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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

on the implementation of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Acronyms

AIR	Annual implementation report
CFP	Common fisheries policy
CMES	Common monitoring and evaluation system
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EMFAF	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
EU	European Union
FAME	Fisheries and aquaculture monitoring and evaluation
IMP	Integrated maritime policy
MA	Managing authority
MEF	Monitoring and evaluation framework
OP	Operational programme
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) supported the EU's maritime and fisheries policies from 2014 to 2020. A total of EUR 6.4 billion is available under the fund, EUR 5.96 billion of which Member States and the Commission jointly manage (shared management). This report pertains to the budget under shared management only. This budget is used to foster the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture, to promote effective and sustainable marketing and processing of fishery and aquaculture products, and to strengthen fisheries control and improve the collection of scientific data for fisheries management. It helps coastal communities diversify their blue economy and helps make the EU's coasts more attractive. It also supports environmental protection and the enrichment of aquatic biodiversity.

A common monitoring and evaluation system (CMES) was set up to monitor the EMFF operations financed under shared management[1]. It helps record and track these operations' achievements. By doing so, it provides transparency on the use of public money and enables the evaluation of EMFF support. A framework for continuous dialogue, maintenance, support and the sharing of experience between the Commission and the Member States underpins the CMES. The aim of this framework is to provide common, comparable data that can be aggregated and analysed against various criteria across Member States,

This is the second report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the CMES. It focuses on developments since the previous report[2], sets out lessons learned during implementation, and looks at how these have been taken into account in developing the framework for the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) for 2021 to 2027[3]. This report does not give details of the achievements of the EMFF. These are given in the EMFF implementation reports, available on the DG MARE website[4].

As set out in Article 108 of the EMFF Regulation, the CMES' objectives are:

a) to demonstrate the progress and achievements of the common fisheries policy (CFP) and the integrated maritime policy (IMP), and to consider the general impact and assess the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of EMFF operations;
b) to contribute to better targeted support for the CFP and the IMP;
c) to support a common learning process for monitoring and evaluation; and
d) to provide well grounded, evidence-based evaluations of EMFF operations that feed into the decision-making process.

To achieve these objectives, the CMES provides the following[5]:

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1 Article 107 of Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council (the 'EMFF Regulation').

2 As required in accordance with Article 107(4) of the EMFF Regulation. The first report was published in 2018 (COM(2018) 48 final).

3 Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004.

4 https://ec.europa.eu/oceans-and-fisheries/funding/fisheries-and-aquaculture-monitoring-and-evaluation-fame_en

5 Listed in Article 1 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1014/2014.

1) an intervention logic explaining how priorities, specific objectives and measures affect each other[6];
2) a set of common indicators[7];
3) cumulative data on operations selected for funding[8];
4) annual implementation reports (AIRs) on operational programmes (OPs)[9];
5) evaluation plans[10];
6) *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluations and other evaluation activities linked to EMFF programmes[11]; and
7) performance reviews[12].

These aspects are described in detail in the previous report on the implementation of the CMES of the EMFF[13]. **This report focuses on new aspects that have emerged since the last report.**

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CMES

Each of the aspects described in Section 1 were discussed with the Member States in EMFF expert group meetings[14]. The Commission used these meetings to develop the framework of delegated and implementing regulations that support the CMES. This participative approach was continued throughout the programming period, involving the managing authorities (MAs) in further developing and strengthening the CMES by sharing best practice and addressing common issues. This ensured collective ownership and acceptance of the system, and helped train and equip the MAs and the Commission to perform monitoring and evaluation.

To ensure that Member States apply the CMES consistently, the Commission set up a technical support unit, known as FAME (fisheries and aquaculture monitoring and evaluation)[15]. This support service was provided by an external contractor over the 7 years of the programming period. Feedback, experience and knowledge was collected from the MAs and developed with the FAME support unit. Working papers and reports produced

6 Article 18(1)(a) and Article 116 of the EMFF Regulation.

7 Article 109 of the EMFF Regulation. The list of common indicators is set out in the Annex to Regulation (EU) No 1014/2014.

8 Article 97(1)(a) of the EMFF Regulation (Infosys Report).

9 Article 114 of the EMFF Regulation, complementing Article 50 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (the 'Common Provisions Regulation' (CPR)).

10 Article 115 of the EMFF Regulation read together with Article 56 of the CPR.

11 Articles 115, 116 and 117 of the EMFF Regulation read together with Articles 55, 56 and 57 of the CPR.

12 Article 21(1) of the CPR.

13 COM(2018) 48 final.

14 Documents from and reports of these meetings are available at https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff_en.

15 Further information on FAME is available at https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff/fame_en.

by FAME are available on the Europa webpage[16]. FAME helped the Commission and the Member States develop, implement and analyse each of the aspects set out in this chapter.

16 https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff/fame_en

What can the CMES tell us about the EMFF?

The CMES combines monitoring and evaluation information from several sources. Information on each operation financed can be combined with contextual information on the situation in the Member States, and external databases such as the common fleet register.

- Common result indicators convey the highest-level information. For example, thanks to EMFF support, 31 594 jobs were maintained in coastal communities across the fisheries, aquaculture and processing sectors.
- Expenditure can be assessed against the EMFF Regulation's measures for which it was committed. For example, around 33% of total EMFF funding was committed to measures supporting biodiversity (EUR 1 637 million).
- More detailed analysis by sector can also be provided. For example, 13 123 individual vessels received EMFF support. Around 25% of EMFF spending dedicated to vessels was provided for vessels in the small-scale coastal fisheries sector (EUR 124 million).

Each of the examples provided can further be broken down by Member State. The figures relate to the state of EMFF implementation on 31 December 2020. Further details and examples can be found in the EMFF implementation reports on the DG MARE website[174].

2.1. EMFF intervention logic

The intervention logic describes how policy decisions, measures taken and the desired outcome affect each other. It is the backbone of monitoring and evaluation, starting at policy level and continuing at the levels of individual programmes and operations.

Article 5 of the EMFF Regulation sets out the its EU objectives. At policy level, these are broken down into EU priorities and specific objectives, as set out in Article 6 of the EMFF Regulation. Each Member State implementing the EMFF[18] designs an OP. The OP addresses the support needs of the Member State in question by selecting from the available set of 51 measures. Member States analyse their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to identify their needs. This analysis enables them to decide on appropriate measures and their intensity. Member States also select appropriate result and output indicators, and set target values and milestones for financial, output and result indicators. They are used to monitor progress and facilitate evaluation. The OP is approved by the Commission. Throughout the implementation period, Member States may amend their programmes to reflect changing needs, following Commission approval of the programme.

The intervention logic was proposed as a predefined structure to address the needs of all Member States. However, during implementation, it became apparent that a more flexible approach would work better. Some aspects worked well, such as EU priorities. These facilitated the aggregation of data at the level of European Structural and Investment (ESI)

17 https://ec.europa.eu/oceans-and-fisheries/funding/fisheries-and-aquaculture-monitoring-and-evaluation-fame_en

18 All Member States except Luxembourg.

Funds[19]. Other aspects, such as thematic objectives[20] (i.e. higher-level aggregation representing the 11 investment priorities of the ESI Funds), proved to be of little relevance to the EMFF because it has a comparatively small budget for such high-level analysis.

In some cases, the rigid links between aspects of the EMFF intervention logic were difficult to work with. Links between EU priorities and measures were created by the EMFF Regulation. The Regulation framed some measures very narrowly. For example, it split productive investments in aquaculture into 11 categories. In practice, it was found that Member States did not use such narrowly defined measures well. They preferred to provide funding under the more broadly framed measures covering the same objectives.

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 1014/2014[21] created the link between EU priorities and common result indicators. Member States' implementation of measures feeds into the result indicators. Section 2.2 details the observations on the common result indicators made over the course of programme implementation.

During implementation, it was necessary to analyse how EMFF measures, and the nature of the operations supported under each measure, helped achieve the CFP's objectives. For this, ad hoc methods were developed in workshops and using technical expertise. The availability of detailed operation-level data facilitated this analysis. For example, it was found that operations implemented under 11 EMFF measures (e.g. innovation under Article 47, productive investment in aquaculture under points (a) to (d) and (f) to (h) of Article 48(1), and aquaculture providing environmental services under Article 54) helped achieve the CFP objective of promoting the development of sustainable aquaculture activities. This type of analysis showed the clear value of having detailed information about each operation.

Example: link between EU priorities, specific objectives, measures and result indicators

EU priority 1 (promoting environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fisheries) has six specific objectives.

Each specific objective has a corresponding series of measures. For example, the permanent cessation of fishing activities and support for systems of allocation of fishing opportunities are measures (Articles 34 and 36 of the EMFF Regulation respectively) that contribute to the achievement of specific objective 3 (ensuring a balance between fishing capacity and available fishing opportunities), under EU priority 1.

19 https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/european-structural-and-investment-funds_en

20 https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/t/thematic-objectives

21 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1014/2014 of 22 July 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regards to the content and construction of a common monitoring and evaluation system for the operations funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (OJ L 283, 27.9.2014, p. 11).

The following common result indicators apply to specific objective 3: result indicator 1.3 (change in net profits) and result indicator 1.6 (change in the percentage of unbalanced fleets).

The way monitoring and evaluation data are provided follows the structure of the intervention logic described. Data are provided in three principal formats:

- cumulative data on operations (Infosys) submitted at the end of March each year;
- annual implementation reports (AIRs), submitted at the end of May each year; and
- evaluations conducted before, during and after the programming period.

These data feed into the set of common result indicators that serve as key illustrators of the EMFF's achievements.

2.2. Common indicators

Overall, the EMFF's common indicators provided a good basis for monitoring progress in implementing it. Their values are reported on the publicly accessible Open Data Portal[22]. Below are the observations made on the indicators.

- Context indicators are essential for the SWOT analysis and for determining Member States' needs. However, their inclusion in reporting had no value for monitoring progress.
- The most reliable output indicator was the number of operations. It provided simplicity for programming and reporting, and can be greatly improved by combining it with other operation-level data.
- Some indicators were complex and difficult to use in the field due to a lack of data, or differences in data capture between Member States (for example both positive and negative changes to the indicators – 'change in unwanted catches' or 'change in fuel efficiency of fish capture' – being considered positive changes).
- Some indicators were not fully suitable for capturing the direct medium-term effect of the EMFF. Instead, they were geared more towards capturing the effects of the CFP, independently of the EMFF (for example 'change in unwanted catches' or 'change in the coverage of marine protected areas').
- MAs avoided more complex indicators. Such indicators were often declared non-applicable at programme level, or were simply not reported at the level of single operations.
- Various reporting errors occurred frequently. Most of them were due to the misinterpretation of indicators' definitions and varying data collection practices. Definitions were clarified and improved throughout the implementation period by regularly updating the working paper on indicator definitions[23]. Other errors occurred due to imprecision in measurement units, for example 'thousand EUR' instead of simply EUR. These errors were detected and rectified in reporting and in programming and by providing revised definitions to improve definition use.

[22] https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/

[23] FAME, *Working paper on definitions of EMFF common indicators*: https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff/fame_en.

- Member States had the option of reporting programme-specific result indicators. Their value outside of reporting for the Member State concerned was limited, as they could not be aggregated at EU level.
- In practice, it was found that common result indicators only defined and intended for use under certain measures may have been equally well suited to use under other measures. Experience during implementation showed that a more flexible structure would have worked better.

Example: three EMFF common result indicators, representing achievements of the fund from 2014 to 2020

1. **Number of operations financed by the EMFF which implement the EU's control, inspections and enforcement system:**

   planned, according to Member State programmes: **954 operations**

   implemented, according to Member State AIRs: **615 operations.**

2. **Number of new businesses created by community-led local development initiatives financed under the EMFF:**

   planned, according to Member State programmes: **750 businesses**

   implemented, according to Member State AIRs: **486 businesses.**

3. **Employment maintained in the fisheries sector thanks to EMFF support, measured in full-time equivalent (FTE) units:**

   planned, according to Member State programmes: **22 473 FTEs**

   implemented, according to Member State AIRs: **17 985 FTEs**

2.3. Cumulative data on operations (Infosys)

In the 2014-2020 period, reporting was introduced pursuant to Article 97(1) of the EMFF Regulation. This led to the production of data greatly superior to the data available for the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) in the previous period (2007-2014). However, it took some time to set up systems in each Member State that were compatible and sufficiently reliable to aggregate data, for example by detecting and eliminating unit errors such as reporting 'EUR' instead of 'thousand EUR'. The FAME support unit developed several working papers and supporting IT tools to help set up the systems. The tools were designed to reduce reporting errors and shorten the time needed to curate and finalise the data before they could be used for analysis.

Infosys provides a well structured, common and consistent way of recording data. This makes it possible to use Infosys for progress monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking at Member State level. At the aggregated EU level, it has become an invaluable tool for providing reliable data for reporting and decision-making.

What can Infosys tell us about a project?

Data recorded at the level of an operation helps the Commission understand the story behind it. For example, a fisher from Almería (Spain) operating as a micro-enterprise implements an EMFF operation related to diversification and new forms of income by developing blue-water angling tourism on her vessel. The vessel can be identified by the fishing fleet register number, linking to information on the vessel's size, engine power, class and main fishing gears.

The operation start and end dates are provided. The total cost of operation and funding details are provided. For example, half of the funding comes from the EMFF budget and the rest is a combination of government and private funding.

The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) code for the business is provided, indicating the local area the operation covers. The data can also show the operation's relevance to the promotion of gender equality in the fisheries sector.

The operation is implemented under Article 30 ('Diversification and new forms of income') of the EMFF Regulation. The result is measured by the common indicator 'change in net profits'.

Article 97 of the EMFF Regulation requires MAs to provide the Commission with cumulative data on operations selected for funding. The data, provided at the end of March each year, cover implementation until the end of the previous calendar year. Just like the reporting systems of earlier funding instruments (the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance and the EFF), this reporting system is commonly known as Infosys.

The level of detail provided at operation level through Infosys reporting is unique to the EMFF. Two Implementing Regulations[24] provide details on the required data and database structure. The data describe progress and achievements at operation level by capturing what is happening on the ground. The data include key information about the beneficiary (e.g. business size or gender) and the operation (type of activities, budget, number of fishers concerned, total area concerned, etc.). To limit the administrative burden on MAs and beneficiaries, most of the Infosys data comes from information already stored in national databases set up to comply with the data recording and storage requirements for individual operations.

2.4. AIRs

Under Article 114 of the EMFF Regulation and Article 50 of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), an AIR for each programme must be transmitted to the Commission by 31 May each year. AIRs summarise the main achievements of and challenges in implementing OPs. Just like Infosys, AIRs cover implementation until the end of the previous calendar year. The Commission and the Member States use the overview of implementation the AIRs provide to review achievements and make adjustments where necessary.

[24] Commission Implementing Regulations (EU) No 1242/2014 and (EU) No 1243/2014.

AIRs provide two types of information: qualitative information describing the main achievements and challenges, and quantitative information containing aggregated data in tabular form. They also contain an indicative financial allocation at measure level.

AIRs are valuable sources of information, particularly on the narrative of how the implementation of the programme has developed over the programming period, what has been successful, and where there are difficulties and challenges.

The information in an AIR pertains to implementation at the end of the previous December. Factoring in the time it takes for the report to be prepared, submitted and accepted and for any necessary revisions to be made, the data in the report are usually about 9 months old at the time of publication.

AIR data are also used to aggregate data at the level of the ESI Funds, and are made publicly available on the Open Data Portal[25]. Infosys, on the other hand, is used for more technical and detailed analysis. Having two separate reporting streams for quantitative data has made analysis more complex. This is because the resulting data sets need to be compared to detect differences and errors.

What does an AIR tell us about implementation?

AIRs provide information on issues affecting the implementation and performance of the programme by describing the national economic and legal environment. This is important information for the Commission to be able to formulate observations and work with the Member States on their specific challenges to improve implementation. The reports provide details of support for small-scale coastal fisheries, for example the replacement or modernisation of main or ancillary engines.

AIRs also describe activities that are part of the programme's evaluation plan, and summarise the evaluations conducted. The 2017 and 2019 reports included special sections providing additional information on support for climate change objectives and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

2.5. Evaluations

Member States conducted *ex ante* evaluations[26] as a basis for programme design. These evaluations were submitted to the Commission together with the OPs. The Commission drew up a synthesis of the *ex ante* evaluations[27]. This synthesis showed that the main benefit of *ex ante* evaluation was the support it provided in performing SWOT analyses, identifying programmes' specific intervention needs, and quantifying indicator targets.

Each programme also includes an evaluation plan to ensure regular evaluations and appropriate follow-up. Evaluations should assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact

25 https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/

26 Article 55 of the CPR.

27 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a47f1ad1-055d-11e7-8a35-01aa75ed71a1

of the EMFF[28]. At least once during the programming period, an evaluation should assess how EMFF support has helped achieve the objectives for each EU priority. These evaluations will feed into the *ex post* evaluation of the EMFF, due by the end of 2024[29].

The most frequent type of evaluation conducted by the Member States are evaluations of processes and procedures. Most of these were structured to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of processes at the level of the OP, by specific objective and measure. Examples of specific evaluations conducted include:

- an evaluation of the implementation of community-led local development;
- a cost-benefit analysis of a decommissioning scheme;
- an evaluation of a lobster V-notching scheme;
- an evaluation of a sustainable fisheries scheme;
- an evaluation of recirculating aquaculture systems;
- an impact assessment of the blue economy sectors; and
- an *ex ante* assessment of the use of financial instruments.

According to information on evaluations provided in the AIRs, three main outcomes were identified:

- OP amendments in line with observations made in evaluations, mostly to reallocate funding from measures that attracted less interest to measures in greater demand;
- the simplification, streamlining and adjustment of national rules and procedures; and
- the development of ideas and draft programme structures for the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).

The evaluation synthesis of the AIRs and the evaluation support and capacity building workshops[30] of the fisheries and aquaculture monitoring and evaluation (FAME) unit showed that the quality and extent of evaluations varied significantly across Member States. The quality and extent of evaluations depended a lot on:

- the organisation of the MAs and their effectiveness in overseeing the national programme;
- the contracted experts' level of expertise; and
- the degree of preparation and expertise applied to:
    - defining the terms of reference for an evaluation;
    - drafting suitable evaluation questions; and
    - specifying the selection criteria for tenders for evaluations.

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28 Article 115 of the EMFF Regulation and Article 56 of the CPR.

29 Article 57 of the CPR.

30 Workshops to help managing authorities improve the quality and depth of their activities. For example helping to design specific, targeted evaluation questions suitable to the resources and information available for the work.

Member States reported difficulties in deciding on the number and scope of the evaluation questions, resulting in an evaluation that could be either too general or too focused on a specific topic, depending on the available time and budget.

Examples of evaluations assessing performance and implementation

In 2020 a Member State carried out an evaluation of performance and an evaluation of the implementation process. The performance evaluation focused on how effective EMFF measures had been in achieving the OP's specific objectives and targets. The evaluation of the implementation process assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery mechanism of EMFF support, by assessing management structures and implementation methods.

Based on the evaluations, the Member State decided to keep the targets for programme implementation under review, and to reallocate funds from measures unlikely to spend their full allocation to measures in greater demand. The ensuing recommendations suggested streamlining the number of interventions to make administration more efficient and provide more clarity for applicants. They also suggested improving the IT system and simplifying programme management procedures, especially enabling online grant processing.

2.6. Performance framework

Articles 21 and 22 of the CPR provide the basis for the performance framework and its application to the review of programmes. The performance review examined the achievement of the milestones of the programmes at the level of EU priorities, using the information presented in the AIRs submitted by the Member States in 2019.

For each EMFF programme, the Commission adopted decisions on the EU priorities that had achieved their milestones (financial and output indicators). The performance reserve (i.e. 5%-7% of the allocation to each priority, as decided by the Member State in question) was allocated to these priorities. The performance reserve for priorities that had not achieved their milestones was reallocated to priorities that had done so.

The performance framework, in particular the review of programmes, required analysis and the adoption of decisions. The review did provide an incentive to improve implementation, but the incentive was not very strong. The consequence of underperformance was the mandatory transfer of funds from one EU priority to another. This tallies with the logical action of the MA to improve implementation under normal circumstances, even without the review.

3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK OF THE EMFAF

The monitoring and evaluation framework (MEF) of the EMFAF was set up as part of the performance framework of the EU budget[31]. This performance framework includes concepts such as core performance indicators, harmonised reporting and tracking of expenditure for horizontal aspects such as climate and the environment. Each fund

[31] Described in COM(2021) 366 final.

therefore has a tailor-made framework. The MEF of the EMFAF is based on the experience gained during the implementation of the EMFF, as described in Section 2. The current section briefly describes the novelties of the MEF. The full details will be published in a working paper that will be made available on the EMFAF page of DG MARE's website[32].

The EMFAF intervention logic is more flexible than that of the EMFF. There are fewer priorities and fewer specific objectives and the well defined, detailed measures of the EMFF are no longer used as a programming and monitoring tool. Instead, Member States have the freedom to choose and define tailor-made measures for their specific needs.

Member States also have the freedom to choose the most suitable common result indicators to measure the effects of their action. The indicators are set out in the EMFAF Regulation[33] and the number of indicators was reduced from 35 under the EMFF to 22 (25 including sub-indicators). They were simplified and described in a way that should eliminate many of the uncertainties and errors related to the EMFF's indicators.

Under the EMFAF, Member States do not submit AIRs. Instead, they report more structured and more regular quantitative data, as specified in the 2021-2027 CPR[34]. Twice a year, these quantitative data are complemented by operation-level implementation data (Infosys). Annual performance review meetings between the MA and the Commission provide the opportunity to address qualitative aspects of the programme.

Evaluations remain a key aspect of the framework. Member States must evaluate their programmes based on one or more of the following criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and Union added value[35]. The aim is to improve the quality of the design and implementation of programmes. Evaluations may also cover other relevant criteria such as inclusiveness, non-discrimination and visibility. The framework also provides for an interim and final evaluation of the EMFAF's implementation.

Article 16 of the 2021-2027 CPR sets up the performance framework. The framework sets milestones and targets for output and result indicators, and links them to specific objectives. This facilitates monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the Fund's performance during the implementation period. The EMFAF Regulation does not provide for a performance review and subsequent allocation of a performance reserve.

Table 1 provides an overview of the most significant differences between the 2014-2020 period and the 2021-2027 period. Overall, monitoring and evaluation as part of the EMFAF framework has been simplified and offers greater consistency and flexibility than the EMFF framework.

Table 1: Comparison of the EMFF and EMFAF MEFs

32 https://ec.europa.eu/oceans-and-fisheries/funding/emfaf_en

33 Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004.

34 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

35 Article 44 of the 2021-2027 CPR.

Aspect	2014-2020 CMES (EMFF)	2021-2027 MEF (EMFAF)
Intervention logic	Predefined	More flexible with fewer constraints
Priorities	6	4
Specific objectives	17	10
Measures	Predefined in the EMFF Regulation	No measures; Member States specify their types of action at specific objective level (ineligible action is excluded)
Context indicators	53	None
Result indicators	35 including sub-indicators	25 including sub-indicators
Output indicators	28	1
Types of operation	160	66
Reporting annually	Once	Operation-level data: twice; financial data: three times
Evaluation plan	Yes, part of the OP	Yes, internal document
Evaluation	*Ex ante* evaluation in 2015 (Member States), evaluations during the implementation period (Member States), *ex post* evaluation in 2024 (Commission)	Evaluations during the implementation period (Member States), interim evaluation in 2024 (Commission), impact evaluation in 2029 (Member States), *ex post* evaluation in 2031 (Commission)
Performance framework	Included, but no guidance provided	Included; Member States received a performance framework methodology paper[36]

Source: FAME, 2021

4. CONCLUSION

When the CMES of the EMFF was set up in 2014, it delivered comparable reporting at operation level across Member States for the first time. The system was based on a predefined intervention logic and a set of common indicators. Its rigid structure created some difficulties, for example issues related to the level of detail describing the measures to implement the funding, various interpretations of requirements and definitions across Member States, and different scales of intervention compared to the other ESI Funds. The Commission, with the assistance of the FAME support unit, has worked continuously to address these issues. FAME has also provided the necessary support, analysis and training for both Member States and the Commission. The workshops, working papers and ad hoc support drew on collective experience and greatly harmonised and improved MAs' capacity to collect data on, report on and evaluate the EMFF's performance. The experience gained in implementing the EMFF has been central in developing a leaner, simplified framework with greater reporting frequency for the 2021-2027 period.

[36] The working paper on the performance framework methodology was distributed and presented in June 2021. Its purpose is to facilitate programme approval, to provide a template for the intervention logic of the Member States' programmes, and to provide a basis for selecting indicators and specifying (and subsequently revising) milestones, targets and financial estimates. These aspects can provide a basis for the monitoring and evaluation plan to be drafted at a later stage and to give programmers and stakeholders guidance on storing knowledge in their organisations.