particularly in areas requiring rapid responses or innovative approaches.

Factors influencing the effectiveness of the support

The survey responses highlight several key factors that influenced the implementation of AMIF 2014-2020, with varying degrees of impact. AMIF's strategic and financial framework was positively regarded, but limitations in organizational resources and external pressures, such as public opinion and global crises, underscored areas where additional support and flexibility could enhance the programme's effectiveness.

Efficiency

The cost effectiveness of AMIF 2014-2020 received mixed assessments from respondents. While the majority of respondents acknowledged that the Fund achieved results efficiently, some participants noted that significant administrative workloads diverted critical resources away from operational activities, leading to delays and diminishing the effectiveness of funded initiatives. Additionally, certain respondents implied that the reliance on state authorities for fund distribution created bottlenecks, further limiting the timely delivery of benefits.

Complementarity

AMIF is generally perceived as complementary and coordinated with other EU and national initiatives. Positive feedback highlights successful coordination with local, regional, and national programs, particularly in areas such as reception conditions, asylum procedures, social inclusion, and labour market integration. However, some respondents noted challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles and lack of coherent information on combining AMIF with other EU funds.

EU added value

Extent to which results, outputs, impacts could not have been achieved without EU intervention

Respondents emphasised the importance of continued individualised assistance for non-EU nationals in reception conditions and asylum procedures, as well as early integration support through measures like language courses, health services, and employment assistance. Similarly, there was a broad consensus on the need for specialised support for vulnerable groups, including minors, across all phases of asylum and integration. Investment in resettlement and humanitarian admission also stood out as a priority, alongside the development of strategies and cooperation to facilitate legal migration and effective integration.

Evidence of scope, scale, role and process effects

AMIF was seen as a driver of innovation, collaboration and financial enhancement, with its added value most clearly observed in the areas of knowledge transfer, expanded support, and capacity building. Respondents noted its contribution to the transfer of ideas and best practices across the Member States and the development of innovative approaches to asylum, migration and integration processes. These areas were widely recognised as key

achievements, reflecting AMIF's ability to drive cooperation and creative solutions across the EU.

There was also acknowledgement of AMIF's capacity to extend its benefits to additional groups beyond those traditionally addressed at the national level. While opinions were more varied here, the Fund was still seen as a means to broaden the reach of support measures. Similarly, AMIF's role in increasing allocated resources for to asylum, migration and integration was noted, underlining its contribution to enhancing financial capacity and scaling up efforts in these areas.

Recommendations

Suggested improvements for increased effectiveness and efficiency

The recommendations primarily focus on simplifying administrative processes and enhancing flexibility to make AMIF more effective.

Respondents emphasised the need to streamline the application process by reducing bureaucratic hurdles, shortening applications, and introducing faster approval periods. Some respondents suggested shifting towards simplified cost options, such as flat rates for material costs and payroll, to ease the burden of detailed accounting and reporting.

Additionally, better tools, such as user-friendly administrative platforms, were recommended for improved efficiency. There was also a call for AMIF to focus more on outcomes and achievements rather than rigid administrative requirements, with lighter audits and simplified reporting procedures.

Flexibility emerged as another key theme. Respondents advocated for a more dynamic and adaptable funding approach, including the possibility of recurring subsidies instead of project calls and greater freedom to adjust project plans in response to new challenges, such as mass influxes of unforeseen crises.

Recommendations also highlighted the need for long-term funding commitments to ensure sustainability and the retention of trained human resources. Direct access to funding for cities, grassroots organizations, and civil society was suggested by several respondents, as well as the importance of targeting local needs and enabling rapid-response funds for emergencies.

In addition, respondents stressed the importance of better communication and support from funding providers. Clearer guidance during the application process, improved awareness of funding opportunities, and better advice on demonstrating EU added value were mentioned as areas of improvement.

Finally, greater coordination between national, regional and international funding mechanisms was recommended to ensure alignment, avoid duplication, and maximize impact.

First EU level focus group

The first EU-level focus group was held on 25 June in Brussels, gathering participants from eight Managing Authorities (AT, BG, EE, DE, IT, NL, SK, SE) and 21 beneficiaries, with the aim of gathering preliminary evidence on AMIF implementation challenges and good practices related to the AMIF four specific objectives.

After a brief presentation of the study, two breakout sessions were organised to hold thorough discussions on: 1) challenges hampering the successful AMIF implementation, particularly focusing on programming and selection, implementation, monitoring, and communication; and 2) good practices and policy issues with respect to four SOs of the Fund (i.e. SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4).

The first breakout session highlighted several key insights, offering a deeper understanding of both challenges and positive aspects associated with AMIF implementation.

Firstly, with regard to the programming and selection of projects, both beneficiaries and Managing Authorities noted that applications for AMIF projects are sometimes too cumbersome and not clear enough. As for implementation, Managing Authorities stressed the importance of focusing on the use of simplified cost options to enhance implementation, while both Managing Authorities and beneficiaries highlighted that the use of unit costs has streamlined project implementation and reporting. Nonetheless, beneficiaries also highlighted that unit costs are hardly adjusted against inflation and that the related reporting requirements, though streamlined, are quite time-consuming.

No major issues were highlighted concerning monitoring, except for limited involvement of relevant partners in the Monitoring Committees featured by Managing Authorities. As for managing controls, beneficiaries stressed the need to prioritise the achievement of project results and objectives, rather than strict adherence to the initial project proposal.

Lastly, beneficiaries and Managing Authorities noted that there is limited visibility of AMIF projects and their impact, despite the overall increase of budget allocated to communication activities.

Among the main outcomes of the second break-out session on AMIF SOs, beneficiaries noted that AMIF's contribution through SO2 is pivotal, as it enables Member States to fund what they would not be able to fund otherwise. As for SO3, beneficiaries suggested that irregular migration should be covered by other Home Affairs Funds instead (e.g. ISF) and that AMIF should focus more on aspects related to integration. No issues emerged with regard to SO4, with beneficiaries noting that since the 2014-2020 programming period there have been improvements in terms of the relevance of AMIF projects related to migrants sharing capacities and overall EU solidarity.

Overall, throughout the focus group the EU added value of AMIF was highlighted by both Managing Authorities and beneficiaries. Beneficiaries further added that AMIF plays a pivotal role at the national level as no other national initiatives allocate enough funding on the same policy priorities. As noted by participants, AMIF provides legitimacy to the projects carried out at the grass-root level in the field of migration and asylum.

Second EU level focus group

An **EU-level focus group** was held online through Microsoft Teams on 27 March 2025. The focus group gathered 21 participants from:

- **Relevant DG HOME units** (7): Unit E1 (2), Unit E2 (1), Unit E3 (1), Unit E4 (1), Unit C1 (1), Unit C2 (1).
- **Other relevant DGs** (2): DG EMPL (1), DG REGIO (1)
- **Relevant EU Agencies** (2): EUAA (1), Frontex (1).
- **Managing Authorities** (10): from the Member States (DE, IT, EL, FR, LT, PL, RO) already consulted as part of the country case studies.

The focus group had the twofold **objective** of i) **validating the evaluation findings**, particularly in view of potential factual mistakes, thus allowing the Team to fine-tune the evaluation results, and ii) discussing the **design of recommendations**, based on the inputs provided by the Team.

The focus group was organised in **two plenary sessions**.

The **first plenary session** was dedicated to the presentation of the study, followed by a Q&A session. During this Q&A, participants asked for some clarifications on the evaluation findings, and highlighted new elements to be taken into consideration in the evaluation of AMIF, such as the following:

- One **RA provided positive feedback on the evaluation findings** presented by the Team as well as on the challenges identified. The same RA noted that switching from the implementation of the SOLID funds to AMIF 2014-2020 required some internal adjustments, including the hiring of new staff to be able to address all reporting requirements.
- **DG HOME** highlighted that the **limited number of returns performed with the support of AMIF** may be attributed to Member States following DG HOME's suggestion to **primarily rely on Frontex assistance for organising returns**, while using AMIF funds for other related activities. This approach ensures that there is no overlap between the assistance provided by Frontex and that provided by AMIF.
- **DG EMPL** emphasised that the positive finding as concerns **complementarity** between AMIF and other funds **contradicts observations made by the European Court of Auditors (ECA)** in their report published in December 2024, which points to the fact that there was limited coordination between AMIF and other funds.
- On the same topic, **one RA noted that the report by the ECA states that improvements are seen with regard to ensuring complementarity** and **agreed with the Team's finding that efforts were being made to avoid overlaps** with other EU funds. The Team clarified that the highest level of complementarity was found between AMIF and the European Social Fund (ESF), whereas room for improvement remains with regard to other EU funds. The Team further added that

the report of the ECA will be taken into consideration to integrate and fine-tune the findings.

The **second plenary** consisted of **two interactive, co-design sessions** using the MIRO application in which participants were able to discuss challenges and provide inputs on related recommendations.

In the first session, the Study Team presented an overview table displaying the challenges identified in the study clustered into three groups according to their degree of urgency (i.e. low, medium and high), and asked the participants to complement the table with additional challenges, modify the existing ones, or amend the associated degree of urgency.

In the second session, recommendations to address the challenges were designed, starting from inputs and suggestions provided by the Team: participants were asked to actively modify or add recommendations to address each of the challenges discussed in the earlier session and assess their degree of feasibility (i.e. specifying whether each recommendation is highly feasible, moderately feasible, or hardly feasible). The discussion unfolded starting from the challenges deemed most urgent in the previous discussion, followed by moderately urgent challenges, and concluded with the least urgent ones. Overall, while some recommendations identified by the Team were retained as originally proposed, others were discarded and replaced with alternative suggestions, or entirely new recommendations were introduced.