

Interim evaluation of the European Fisheries Fund (2007-2013)

Synthesis of the 26 national evaluation reports

December 2011

Document drawn up on the basis of the reports on the interim evaluation of the EFF that were undertaken by the Member States and transmitted to the European Commission by the end of June 2011. It does not reflect the opinion of the European Commission, which cannot be held responsible if this information is incomplete or inaccurate. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission may be held responsible for the use that may be made of the information contained in this publication.

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarise the contents of the national interim evaluation reports on the European Fisheries Fund (2007-2013) and to highlight the main points and recommendations that emerge. It also aims to provide a basis for the organisation of a “strategic debate” with Member States to be undertaken by the end of 2011, which should also focus more widely on the content and progress of the implementation of national strategic plans, and develop the exchange of best practice among Member States, as prescribed in Article 16 of the EFF regulation.

The interim evaluation reports were prepared in each MS based on a common methodological framework developed by the European Commission prior to the launch of the evaluation with the support of an evaluator’s network (composed of representatives designated by the MS) as well as external consultants. This methodological framework addressed minimal standards and provided a common set of evaluation questions, criteria and indicators to be applied for the assessment of all participating Member States, whilst providing the flexibility to deal with any issues linked to the national context and specific questions.

As detailed in the methodological framework, an interim evaluation is conducted half-way through the lifecycle of the programme. It is thus not an end in itself, but rather a means to improve the relevance and functioning of the programme. It provides an opportunity to identify reorientations of the programme which may be needed to ensure the achievement of the original objectives. The interim evaluations thus focus on following objectives:

- Determining if the programmes’ strategies are still relevant, taking into account changes in the common fisheries policy and socio-economic context;
- Assessing the quality and efficiency of the implementation and management in place,
- Assessing effectiveness and appraising progress made by the implemented projects towards the achievement of the OP’s set objectives.

Additional objectives are to provide recommendations for improving programme implementation and identify ideas and feedback for the “Strategic debate”, notably on some best practices identified in the MS.

Based on these objectives and common framework, this synthesis report thus considers:

- ▶ A short presentation of the EFF and of the 26 operational programmes, as well as an overview of the 26 interim evaluation reports and their specific contents and methodologies used;
- ▶ The assessment of the relevance of the operational programmes, considering the changes in the context since their development;
- ▶ The assessment of the implementation of the operational programmes as regards the partnership principle during development and implementation, the management and control system, the communication, selection and payment procedures, and the monitoring system in place in the MS;
- ▶ The progress made to date in implementing EFF programmes up to the end of 2010 and/or beginning of 2011 as well as the main reasons for programmes falling behind schedule;
- ▶ The information available to assess the outputs, outcome and first impact of programmes under each priority axis.

The synthesis also presents a few examples of good practices and illustrations quoted from the national evaluation reports.

2 EFF presentation and overview of the 26 evaluation reports

2.1 EFF presentation

The European Fisheries Fund (EFF)¹ is the financial instrument of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) for 2007-2013. The EFF replaced the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) which covered the 2000-2006 programming period. The EFF total budget amounts to € 4.3 billion.

This public aid instrument seeks to grant financial support to the European fisheries sector for the period 2007-2013 to help it adapt to changes required within the sector and further the CFP whose general objective is to "provide for sustainable exploitation of living aquatic resources and of aquaculture in the context of sustainable development, taking account of the environmental, economic and social aspects in a balanced manner" (*Council Reg. (EC) No 1198/2006*).

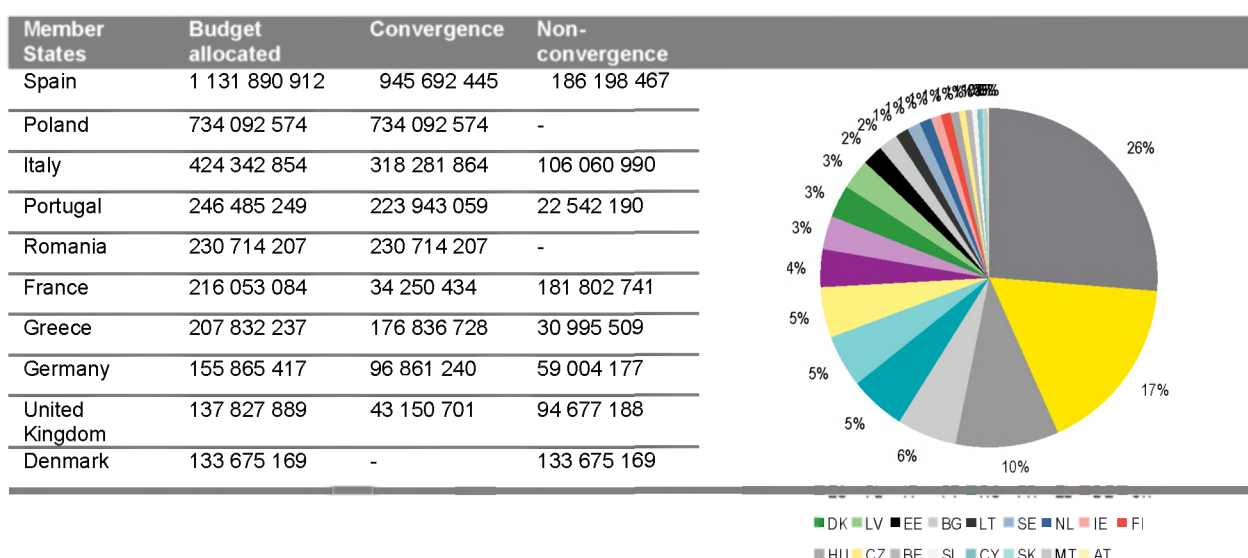
The EFF is designed to secure a sustainable European fishing and aquaculture industry by achieving the objectives set under the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in 2002.

EFF targets five priority areas (priority axes):

- ▶ Priority axis 1: adaptation of the Community fishing fleet;
- ▶ Priority axis 2: aquaculture, inland fishing, processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products;
- ▶ Priority axis 3: measures of collective benefit;
- ▶ Priority axis 4: sustainable development of fisheries areas;
- ▶ Priority axis 5: technical assistance to facilitate the delivery of assistance.

In line with the former programming period, Spain remains the main beneficiary of the European funds for fisheries. Poland is the second largest recipient of EC contribution. Seven countries account for 75% of the contribution, including Mediterranean countries (ES, IT, PT, EL, FR), the UK and larger countries (PL, RO and DE).

Figure 1: Allocation of the EFF budget



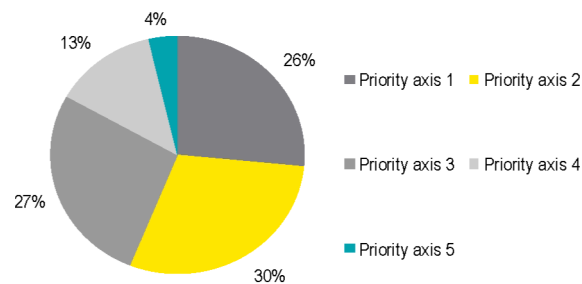
¹ Commission Regulation (EC) No 498/2007 of 26 March 2007 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 on the European Fisheries Fund

Member States	Budget allocated	Convergence	Non-convergence
Latvia	125 015 563	125 015 563	-
Estonia	84 568 039	84 568 039	-
Bulgaria	80 009 708	80 009 708	-
Lithuania	54 713 408	54 713 408	-
Sweden	54 664 803	-	54 664 803
Netherlands	48 578 417	-	48 578 417
Ireland	42 266 603	-	42 266 603
Finland	39 448 827	-	39 448 827
Hungary	34 850 860	34 291 357	559 503
Czech Republic	27 106 675	27 106 675	-
Belgium	26 261 648	-	26 261 648
Slovenia	21 640 283	21 640 283	-
Cyprus	19 724 418	19 724 418	-
Slovakia	13 688 528	12 681 459	1 007 069
Malta	8 372 329	8 372 329	-
Austria	5 259 318	187 326	5 071 992
TOTAL	4 304 949 019	3 252 409 308	1 052 539 711

Source: Second annual Report on implementation of the European Fisheries Fund (2008) SEC(2009)1714

The allocation is balanced between the three major axes ranging from 26% to 30%. The new Axis 4 focusing on sustainable development remains lower with only 13% of the Community budget allocation.

Figure 2: Allocated budget by Priority axis



Source: Second annual Report on implementation of the European Fisheries Fund (2008) SEC(2009)1714

2.2 Overview of the 26 EFF interim evaluations reports

Evaluation methodological framework

The common methodological framework elaborated by DG MARE and followed by the evaluation reports defines a list of 11 related evaluation questions as listed below:

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions (EQ)
Relevance of the Operational Programme's objectives	EQ 1: Considering the change in the regulatory, socio-economic and political context, have new needs emerged since the drafting of the operational programme? EQ2: Considering this changing context, to what extent does the initial (or revised) operational programme address the new needs of the sector within the framework of the CFP?
Implementation and management system	EQ3: How effectively is the principle of partnership applied in the EFF implementation? Are stakeholders effectively involved in the EFF implementation? Is EFF implementation well coordinated between the national/ local level? Are stakeholders, such as / in particular women's organisations/ orgs promoting equal opportunities between women and men and environmental stakeholders/ NGOs involved in the EFF implementation? EQ4: To what extent do the management processes in place, from project application to payments, enable the effective implementation of projects that best achieve the programme's objectives? EQ5: How effective is the programme monitoring system?
Effectiveness and progress to date	EQ6: What is the programme's state of progress at the end of 2010? EQ7: What are the preliminary results achieved by the Axis 1 projects in relation to mid term targets of OP?*
	EQ8: What are the preliminary results achieved by the Axis 2 projects in relation to mid term targets of OP?*
	EQ9: What are the preliminary results achieved by the Axis 3 projects in relation to mid term targets of OP?*
	EQ10: How far has the Axis 4 implementation process progressed in the country (groups operational, groups formed but not implementing local strategy, groups not formed...)? How did the national institutions, in particular the managing authority, adapt to the territorial character of Axis 4? To what extent did the instruments/measures of the EFF contribute to an efficient implementation process? To what extent did the support by FARnet foster the implementation of axis 4?
	EQ11: What are the outputs and results of Axis 5?

** if applicable to the programme*

Content and structure of evaluation reports

According to the assessment performed by DG desk officers, most evaluation reports are of good quality in terms of structure and content.

They generally follow the guidelines and are rather easy to read. Expected analyses are easily available as regards the different sections:

- executive summary,
- description of the context and objectives of the evaluation,
- presentation of the evaluation methodological approach (with a specific focus on the sources of data, techniques for data collection, indicators used and problems and limitations),
- and analyses on the 3 evaluation themes defined in the common methodological framework (relevance, implementation and management system, and effectiveness)

Main problems encountered relate to:

- the description of the methodology used which sometimes lacks details.
- the presentation of limitations and problems encountered
- the consideration of transversal issues (environment and equal opportunities) which are not always clearly analysed within the reports
- the structure of the reports which are sometimes more difficult to read, too descriptive and/ or too general.

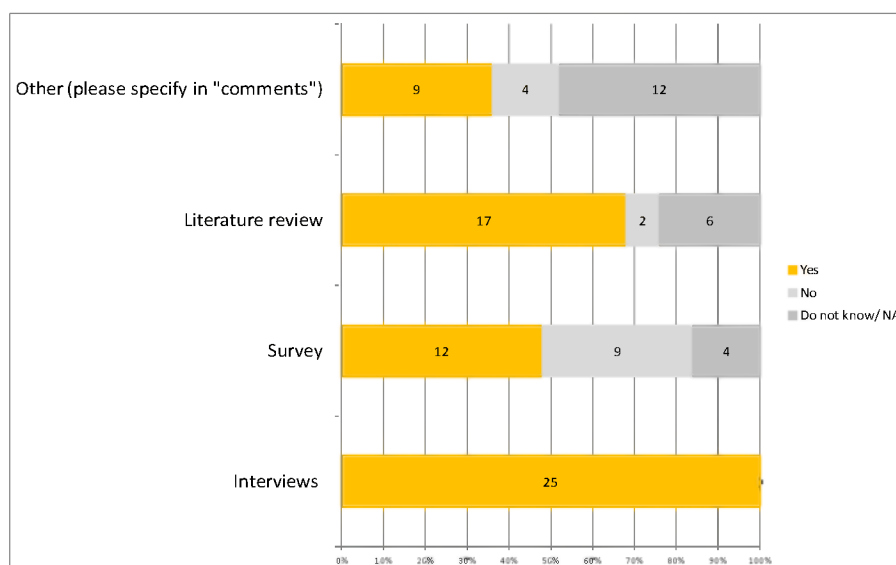
The summary below provides a general overview of these quality assessments and mentions the main problems encountered:

Country	Overall assessment of completeness and structure of the report	Main problems of the report
Austria	+	The description of methodology could be more detailed. The sources of data are always indicated under the tables but no information can be found on the techniques for data collection.
Belgium	+	Transversal issues are not sufficiently taken into account unclear
Bulgaria	++	
Czech Republic	++	
Cyprus	++	
Denmark	++	
Estonia	++	
France	+	Transversal issues are not sufficiently taken into account unclear
Finland	++	
Germany	++	
Hungary	~	Some chapters are not very clear. The description of methodology is too general. The report lacks of details on some specific questions (ex: reasons explain delays)
Greece	++	
Ireland	++	
Italy	+	The structure does not follow the guidelines.
Latvia	+	The structure does not follow the guidelines. Problems and limitations are not sufficiently detailed
Lithuania	+	Transversal issues are not sufficiently taken into account unclear
Malta	+	Problems and limitations are not sufficiently detailed
Poland	++	
Portugal	+	The report is too long and descriptive
Romania	X	The main findings are superficial and avoid drawing a realist picture of the situation. The report lacks of details on some specific questions (ex: reasons explain delays). The Report lacks a unitary structure of analysis, mixing answers to questionnaires, with analysis and sheer presentation of data taken from the operational program and other sources.
Slovakia	++	
Slovenia	++	
Spain	~	The description of methodology could be more detailed. The emphasis granted to the relevance (and coherence) analysis appears unjustified and to the detriment of the assessment of the effective functioning of the management system and of the effectiveness of the OP implementation.
Sweden	++	
United Kingdom	++	

Tools and techniques used

National evaluators used several methods to collect relevant primary and secondary data.

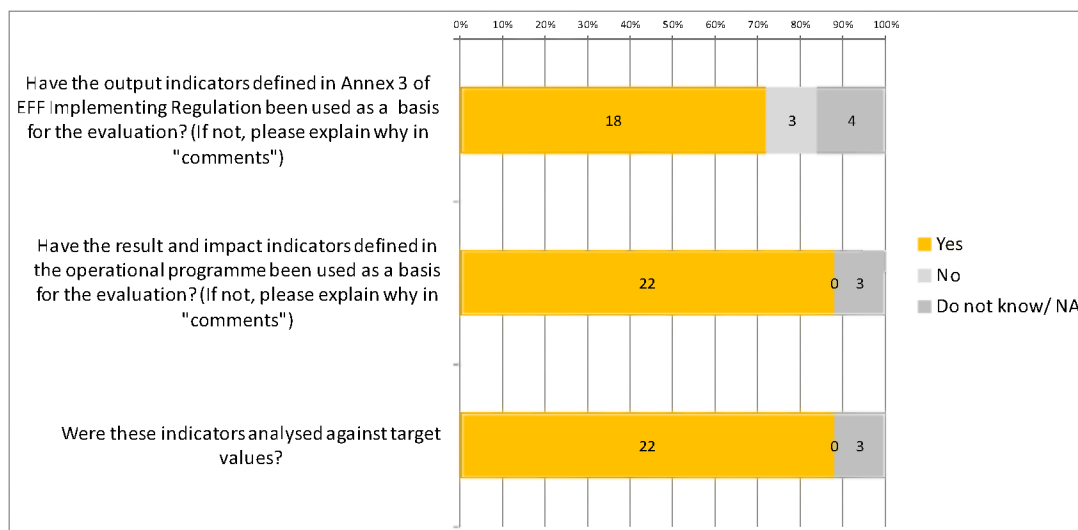
- All of them employed an interview process with a various number of stakeholders, mainly implementing bodies, stakeholder organizations and scientific bodies. Most evaluation reports included interviews with beneficiaries, although the number of interviewees seems to vary to a large degree from one MS to another.
- Quite a large number of evaluation reports base their analyses on literature review (17), and surveys (12) which targeted beneficiaries.
- Additional data collection tools include working groups/ workshops (Estonia, Finland), case studies (Hungary) and observation methods (Lithuania).



Apart from a few MS, the methodological approach is generally considered reliable and conclusions and recommendations are CLEAR (concise, logical, evidence-based, analytical, relevant). The main problems are as follows:

- In Spain, the data collection methodology focused far too much on documentary analysis and therefore not sufficiently on stakeholder interviews. Interviews were conducted exclusively with MC members (MA and comunidades autonomas i.e. intermediate bodies in the regions), but no information is provided on questions or issues raised nor an actual number of interviewees.
- As regards Romania, the problems relate more to the analysis approach; the conclusions do not seem to be based on analytical analysis, while the recommendations are too general and do not explain how to improve the programme implementation.

A few limitations on the methodological approach are mentioned in the reports. These limitations refer mainly to the early stage of implementation and the associated lack of data. Output indicators defined in Annex 3 of EFF implementing Regulation have been used, however only partially. These indicators were often raised and discussed in a non-exhaustive manner.



2.3 Methodology and data sources of the synthesis report

Methodology

This synthesis of all 26 national EFF evaluation reports was drafted in 3 steps:

- 1. Developing a common analysis grid which aimed to extract from the reports all relevant information for the synthesis. The grid included both closed and open questions, as well as specific tables dedicated to the collection of quantitative data according to a selection of indicators from Annex 3 of EFF regulation or from the most commonly used result and impact indicators suggested by DG MARE working paper "Indicators for monitoring and evaluation: a practical guide for the EFF". (NB: This analysis grid was intended to complement the information already available through the 26 assessment grids completed by DG MARE desk officers on reception of their respective evaluation reports by requesting more detailed information on the different evaluation criteria).
- 2. Reviewing all reports and completing the analysis grids. This task was performed by national experts (or by experts with appropriate linguistic capability).
- 3. Consolidating all 26 analysis grids, undertaking overall analyses and drawing conclusions. The review of analysis grids also allowed some relevant examples, or good practices, to be extracted. In addition, the 26 assessment grids received from DG MARE desk officers have been consolidated and have enabled additional analysis to be performed.

Data sources

National interim evaluation reports are the only sources of information for drafting this synthesis, except for financial information on commitments. Indeed, financial data on commitments and achievements as included in the evaluation reports do not provide a comparable basis and cannot be used as aggregated information as they are in heterogeneous format: they are sometimes based only on EFF co-financing, whilst in other instances include overall public co-financing. Some MS only mention the commitment rates whilst others include absolute data and/or focus on achievements with no in-depth analysis of commitments. The related measures under each priority axis are not always considered under the same number and names which makes it difficult to aggregate data from all evaluation reports. Finally, the cut-off dates are not always the same.

Sources for financial data are as follows:

- Overall commitments per MS and per priority axis are sourced from national implementation reports as at 31.12.2010 (except for 3 MS for which financial data from the national evaluation

report were used, as those from national implementation reports were too different and not consistent with analyses made)

- Commitments per measure under each priority axis (chapters 5.1 to 5.4) are sourced from the EU interim evaluation report issued on February 2011.²

Each of the following sections includes a conclusion section and, where relevant, a list of useful recommendations. Sources for these conclusions and recommendations are the national evaluation reports. However, conclusions have been organized in order to correspond with the requirements of a synthesis, and have therefore been distinguished in two parts:

- general conclusions that either result from the cross-analysis of national evaluation reports (highlighting of common points or significant divergences) or that apply to all cases;
- and more specific conclusions that relate to one or more MS only.

The same process was followed with recommendations.

Limitations

The following limitations must be taken into account when considering the analysis performed for this synthesis:

- The quality of the evaluation reports is rather heterogeneous in terms of data, completeness, and methodology. It is quite low for the Spanish report which does not allow information to be extracted for every theme studied in this synthesis
- Financial data, output, results and impact indicators are heterogeneous (and do not always include annex 3 of EFF regulation indicators). They can hardly be aggregated and rarely provide meaningful comparisons across MS.

² See http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/studies/eff_interim_evaluation_en.pdf

3 Synthesis of answers to the evaluation questions on the relevance

This section provides a synthesis of main analyses and conclusions to answer the 2 evaluation questions that refer to the relevance of the EFF programmes:

EQ1. Considering the change in the regulatory, socio-economic and political context, have new needs emerged since the drafting of the operational programme?

EQ2. To what extent does the initial (or revised) operational program still address the current new needs of the sector?

3.1 Main changes in the context

Since 2007, the fisheries sector has mainly been impacted by the financial and economic crisis and 2007/2008 fuel costs crisis.

1/ The financial and economic crisis has affected most MS and resulted in:

- **Limited access to private finance:** MS such as Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia and United Kingdom report the unwillingness of banks to provide support to the fishing and aquaculture sector, both in terms of support for new capital investments and financing of working capital;
- **Stronger public expenditure control:** In United Kingdom for example, previous sources of public sector match funding have disappeared or have been significantly reduced with the severe cuts to the budgets of all government departments and local authorities along with the abolition of the regional development agencies. Similarly, the need for public spending cuts have put serious pressure on the Greek and Irish governments' ability to provide full match funding for the scale of activities originally planned in the operational programmes.

Reduced access to credit along with the difficulties with securing national contribution to operational programme actions are impeding implementation of the programme by generating **delays in the investments and payments procedures**. In Denmark, for example, some aquaculture projects were cancelled. This negative impact was even stronger in Bulgaria and Romania where the number of application has remained very low.

2/ The fuel crisis and economic crisis amplified financial and economic pressure on the sector.

In Malta, for example, whilst the operating costs have increased (fuel costs, fish feed costs, energy costs), selling prices of fish have increased at a lower rate, which adversely affected the profit margins of both fisheries and aquaculture operators. Due to those higher costs, many small-scale fishermen refrain from fishing (Bulgaria) and make fewer trips and operating closer to home ports (Cyprus, United Kingdom). In Italy, ships have reduced their activity by 15% (in terms of working days) and captures were down by 19% in 2008. In France, fuel costs crisis has generated significant social/workers movements in 2007 and 2008.

In addition, in some MS a **decline in demand for fisheries' products** has been observed (Cyprus, Denmark and Portugal) and **prices of outputs (fish products, aquaculture products) have stagnated** or have been reduced (Czech Republic, Denmark, Portugal, France, Latvia, Slovakia).

On the other hand, some MS highlight a rather **limited or very temporary impact of the fuel crisis on the sector** (Austria, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and United Kingdom). In Poland for example, despite a relatively significant rise in the price of diesel fuel in 2008, at the beginning of 2009 and 2010 fuel prices returned to the level of 2007.

The crisis was also seen as **an opportunity to promote innovation and improved productivity** in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and switching to more rational (more economical) methods of fishing as well as the restructuring of the fleet (for example through withdrawal of less economically efficient vessels in Poland) or more energy saving measures (the Netherlands). In Denmark, in 2008 the program and two new support packages were implemented to support more energy efficient fishing vessels ("Fuel package" 1 and 2). This has resulted in fuel savings of on average 10.4% on 143 fishing vessels. In Latvia, many aquaculture enterprises are considering abandoning manual labour, thus promoting the automation of production processes. In general, according to the information provided by representatives of the Latvian fisheries sector, the sector has weathered the financial crisis successfully, thanks to the EFF support to date.

3/ Apart from the economic, financial and fuel price crises, other changes in the context mentioned by the MS include:

- **Increased social pressure for sustainable fishing.** In Germany sustainability has become the new priority in the fishing industry, while in Belgium the priority has been given to the “eel recovery plan”. In Slovenia, the new, general need that arose after the preparation of OP Fisheries is the need to preserve the sector and make it self-sustaining along with sustainable management of available maritime sources.
- **Globalization of the fishing industry:** Recent decades have seen the markets for fish products become increasingly internationalised and for a large number of fish products prices are currently being shaped by global markets. An increased pressure on the competitiveness of freshwater fish and products has been noted in the evaluation reports for Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Portugal. In Portugal, an increase in international competition has been observed, especially relating to aquaculture products (increase in imports). In Czech Republic further substitutes of freshwater fish started to be imported to the domestic market and subsidised imports of freshwater fish from third countries have been flowing into the country³. Compared to previous years, the pressure on the competitiveness of freshwater fish and fish products has increased, and productive fish farmers thus suffer from lack of free funds for investments. In Denmark, the declining supply of raw materials from traditional suppliers in the North Atlantic area, combined with increased competition from low-wage countries, has placed parts of the Danish fishing industry under additional pressure. Thus, for example, fillet production has been on the decline.

3.2 Revision of EFF programmes and main findings on their relevance

In spite of those changes in the socio-economic and political context, the majority of national mid-term evaluations conclude that the content and objectives of the National Strategic Plans and Operational Programmes remain relevant. However, the changes in the economic landscape do have serious practical **consequences for the progress of OP activities**, for the ability to draw down EFF support, and for support to the now critical national and EU priority of job creation.

Only one MS, Spain, is currently preparing an update to its National Strategic Plan.

As to the Operational Programmes, roughly one-third of MS introduced amendments to their Operational Programmes since 2007. Some of those amendments occurred in relation to the Commission Regulation (EC) No 744/2008 of 24 July 2008 instituting a temporary specific action aiming to promote the restructuring of the European Community fishing fleets affected by the economic crisis (in Denmark, Finland, France and Greece). Some other MS, such as Austria, Bulgaria, Latvia and Malta introduced a redistribution of funding between Axes.

Table 1: Amendments in the Operational Programmes

³ Cheap frozen fish from abroad (e.g. products from Asia, where there are quite different hygienic and veterinary standards than in the CR and in Europe), or subsidised exports from neighbouring countries with the low prices.

MS	Main amendments
Austria	The major changes are the creation of energy reports and the adjustment of the financial plan.
Bulgaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establishment of a Guarantee Fund, which has to issue guarantees to cover the risk of projects (due to deterioration of bank loan financing terms). – Increase in the number of planned fisheries local action group - from 4 to 6 (still in progress as a reallocation of the funds should be implemented as the budget for Axis 4 is not sufficient). – Change in the Audit Authority.
Finland	To take into account the possibilities offered in the Fuel Crisis Package R. 744/2008.
France	Reinforcement of Fleet restructuring measure following EC Reg. 744/2008 and national measures in this perspective.
Greece	Addition of the CR (EC) No 744/2008 of 24 July 2008 "Instituting a temporary specific action aiming to promote the restructuring of the European Community fishing fleets affected by the economic crisis"
Latvia	The only changes being introduced are with respect to the volume of funding for various measures (funding available for Priority Axis 4 was cut by EUR 15.7M, with corresponding increases in the funding for Priority Axes 1, 2 and 3 – by EUR 7M, 4.3M and 4.3M, respectively) ⁴ . In turn, the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EFF Support in Latvia for 2007-2013 has now been released in its third version, and it has been subject to several amendments since the first draft, of which a small portion has been justified by the changes caused by the economic and financial crisis (specifying and supplementing the legal basis of the Operational Programme measure according to the European Council Regulation (EC) 744/2008 of 24 July 2008, by which a special temporary activity is established for promotion of restructuring European Community fishing fleets affected by the economic crises.
Malta	In November 2009, the MA presented a revision in financial budgets for approval by the MC. This revision was required in order to ensure that the Measures under Priority Axis 2 are properly designed and executed. It is therefore deemed to have helped in making the Measures of the OP more relevant.
Denmark	<p>The increasing fuel prices justified a programme modification in 2008, when special efforts were initiated to cut fuel consumption in the fishing fleet.</p> <p>The programme was revised and two subsidy schemes implemented: "Fuel packages 1 and 2" for energy-efficient investments for the period from programme modification to end-2010.</p> <p>The two subsidy schemes attracted many applicants, with energy inspections and modernisations being carried out on a large number of fishing vessels.</p>

⁴ Respectively: LVL 11M, 5M, 3M and 3M.

3.3 Main conclusions on relevance

Since 2007, the sector was mainly impacted by the financial/ economic crisis and 2007/2008 fuel crisis which resulted in reduced access to private finance, stronger public expenditure control, increased financial and economic pressure on the sector (rising fuel costs, fish feed costs increase, rising unemployment), a decline in demand for fisheries products, and prices that have stagnated/fallen.

A few MS however highlight a rather limited or very temporary impact of fuel crisis on the sector. The crisis was sometimes seen as an opportunity to promote innovation and higher productivity in the sector, to switch to more economical methods of fishing and to restructure the fleet.

Other changes in the context include the increased social pressure for sustainable fishing and globalization of the fishing industry, as well as increased pressure on the competitiveness of freshwater fish and products

The majority of national evaluation reports conclude that the content and objectives of NSP and OP remain relevant.

Only on MS has changed/updated their NSP and roughly one-third of MS introduced amendments to their OP, mainly in relation to the “fuel package” or to make some budgetary adjustments between Axes.

However, the changes in the economic landscape do have serious practical consequences for the progress of OP activities, for the ability to draw down EFF support, and for support to the now critical national and EU priority of job creation.

4 Synthesis of answers to the evaluation questions on the efficiency and quality of implementation

This section provides a synthesis of the main analysis, conclusions and recommendations made in response to the 3 evaluation questions that relate to the main processes underpinning the Programme, which include the partnership processes, the overall management processes (promotion and awareness, selection and appraisal, payments and claims) and the monitoring and evaluation system:

EQ3. How effectively is the principle of partnership applied in the EFF implementation? Are stakeholders effectively involved in the EFF implementation? Is EFF implementation well coordinated between the national/ local level?

EQ4. To what extent do the implementation and management processes in place, from project application to payments, enable the effective implementation of projects that best achieve the programme's objectives?

EQ5. How effective is the programme monitoring system?

4.1 Partnership principle

a. Programme development and launch

The consultation process is considered satisfactory in terms of the number and variety of stakeholders involved during programme development and launch. All evaluation reports that address this matter in detail (18) reach this positive conclusion.

The partnership principle during the development of the OP was applied through the following means:

- written consultations (position papers);
- working groups with sector stakeholders;
- organisation of meetings and fora;
- facilitation of interviews;
- surveys of sector representatives;
- extension of FIFG monitoring Committee activities to preparation of the EFF OP; and
- Publication of working documents on website for comments.

Written consultations and establishing working groups are the most common consultation actions organised to date. The other types of actions were used by only a limited number of MS however this does not necessarily mean that they cannot constitute good practices for other MS in order to improve the quality of partnership principle.

As an example the Irish report provides a positive assessment of the partnership principle applied during programme development which is presented as a “best practice”:

"Partnership was (...) a feature of the Programme's development from an early stage, including the initial planning stages. In particular, the Ex-ante Evaluation of the Programme noted that partnership arrangements had been a key strength in its preparation, especially through the consultation process that underpinned work of the Seafood Industry Strategy Review Group and the National Strategic Plan. Extensive consultation with a wide spectrum of stakeholders had played a key role in this strategy development process, and the Programme itself has in turn been shaped by the needs and priorities identified in the underlying national seafood strategy.

Moreover, further partnership arrangements were facilitated in the early stages by the establishment of the 23-member Seafood Strategy Implementation Group. The purpose of this body, which was established in February 2007 and was in place until April 2009, was to develop and oversee a detailed implementation plan for the recommendations of the Seafood Industry Strategy Review Group. In addition, membership of the Monitoring Committee was to be drawn in part from this group and it was intended that there would be a clear linkage between the work of the group and the subsequent work of the Monitoring Committee. In addition, the Implementation Group played a key role as the "Monitoring Committee" in overseeing the implementation of the 2008 Decommissioning Scheme, which was funded under Axis 1 of the OP but which was implemented before the Programme was formally approved in September 2008"

Quote from the Irish evaluation report

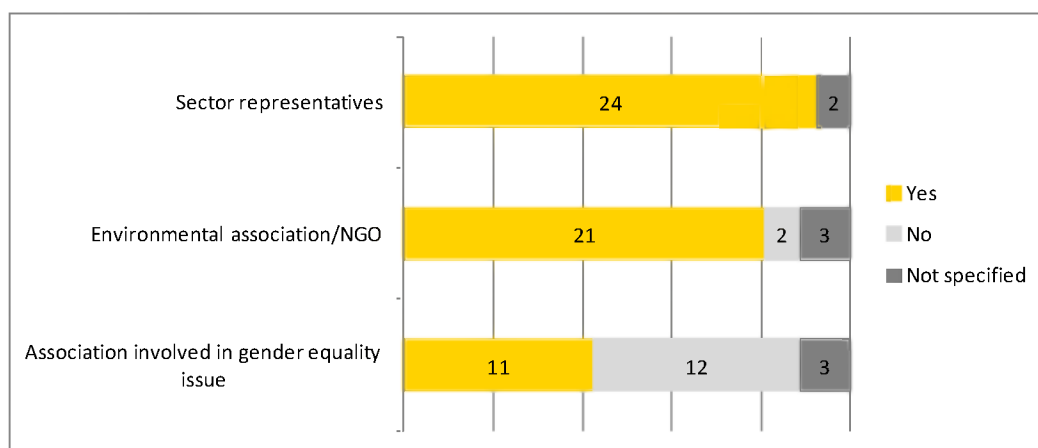
b. Partnership within the Monitoring committee

The partnership principle within the Monitoring Committee (MC) is respected to a varying degree and demonstrates both positives and negatives in terms of composition and involvement:

- Sector representatives generally participate actively in the MC in all MS and have a strong and regular representation in the national MCs.
- Environmental organisations are also well represented in the MC with the exception of France and Austria. In France, it appears that these organisations are not interested in participating in the MC as they have strained relations with the fisheries sector and do not wish to be involved in EFF implementation. In Austria, even though no NGO or association participate in the MC, government representatives in charge of environmental matters, enable these issues to be addressed.
- Gender equality / equal opportunity organisations are lacking representatives in half of the MS. Only 11 MS involve gender equality organisations in their MC. It is often pointed out in the evaluation reports that this absence could potentially be due to difficulties in involving these groups due to their limited size, and sometimes because they merely do not exist in some of the MS.

The following figure presents the distribution of stakeholders' involvement in the MC by type of stakeholder.

Figure 3 - Stakeholders involvement in the Monitoring Committee



Monitoring committees generally meet twice a year, although MC meetings are less regular in some MS (Cyprus, France, Greece and Estonia).

Beyond the mere composition of MCs, the partnership principle is also assessed through the actual degree of involvement and participation of invited stakeholders in the MC meetings and in the decisions that are taken in those meetings.

However, the actual level of cooperation within the MC is questioned in many evaluation reports because of the low participation of stakeholders and the lack of actual discussion. It is often pointed out that the non-institutional stakeholders do not actually participate in the content and in the discussions of the MC meetings. Stakeholders also sometimes simply do not attend these meetings even though they are invited and considered as members of the MC. This mainly concerns social partners (NGOs, associations, workers associations, environmental and gender equality organisations...).

In addition, amongst many participants in a large proportion of the MS, there is an impression that final decisions are made by the managing authority during MC meetings regardless of the debate. A certain number of national evaluation reports reveal that several stakeholders consider that decisions are made without involving the MC (although it is the only legitimate place to endorse these decisions) and without taking into consideration the different sector representatives points of view.

These issues related to the effective cooperation within the MC have been highlighted in ten MS evaluation reports (in different terms and to varying degrees): Bulgaria, France, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK. In conclusion, this tends to fail to ensure the representation of all interests.

c. Main findings related to partnership principle in the MS

	Partnership during programme development	Partnership during implementation	Overall evaluation of partnership principle in the MS
Austria	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation despite the absence of associations involved in gender equality issues and the environment.	+
Belgium	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation.	++
Bulgaria	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation despite the absence of environmental NGOs and underrepresentation of the small-scale fishery subsector. In addition, the evaluation report mentions the following limitations ; a lack of effective discussions of the problems in the sector, insufficient knowledge of the EFF as regards the functioning of the MC, and the absence of effective procedures for the subsequent control of MC's decision. Basically, the trust in the MC seems broken due to deteriorated communications with professional organisations, frequent changes in management and lack of instruments for consultation with partners	~
Cyprus	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation.	+

	Partnership during programme development	Partnership during implementation	Overall evaluation of partnership principle in the MS
	number and variety of stakeholders involved.	However; the evaluation reports highlight that the technical capacity of many stakeholders (such as gender equality and environmental NGOs) is very limited, not allowing them to contribute significantly	
Czech Rep	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation.	++
Denmark	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation despite the absence of environmental NGOs.	++
Estonia	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation.	++
Finland	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation.	++
France	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved. However the low involvement of NGOs and management centralisation has generated divergences with overseas regions during programme development.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation although NGOs are absent Some actors do not consider the committee as a forum for dialogue and consultation but rather as the validation chamber for decisions that have already been made	+
Germany	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation despite the absence of environmental NGOs.	+
Greece	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in programme implementation although absence of environment and gender equality organizations.	+
Hungary	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation.	++
Ireland	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation. However evidence of the level of engagement of stakeholders within the Monitoring Committee is mixed.	++
Italy	<i>Not specific conclusion in the report</i>	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation.	+
Latvia	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation. However representatives of some social partners do not attend the meetings at all or attend irregularly.	+
Malta	<i>Not specific conclusion in the report</i>	Good representation of stakeholders in the MC, but their involvement in decision making can be improved	+
Netherlands	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Partnerships are well designed and operate effectively but the involvement of stakeholders is limited.	+

	Partnership during programme development	Partnership during implementation	Overall evaluation of partnership principle in the MS
Poland	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved. However, criticism was expressed by the communities that some of the needs communicated were not fully addressed.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation although absence of gender equality NGOs.	+
Portugal	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation. A rather informative involvement of stakeholders - more than a participative involvement.	+
Romania	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation.	+
Slovakia	The consultation process is assessed as mostly satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Meetings, that involve relatively large number of entities that have no direct relationship to, or little knowledge of, the fisheries sector Meetings tend to be a formality and do not provide members with a sufficiently stimulating environment for expert discussion, finding solutions and comparing alternative proposals.	~
Slovenia	<i>Not specific conclusion in the report</i>	Target groups do not consider the current partnership as sufficiently active and representative.	-
Spain	<i>Not specific conclusion in the report</i>	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in the programme implementation.	+
Sweden	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant sector stakeholders have been involved in programme implementation. Varied perceptions as to the degree to which the different views have been actually observed.	+
UK	The consultation process is assessed as entirely satisfactory as regards the number and variety of stakeholders involved.	Relevant stakeholders of the sector have been involved in programme implementation. PMC member engagement in the process was limited until recently.	+

Source: national evaluation reports

d. Conclusions on the application of the partnership principle

The partnership principle within the Monitoring Committees is respected to a varying degree across the different MS:

- On the one hand, **the consultation process has been considered as satisfactory in terms of the number and variety of stakeholders involved during programme development and launch;**
- On the other hand, **despite a satisfactory representation level of sector representatives and environmental organisations,** the participation of gender equality organisations is rather low, and sometimes non-existent. In addition, **evaluation reports note a lack of actual cooperation within the frame of the MC which fails to ensure the representation of all interests.** Evidence of the level of engagement of stakeholders suggests that the Monitoring Committees have some limitations as a vehicle for interaction among the partners, being a rather formalised structure.

e. Main recommendations

Whilst several reports recommend increasing and improving the involvement of stakeholders in the programme definition and the MC meetings, other recommendations mainly relate to following changes:

- MS have to develop procedures for consulting with partners, including publishing of all proposals received, approved and rejected and the associated justification for such decisions.
- New members have to be invited to improve the MC's composition: Gender equality organisations as a priority, but also scientific research organizations, local municipality associations and agencies for food safety.
- A detailed procedure regarding acceptance/rejection of MC's recommendations, interim assessments and decision implementation should be developed.
- When preparing the following programming period, emphasis should be put on a thorough analysis of absorption capacity (which should be better evaluated, for instance through partners' consultation) and the preparation of a sound programme intervention logic. Based on this logic, selection criteria, indicators and eligible expenditures should be defined.

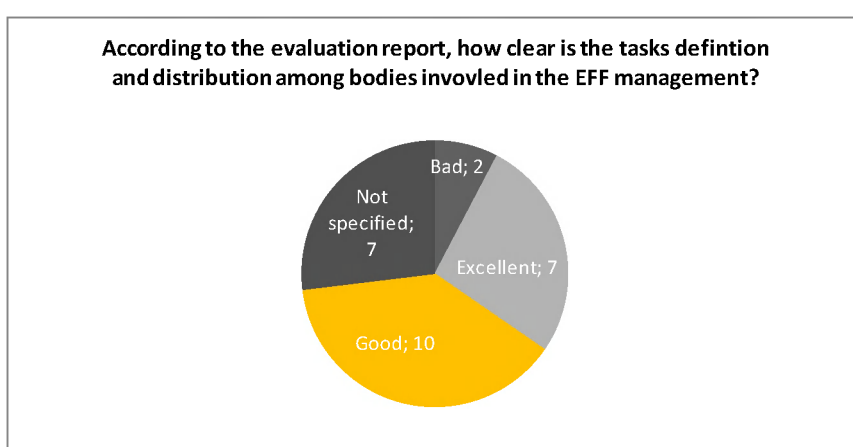
4.2 Overall management and implementation of Programme

a. Management of the programmes

The tasks definition and tasks distribution among bodies involved in the EFF management are considered as good or excellent in a large majority of MS. Overall, this highlights that management systems which have been set up generally function properly and that actors involved in the OP management are satisfied with tasks definition.

The figure below presents how the tasks definition and distribution is assessed in the MS evaluation reports:

Figure 4 - Clarity of tasks distribution



Source: national evaluation reports

However, **several difficulties have been pointed out** in the reports. These difficulties mainly include:

- The high level of regulation may be difficult to understand and interpret for the institutions which are in charge of the programme management. This mainly concerns the EU regulation and more specifically the reporting and control requirements related to the EFF.
- The transfer of competencies between managing bodies has created difficulties in some of the MS. This is related to the change of managing bodies following to the centralisation of OPs with the EFF which has engendered changes and difficulties compared to the FIGG.
- The difficult coordination between central and local levels of management (communication and reporting to the MA is not always effective) has also been emphasized in the reports. This can cause delays in management or variability in the implementation of some procedures.
- Despite some improvements, there is still a heavy administrative burden created by the management system as a whole, especially as regards the audit function which seems disproportionate compared with the size of the programmes.

Although administrative burden remains a problem - which is more specifically described in the following sections related to the various procedures (selection and payment to beneficiaries mainly) - the processes seem have significantly improved in some MS such as Latvia:

Reduction of Administrative Expenditure in Latvia :

- 1. Reports on the implemented projects can be currently submitted electronically in Priority Axes 1-3, yet this facility is used by a relatively small number of beneficiaries;*
- 2. No agreements are concluded with the beneficiaries; instead, a decision in the form of an administrative act is sent out, which helps reduce administrative costs and save time;*
- 3. The available administrative resources are used more efficiently: for example, the RSS has managed to implement funding ten times that of the previous period by using the same human resources (10M in 2004-2006 and 114M in 2007-2013);*
- 4. The employees' skills in both the RSS [intermediate body] and the MoA have improved, which allows work to be done more efficiently.*

Industry associations also recognise the management progress in comparison with the previous planning period

Quote from the Latvian evaluation report

Focus on some main findings related to programme management in a few select MS

The following table presents several key conclusions in a sample of MS:

Programme management main conclusions	
MS with improved system (experience, new organisation...)	
Latvia	Management system is effective. Several electronic solutions have been integrated in the EFF management and implementation system and access of the RSS to databases of other institutions has been improved, thus reducing the administrative burden and improving the effectiveness of supervision.
Netherlands	Although it prevents projects smaller than 100.000 Euros from being selected, including for Axis 4, management system is rather effective. The decentralization has enabled greater clarity in the definition of roles and functions.
MS with effective system, yet with some areas of improvement	
Bulgaria	Overall, the management system is perceived as effective in the evaluation reports thanks to significant progress in capacity building. Some problems remain due to several MA changes and staff turnover.
France	Management system is complex but relevant by being close to field actors and with a technical and administrative distribution of tasks.
Germany	Management system is effective. The report lists some difficulties: high level of regulation, high level of control and legal uncertainty.
Ireland	<p>The management of the Programme has faced some criticism in terms of the quality of its reporting, and for its role in providing the Secretariat for the Monitoring Committee (management performance in these areas has however improved over time).</p> <p>A possible issue of concern for the future might be the Programme management's ongoing ability to provide the resources to run the Programme, and whether it is likely to come under pressure because of the wider context of planned spending cuts in Irish public administration. In this regard, it is notable that the level of activity under the Programme is currently quite low, it will have to grow considerably if it is to ensure full drawdown of EFF support and achievement of objectives, and this puts further pressure on management resources.</p> <p>Also, the Programme does not currently provide a technical assistance budget (see chapter related to Axis 5), which could help to guarantee that the Programme has sufficient management and administrative resources to ensure its proper implementation.</p>
Slovenia	The weight of the administrative burdens is strongly emphasised and creates delays and ineffectiveness in OP's implementation.
Sweden	Management system is effective but cooperation between MA and local bodies could be improved (processing time for applications can be reduced).
MS with significant areas of improvement	

	Programme management main conclusions
UK	<p>Management system is moderately effective.</p> <p>The transfer from the MFA to MMO was not a smooth one and contributed to problems in programme implementation;</p> <p>Lack of a consistent, integrated database is a major flaw;</p> <p>High administrative complexity because of simple reporting pro formas, a single programme database have has been developed in a timely manner, and additional requirements and procedures in devolved administrations adding to the administrative burden.</p>
Greece	<p>The Management System has some significant deficiencies. The main issue remains the minimum efficiency of the "Special Implementation Service of the OP for Fisheries"(Intermediate body responsible for the implementation of axes 1, 2 and 3).</p>

Source: national evaluation reports

NB: even if this does not clearly appear in the evaluation reports, it must be stressed that decentralised countries such as Spain or Italy have met with major problems of coordination between a central Managing Authority and devolved administrations and/or Intermediate Bodies (as underlined by the February 2011 EFF interim evaluation performed at EU level as well as by DG MARE desks officers).

b. Communication

Sixteen (16) MS have set up a communication plan on the EFF; all of them (when information is available in the evaluation reports) have conducted information and communication actions. The nature and type of communication activities are similar in most MS. The most commonly used means for communication and information of the (potential) beneficiaries include:

- Organisation of public events: conferences, workshops, fora.
- Media broadcasting: press articles in national and regional papers, publications in sector media.
- Implementation of a website dedicated to the EFF (or a web page on the website of the MA).
- Organisation of information meetings with stakeholders (meetings dedicated to one measure or priority axis or linked to the release of call for proposals)
- Preparation of communication and information materials (brochures, kits, posters, goodies....).

Examples of innovative communication actions

In Latvia: Some innovative communication tools were used by the Ministry of Agriculture as well as the RSS and the Fishery cooperation network. For instance, following actions are good examples:

- *Preparation of a video clip about the best projects cofinanced by the FIFG and EFF implemented in 3 regions of Latvia and was broadcast by regional TV channels and distributed on electronic data carrier.*
- *7 conferences organised: 4 conferences "Development for the Countryside – Development for Latvia" (2007) / 1 conference "Opportunities of Development of the Latvian Fisheries Sector Under the EFF for 2007-2013" (2008) on the opportunities offered by the EFF, / 2 international conferences: "EFF and Opportunities for Development of Eastern Baltic Aquaculture" (2008) and "EFF and Opportunities for Development of Fishing and Aquaculture Product Processing" (2009)*
- *Information on OP measures and current events in the implementation thereof was published in the yearbooks Latvian Fisheries in 2008 and 2009, which is one of the main sources of information for the representatives of the fisheries industry.*

In Greece: the management authority has carried out an emailing campaign to stakeholders.

Evaluation reports assess the impact of these communication actions as generally being very positive on EFF knowledge by the potential beneficiaries in a large majority of MS (15 out of 17 MS for which the evaluation report addresses the issue).

Despite these positive conclusions, some negative observations have also been made on communication as well as some difficulties highlighted. Three main difficulties have been faced by MS in this regard:

- Communication material remained unclear; this relates to either the objectives of the programme (and therefore the potential eligibility of a beneficiary) or the procedures for application and selection, which remain difficult to understand for potential beneficiaries.
- Many evaluation reports emphasise that communication actions were focused on some measures of the programme and therefore were not exhaustive. The parts of the programme described as the most commonly “forgotten” by communication actions are collective actions and Priority axis 4. However, this might be explained by the priority axes on which each MS has decided to focus in the implementation of its own OP.
- Evaluation reports often mention that communication actions experience difficulties in reaching the smaller beneficiaries (small enterprises or individual fishermen).

Main findings related to communication and information in the MS

	Communication and Information	Global evaluation of communication in the MS
Austria	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Belgium	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Bulgaria	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Cyprus	Communication and information actions have been rather effective. Although the communication and promotion programme was one of the main priorities, the guide distributed to fishermen seems not to be 100% clear (according to fishermen's interviews).	+
Czech Rep	Communication and information actions have been rather effective. Beneficiaries find the procedures linked to submitting applications understandable but, in their opinion, some of the descriptions or formulations are ambiguous and most of the beneficiaries therefore verify the information from multiple sources.	+
Denmark	Communication and information actions have been effective. 85% of recipients of EFF support answer in a survey that "information is very clear". There are a few complaints about the language (academic and technical), claiming they would like a more simple and basic language in the communication.	++
Estonia	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Finland	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
France	Communication mainly reaches already identified stakeholders and beneficiaries but is quite passive towards reaching new potential beneficiaries.	+
Germany	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Greece	Communication and information actions have been effective. So far (1st and 2nd Phase) it has focused on potential beneficiaries with specialized and focused activities. The 3rd phase will focus on general public for disseminating OP's results.	++
Hungary	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Ireland	Communication and information actions have been rather effective. - On the positive side, the Programme appears to have attracted a reasonably good	+

	Communication and Information	Global evaluation of communication in the MS
	<p>response to its call for proposals, with 140 applications received.</p> <p>- On the negative side, the Programme has found it difficult so far to generate enough applications to produce a healthy level of project approvals and subsequent Programme expenditure.</p>	
Italy	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Latvia	Information is sufficient and accessible. However, the results of a survey show that the beneficiaries under Axis 2 find the information less sufficient (61% find it sufficient vs 81% under Axis 1).	++
Malta	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Netherlands	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Poland	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
Portugal	<p>Communication and information actions have been moderately effective.</p> <p>First tool to communicate: websites that are generally viewed as complicated to browse, poorly organized.</p>	~
Romania	<p>Communication and information actions have been moderately effective.</p> <p>Advertising tools have to be diversified.</p>	~
Slovakia	<p>Communication and information actions have been moderately effective.</p> <p>In addition to lack of focus on objectives, which are not clearly set out in the communication plan, a potential obstacle to the effectiveness of the communication campaign is that the MA does not evaluate the success of information activities. Applicants positively assessed the level of communication by the ministry. In most cases, the information provided was relevant and up-to-date.</p>	~
Slovenia	<p>Communication and information actions have been moderately effective.</p> <p>The information about European structures, European funds, their significance and the ways to draw them effectively are not accessible to a wide audience.</p>	~
Spain	⁵	
Sweden	Communication and information actions have been effective.	++
UK	<p>Communication and information actions have been effective.</p> <p>Significant efforts have been made (and Axis 5 funds used) in promoting the EFF programme and the funding available for specific measures.</p> <p>The various promotional tools used have ensured awareness of the programme amongst most prospective applicants.</p>	++

Source: national evaluation reports

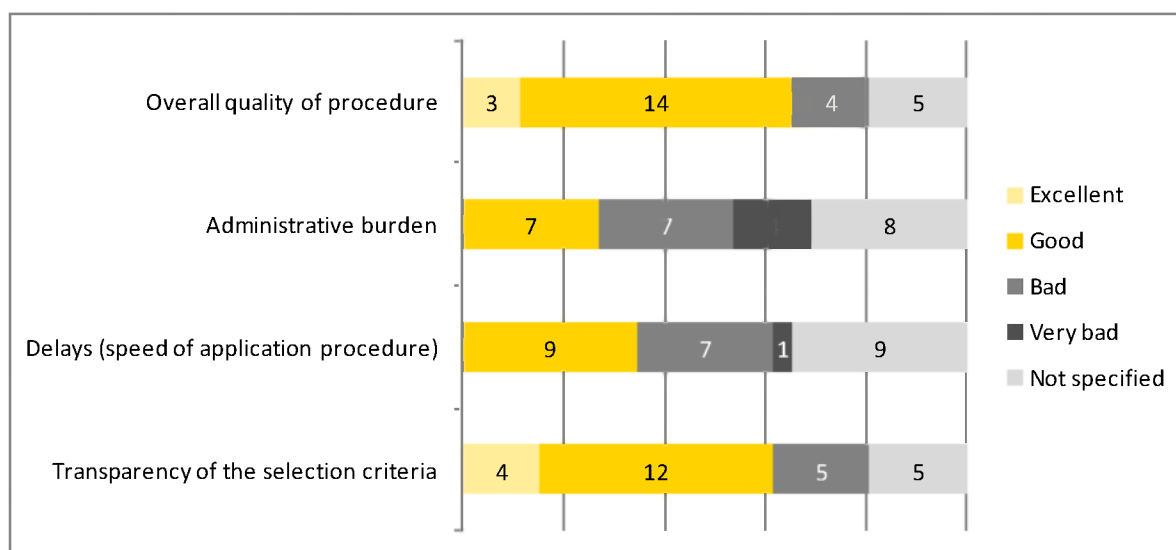
c. Selection procedure

The assessment of the selection procedure as a whole is rather good according the evaluation reports.

The selection procedure is mainly assessed through 4 main criteria: the administrative burden, the speed of application procedure, the transparency of selection criteria and the overall effectiveness of the process. The figure below presents the conclusions according to the 26 national evaluation reports.

⁵ A second report dealing with communication issues was drafted in Spain, but was not used within the framework of this synthesis

Figure 5 - Assessment of selection procedure quality



When analysing in detail the different aspects of these procedures, the evaluation is more heterogeneous:

- Selection criteria are considered as transparent in most MS;
- However, delays and the administrative burden are often cited as negatively impacting this procedure.

Despite a general improvement compared to FIGF emphasized in several reports, the administrative burden remains a problem to achieving an effective implementation of the programme. The most frequent issues related to administrative burden are the following:

- Large number of documents required;
- Overlapping of required information;
- Changes in the course of the procedure;
- Time needed to fulfil the procedures.

The administrative problems faced by MS are relatively similar. The first of them is the quantity of documentation that is required to be included in the request for financing. Examples of very rare and complicated-to-obtain documents that were required for application are given in the evaluation reports. Moreover, some of the documents contain similar information, but are required regardless. Consequently, it may be very long and complicated to apply for an EFF funding, mostly for small structures or individual fishermen or fish farmers.

The issue of the time spent for applications is underscored in several reports. Administrative procedures are often perceived as too long and complicated. Cases of administrative changes in the course of the procedure in a number of calls for proposals have also been mentioned.

In brief, the administrative burden remains a major obstacle to effective EFF implementation.

Gender and environment related selection criteria exist in only about half of the MS.

Main findings related to selection procedure in the MS

	Communication and Information	Global evaluation of selection procedure in the MS
Austria	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++

	Communication and Information	Global evaluation of selection procedure in the MS
Belgium	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Bulgaria	<p>Project selection procedures effectiveness has been assessed as bad.</p> <p>This assessment was expected since no capacity assessment was made, no experience of the staff, no technical assistance for procedure development was provided, no exchange of experience with other member state. Acting under pressure for quick opening of the program, the MA was frequently changed and the staff were not motivated due to complicated requirements Transparency of the selection criteria is low.</p>	-
Cyprus	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Czech Rep	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Denmark	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Estonia	<p>Project selection procedures have been effective.</p> <p>Estonia has chosen an approach where the measure decrees are setting higher standards for eligible costs than EU rules request. This means that the pre-selection is tight and that is why the role of selection criteria is less important and actually the transparency of the process is higher. Usually there is an only one selection criterion: the level of private co-financing or project implementation with smallest budget.</p>	++
Finland	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
France	<p>Project selection procedures effectiveness has been assessed as average.</p> <p>-Assistance only focuses on a few measures</p> <p>-Despite improvements compared to 2000-2006, delays and administrative burdens remain too complex and heavy</p>	-
Germany	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Greece	<p>Project selection procedures have been effective.</p> <p>Besides the general delays in publishing relevant calls overall the project selection and application procedure is ok. It should be mentioned though that very few projects have been approved in order to reach safe conclusions</p>	+
Hungary	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Ireland	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Italy	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Latvia	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Malta	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Netherlands	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++
Poland	<p>Project selection procedures have been moderately effective.</p> <p>The system for selection of applications chosen for the Operational Programme, which is based on the order of correct and complete applications for co-financing (so-called "Olympic system", consisting in a "first arrived first served" principle), resulted in a situation where operations selected for implementation were not always the ones with the highest potential of benefits to the fisheries.</p>	~
Portugal	<p>Project selection procedures have been moderately effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Criteria are uniformly applied on the whole 	~

	Communication and Information	Global evaluation of selection procedure in the MS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some subjectivity remains in the evaluation process 	
Romania	<p>Project selection procedures have been moderately effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluator considers that the request's evaluation process is too rigid There is a need to introduce a fully automated document management system covering all phases of the project 	~
Slovakia	<p>Project selection procedures have been moderately effective.</p> <p>Administrative burden is significant (dates of calls not known in advance, changes in originally given information), delays are faced and transparency of criteria is insufficient.</p>	~
Slovenia	<p>Project selection procedures effectiveness has been assessed as poor.</p> <p>Administrative burden is significant (interviewees pointed out the requests by institutions to provide documents which are sometimes contradictory or do not even exist.),</p> <p>Delays are faced (the application approval procedure at the IB can last up to six months. Requests for concessions and various permits, which are difficult to obtain, either at EARS or other competent institutions responsible for issuing individual decisions, further prolong the application approval procedure.</p> <p>And transparency of criteria is insufficient (an additional deterrent for the beneficiaries are instances where the application was prepared with the help of a CAFS representative and was still rejected despite expert assistance).</p>	-
Spain	/	
Sweden	<p>Project selection procedures have been moderately effective.</p> <p>Selection criteria should be clearer and the procedure more transparent. The time for processing application is too long.</p>	~
UK	Project selection procedures have been effective.	++

Source: national evaluation reports

d. Payments

Payment delays are a major challenge in the implementation of EU funds in general. The FIG implementation was no exception. The evaluation reports mention major payment delays to beneficiaries in six MS (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Portugal, Romania and Sweden) whilst the payment process appears to be satisfactory in other MS (Finland, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Malta...).

Evaluation reports mention numerous reasons explaining why MS face payment delays.

Most of them are related to the time required by the different authorities (MA and PA mainly) to control payment claims and proceed to payment. The elapsed time between claim date and date of payment to the beneficiaries varies (for example: 3 months in the UK, 80 days in Czech Republic) and the beneficiaries often express their concern and dissatisfaction with the time taken to make payments, as this might complicate their circumstances, e.g. in relation to loans that they have to repay. The main concerns are the following:

- A lack of experience in managing EU funds by the administrative services in charge. There may be a shortage of human resources to face the increasing volume of approved applications and therefore an increasing effort required to monitor and ensure the payments (Romania)
- The absence of guidance for payment procedures (at managing bodies level), meaning there are no clearly defined processes with strong deadlines to meet (Bulgaria);
- Complicated workflow and time-consuming procedures, especially as regards processing payment claims and responding (Portugal). This administrative burden occurs predominantly

during checks and controls (For example, in Belgium, the regulations with regard to the control and management of the projects in the program are considered as heavy in terms of administrative burden, especially for small programs).

- Inefficiencies due to the implementation of new information systems, which may also impact the payment process (Greece).

Other reasons are related to the beneficiaries themselves:

- In Bulgaria, it is observed that beneficiaries have insufficient information about examination/verification before payment, which results in delays in sending and validating claims. This generates lack of trust and concerns that the intermediate body has the power to reject each expense made.
- The UK report highlights that there can be a considerable delay in the applicants' submission of claims. As this increases the risk of de-commitment, it is in the IBs interests to pursue applicants and assist with claim submission:

"The UK uses facilitation in each IB. Experience shows that facilitation is beneficial and can be conducted successfully in a number of ways, but the IB must maintain good oversight of services and seek feedback for areas of improvement.

England produces a well laid out and comprehensive monthly report using a reporting template to reduce administrative burden. Reporting templates are now available to all IBs.

Scotland IB has shown the benefits of maintaining close links with other relevant departments to identify funding opportunities and ensure priorities remain relevant.

Northern Ireland meets with all applicants of approved projects to explain the offer letter and associated conditions (Letter of Offer Presentation Meeting). This may not be possible in all IB countries as the volume of applicants would exceed available resources, but this activity could be prioritised by a risk assessment system.

Northern Ireland also operates a mentoring process with approved projects to check progress, timing of spend, etc. This identifies issues arising and reduces the risk of de-commitment."

Quote from the UK evaluation report

Despite these remaining problems, some progress has been noted by some national evaluators thanks to the improvement in terms of administrative burden. This is, for example, the case of Latvia or, to a smaller extent, the UK.

e. Conclusions on programme management

Most evaluation reports reach the conclusion that the management and control systems in place are rather satisfactory, with clear and efficient coordination between the different structures involved in programme management, despite some different evolutions and characteristics. Some difficulties faced in the management of the programmes relate to:

- The transfer of competencies between managing bodies due to the centralisation of OPs, which involved some shifts in roles and responsibilities between Government Departments and the need to recruit and train new staff;
- The coordination between central and local levels of management;
- The knowledge and understanding of the EFF regulation.

As regards the different steps and processes underpinning the Programme, evaluation reports draw the following main conclusions:

- The **impact of communication activities** on the level of EFF knowledge by the potential beneficiaries is good for a large majority of MS.
- Despite a general improvement compared to FIGF emphasised in several reports, the **administrative burden remains a problem in achieving an effective implementation of the programme**. The most frequent issues related to administrative burden are the followings:
 - Large number of documents required;
 - Overlapping/duplication of required information;
 - Changes in the course of the procedure;
 - Time needed to fulfil the procedures.
- Some difficulties have been faced in several MS regarding payment delays and beneficiaries often express their concern and dissatisfaction, which has to be linked mainly with some remaining administrative burden at authorities' level.

f. Main recommendations

A large number of evaluation reports recommend the **simplification of control and management systems (reduction of administrative burden, more timely procedures, better information to potential beneficiaries etc....)**.

Beyond this general recommendation, evaluation reports make the following key recommendations in relation to programme management systems:

Bulgaria	<p>Review (peer review) of the selection criteria and payment terms.</p> <p>Banks to be involved in the assessment stage of the projects.</p> <p>Make a regular assessment of the identified problems by beneficiaries in the application and implementation stage and provision of feedbacks.</p>
Czech Republic	<p>The support of gender equality should be more strongly emphasised in selection criteria, wherever applicable and useful (e.g. in Measures 3.1 or 3.4). As follows e.g. from Article 37 of EFF Regulation, the fund can provide support for measures of common interest where one of the objectives is setting up networks and organising exchanges of experience and best practice among organisations promoting equal opportunities of men and women and other entities involved.</p> <p>Define a maximum time for payments.</p>
Hungary	<p>A flow chart should be prepared and published to describe the protocol of the FOP from the project idea to the end of the operating cycle.</p>
Ireland	<p>More direct engagement with the industry organisations or wider stakeholders to let them know about Programme activities, e.g. e-mail circulars regarding upcoming calls for proposals.</p>
Slovenia	<p>Both in the MS and other MS, MA should explore the possibilities and best practices in relation to provision of additional expert assistance for the preparation of applications and payment claims.</p> <p>Technical specialisation of one or more individuals in the existing legal department that would resolve and advise on legal issues regarding OP Fisheries.</p>
UK	<p>Introduce a simple Risk Assessment System for approved projects to assess likelihood of de-committed funds. This would flag high risk projects (e.g. accounting for large amounts of committed spend, complex and/or multiple project components & partners, long lead in times, etc.) to help prioritise mentoring with applicants. / Establish the most appropriate funding instalments for projects and set dates for these planned instalments as part of a Risk Assessment System and monitoring.</p>
Several MS	<p>Recommendations to reduce administrative burdens:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require some of the document only after validation of the funding of a project. 2. Define and harmonise at EU level a limited number of required documents. 3. Develop electronic dematerialized procedures. 4. Build a common system of project selection criteria for all the MS.

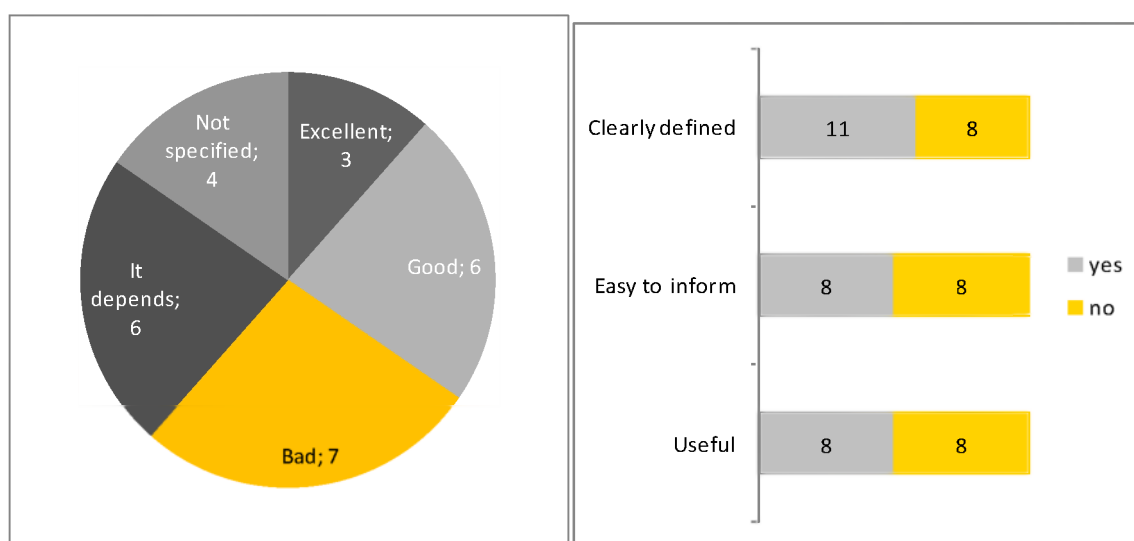
4.3 Programme monitoring

a. Overall analyses

First of all, the majority of MS use a centralized computerized monitoring system. Only two MS do not have computerized system according to evaluation reports (UK and Slovenia; 7 reports do not comment on this matter).

Indicators identified by the MS vary significantly in terms of clarity of definition, ability to inform, and usefulness...:

Figure 6 - Quality of indicators information (left) and evaluation of indicators (right)



Source: national evaluation reports

Overall, the quality of their information also varies significantly. There are more MS for which indicators are evaluated negatively than they are positively.

The assessment of indicators is also heterogeneous as regards the priority axes. It is generally good on Axis 1 and more complicated on Axes 3 or 4.

According to the evaluation reports, the main problems regarding indicators and the monitoring system in general are:

- The monitoring remains mostly financial and administrative (most MS);
- No clear definition of indicators (both indicators defined in EU Regulation and some national indicators): content and interpretation of indicators are not sufficiently agreed upon (France, Estonia, Ireland, Sweden, etc.);
- There is no connection between the different types of indicators (output, result, impact) and thus no way to ensure that measured results and impacts are actually directly or indirectly linked to EFF outputs (Estonia, UK, etc.);
- Incorrectness of data collection and errors when entering data in the monitoring systems (Finland, France, etc.);
- Lack of (or problems with) computerised monitoring systems in several MS (Greece, Portugal, Poland, etc.);
- Many indicators are assessed as useless; some reports mention irrelevant indicators which are not adapted to programme evolutions;
- Lack of gender and environment related indicators (*see chapter 7*);

Examples of insufficiencies are mentioned in the Latvian evaluation report; some data are purely declarative, whilst other objective indicators are not reliable as they lack a clear definition:

“A drawback of the data Monitoring System is the fact that the reliability of certain data is backed up only by the opinion of the project implementers, which are a subjective data source, and the fact that certain objective data indicators (enterprise financial statements) lack important supplementary information, for example, the year which this indicator applies to”.

Quote from the Latvian evaluation report

b. Main findings related to monitoring system in the MS

	Communication and Information	Global evaluation of monitoring system in the MS
Austria	Monitoring system has been effective.	++
Belgium	Monitoring system has been rather effective. However the indicators do not always capture the evolutions or the progress made at the level of the priorities. The global focus is less quantitative than intended and included in the Operational Plan.	+
Bulgaria	Monitoring system has been ineffective. Progress is being evaluated by the means of financial indicators and indicators for number of approved and paid projects. All other indicators are being used only of reporting purposes (Annual report). No connection between output indicators and result indicators Small number of output indicators Insufficient indicators for monitoring quality Reliable and accurate information data which is also easy to collect on a project basis	-
Cyprus	Monitoring system has been effective.	++
Czech Rep	Monitoring system has been rather effective.	+
Denmark	Monitoring system has been effective.	++
Estonia	Monitoring system has been effective.	++
Finland	Monitoring system has been rather effective. However the quality and definition of indicators should be improved as their usefulness in terms of evaluating the program results is not good.	+
France	Monitoring system has been rather effective. Monitoring system has been improved thanks to the use of the information system Presage as management tool. The monitoring however remains mostly financial and administrative, and does not allow to measure in a perfectly reliable way the physical advancement of the programme as well as its results and impacts.	+
Germany	Monitoring system has been effective.	++
Greece	Monitoring system has been rather effective. No actual impact indicators have been created besides the creation of new employment	+

	Communication and Information	Global evaluation of monitoring system in the MS
	positions from grants.	
Hungary	<p>Monitoring system has been moderately effective.</p> <p>From the current structure of monitoring data it is impossible to draw any conclusions (even if the provided information is correct) that would inform us about the achievement of the objectives of the OPF or the NFSP, even if the monitoring data contain crucial information and they comply with the requirements of the Infosys system.</p> <p>Access to monitoring data is difficult, which is reflected in the fact that although the deadline for the submission of data was 18 March, no exact data was available for the Managing Authority and the ARDA even on 19 May.</p>	~
Ireland	<p>Monitoring system has been moderately effective.</p> <p>The indicators used for Axis 1 have proved to be very useful, and give a reliable and timely account of the outcomes that the Axis has sought to achieve, i.e. they clearly demonstrate the number of vessels and the level of GTs and KWs that have been removed from the whitefish fleet. Similarly, the sole output indicator for Axis 4 sets a clear target for what it has set out to achieve, even though it is now clear that this target will not be met.</p> <p>Indicators listed in the Programme document for Axis 3, however, raise a number of issues. In particular, given the changes that have taken place in the implementation of the Axis, many original Programme indicators are no longer relevant to the activities being funded. Also, if these indicators are still relevant, what defines some of them is unclear and could be better spelled out, e.g. what constitutes an environmental management plan. Furthermore, other issues that would have to be addressed are whether: (i) the realism, reliability and data quality for indicators is robust; (ii) the assumptions underlying targets for the Programme are robust; (iii) there is a clear "cause-and-effect" relationship between the investment/interventions proposed and the targets being set.</p> <p>Finally, in terms of impact, the overall Programme targets are hard to relate to Programme activity. This is because the implementation of this Programme forms only a small part of the suite of actions geared towards implementing the national seafood strategy, so progress in achieving industry wide targets for seafood sales and employment can be directly attributed to the Programme.</p>	~
Italy	<p>Monitoring system has been rather effective.</p> <p>The program monitoring system is rather effective. There is nonetheless some difficulty in delivering the information requested by Annex III of Reg. 498/2007.</p>	+
Latvia	<p>Monitoring system has been moderately effective.</p> <p>The data is systematically aggregated in the Monitoring System, which ensures monitoring and contains indicators according to the requirements of the EC and additional information on the beneficiaries.</p> <p>Feeding the data into the Monitoring System ensures an adequate data quality, but the data on the planned and achieved result indicators is not examined as to the compliance of its origin to the actual situation. Therefore, there is a risk that in certain cases the presented data may reflect the subjective opinion of the provider of information. In certain cases the indicators also lack important additional information.</p>	~
Malta	Monitoring system has been effective.	++
Netherlands	<p>Monitoring system has been moderately effective.</p> <p>The collection of data takes place, but the system is not automated sufficiently. Problems with reliability arise. In addition, the correctness of the financial data is subject to the risk of manual entering of data.</p>	~
Poland	<p>Monitoring system has been effective.</p> <p>However the IT system, which is still in the development stage, does not provide full information on indicators, particularly on values of assumed indicators of implementation of operations, which are included in applications for co-financing.</p> <p>In addition, databases and reports generated from INFOSYS contain numerous errors resulting from errors in entering data to the system. It is necessary to verify indicators collected in INFOSYS.</p>	+
Portugal	Monitoring system has been moderately effective.	~

	Communication and Information	Global evaluation of monitoring system in the MS
	The information system overall organization does not allow an effective follow-up of the OP implementation - be it on a financial basis, be it in terms of results and impacts	
Romania	Monitoring system has been moderately effective. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The monitoring is realised through the system of indicators which offer basic data, but which is insufficient. • At the level of Operational Program, the indicator system requires completion and amelioration in order to have permanently in sight the impact of the program, the efficiency of resource allocation and to enable improvements on the way. 	~
Slovakia	Monitoring system has been moderately effective. <p>The range of monitored indicators changes relatively often, which reduces the clarity of the situation and makes an exact comparison of data impossible, particularly in the longer term.</p>	~
Slovenia	Monitoring system has been ineffective. <p>There is no established way of monitoring and gathering (unified) data at one place. These types of tasks are not assigned to particular individuals, nor are there any persons explicitly responsible for their performance.</p>	-
Spain	Monitoring system has been effective. Impact indicators should be improved	+
Sweden	Monitoring system has been moderately effective. <p>Indicators have been unclearly defined (each single indicator is not specified). There have been a lot of difficulties to find out what they actually mean.</p>	~
UK	Monitoring system has been moderately effective. <p>Programme monitoring procedures are in place and being undertaken, but to date this remains reactive to reporting requirements and is not sufficiently coordinated to enable continuous oversight of programme implementation.</p> <p>The indicators used at a programme level are sector-based. The influence of EFF on some, such as fleet capacity, can be readily shown. However, other indicators such as sector GVA are influenced by many variables and establishing the EFF programme's impact on these will be difficult. Most targets and results indicators are too sector-focused which makes it difficult to establish what influence EFF has had on these indicators and how programme implementation could be amended to address results.</p> <p>Monitoring at a project level is undertaken by each IB. The lack of a finalized MCS document and to a certain extent the varied requirements of devolved administrations has led to differing approaches to monitoring by the IBs. Data collection in relation to indicators at a project level continues to be developed by IBs with amendments to existing databases.</p>	~

Source: national evaluation reports

c. Conclusions on programme monitoring

Monitoring Systems as a whole work well, but the quality and definitions of indicators should be improved. The usefulness of the indicators system in terms of evaluating the programmes' results is not good.

- Progress is being evaluated by the means of financial indicators as well as indicators for number of approved and paid projects. Although most MS have defined other indicators to measure impacts and results, these are being used only for reporting purposes (Annual report).
- EC's output indicators are monitored in compliance with EFF regulation (annex 3 of EFF regulation), but some evaluation reports have noted that these mandatory indicators are numerous, not always relevant and adapted, and do not allow to have an actual physical monitoring of programme's effectiveness.

- Other problems on indicators are the following:
 - The data is not always entered correctly or timely into the system.
 - The definition of indicators is not clear, which may result in different interpretation. This is also the case of annex 3 indicators that are not fully understood and thus not fully reliable.
 - The result/impact indicators do not clearly measure the impact of the programme and are influenced mainly by external factors.

d. Main recommendations

A general recommendation is to improve the quality of indicators, especially as regards clarification and better definition. It is also recommended to develop the monitoring of results and impacts, which can only be achieved through an improvement of impact indicators.

Here is a list of significant recommendations that could apply to most MS:

- Sweden: **Review the indicators and clarify what the outcome and performance indicators are.**
- UK: **Better spell out indicators' definition** (for instance: what constitutes an environmental management plan?).
- UK: **Better link impact indicators with the EFF outputs.** To do so, additional programme level targets should be defined that are derived from aggregating project outputs. These will provide a connection between programme spending and the existing programme level targets such as GVA and turnover. For example, the programme contribution to growth in aquaculture & processing capacity needs to be established before its influence on sector turnover can be estimated
- Denmark: **Supplement existing indicators with new indicators based on actual projects. Axis 4 indicators should be made and collected/calculated.**
- Slovakia: **Pay more attention to the regular analysis of monitoring system data and the development of contextual indicators in the fisheries sector that are of fundamental importance for the MA** and have a direct impact at the level of the management and guidance of interventions. Such analyses enable correct, flexible decision-making and prompt reactions where necessary.

5 Synthesis of answers to the evaluation questions on the effectiveness

Methodological note/ reminder: In this section as well as in the following ones related to each priority axis, financial data are as follows:

- Overall commitments per MS and per priority axis are sourced from national implementation reports as at 31.12.2010 (except for 3 MS for which financial data from the national evaluation report were used, as those from national implementation reports were too different and not consistent with analyses made)
- Commitments per measure under each priority axis (chapters 5.1 to 5.4) are sourced from the EU interim evaluation report issued on February 2011 (NB: no data was provided per measure for UK; and data for Slovenia and Latvia reveal some inconsistencies between measure level and total Axis level data. For this reason, these three MS have been excluded from the Measure-level analysis).

These two different sources (at different cut-off dates) explain the discrepancies existing between total commitments per priority axis and total commitments per measure.

5.1 Overall effectiveness

*This section provides a summary of main analyses, conclusions and recommendations made in response to the evaluation question **EQ6: What is the programmes' state of progress at the end of 2010?***

a. Overall state of implementation and effectiveness

View by MS

MS	EFF programmed	EFF committed (1)	% EFF committed
AT	5 259 318	5 259 318	100%
CY	19 724 418	14 485 902	73%
IE	42 266 603	27 726 844	66%
BE	26 100 000	15 786 562	60%
CZ	27 106 675	15 528 750	57%
DK	133 675 169	75 800 000	57%
SE	54 664 803	30 398 330	56%
LV	125 015 563	67 692 232	54%
NL	48 578 417	23 443 310	48%
PT	246 485 249	117 404 171	48%
LT	54 713 408	26 019 799	48%
EE	84 568 039	40 199 377	48%
FR	216 053 084	102 063 000	47%
UK	137 827 889	60 413 258	44%
ES	1 131 890 907	461 566 100	41%
PL	734 091 950	251 393 033	34%
DE	155 865 417	53 091 612	34%
SI	21 640 283	6 936 859	32%
IT	424 342 854	131 622 122	31%
FI	39 448 827	11 778 980	30%

MS	EFF programmed	EFF committed (1)	% EFF committed
HU	34 850 860	10 333 972	30%
SK	13 688 528	3 831 904	28%
EL	207 832 237	38 888 767	19%
MT	8 372 329	916 072	11%
BG	80 009 708	7 540 390	9%
RO	230 714 207	13 042 720	6%
TOTAL	4 304 786 742	1 613 163 385	37%

(1) source: annual report, except for France, Germany and Slovenia: evaluation report

View by priority axis

From a priority axis perspective, as at 31 December 2010, commitments by axis amounted to 47% of total EFF budget (M€ 575) for Axis 1, 43% (M€ 518) for Axis 2, 40% (M€ 451) for Axis 3, 6% (M€ 34) for Axis 4 and 21% (M€ 35) for Axis 5.

Axis 4 achievement rate is the lowest, indicating that whilst groups have been formed, FLAG group projects are generally still in the very early stages of implementation.

Priority axis	EFF programmed	EFF committed	% EFF committed
1	1 215 945 251	574 765 343	47%
2	1 214 932 743	517 854 549	43%
3	1 133 285 167	451 124 497	40%
4	572 606 774	34 325 893	6%
5	168 016 807	35 093 103	21%
TOTAL	4 304 786 742	1 613 163 385	37%

Source: annual report, except for France, Germany and Slovenia: evaluation report

b. Main reasons for success or failure

General reasons:

The main reasons explaining delays in implementation are twofold:

- **Limited co-financing:** the unfavourable economic environment and uncertainties regarding future developments have limited access to debt financing (higher interest rates, requirements for additional collateral, etc.) (Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovenia, Ireland...). Projects are thus much smaller scale than initially envisaged.
- **Late launch of programmes, mostly due to delays in the validation of OP and management and control system,** which have adversely affected the implementation process of all measures under the OP (Malta, Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy)

Some reasons are specific to certain MS:

- Limited knowledge of the programme at the initial stage and uncertainty regarding procedures/monitoring and repayment frequency (Bulgaria)
- Lack of experience in structuring such projects (Bulgaria)
- Administrative problems (Greece: changes in responsible ministry, insufficiencies within the intermediate body...)

Conversely, some success factors are mentioned, and include efficient administration and greater interest from the sector.

The table below summarizes the main reasons for success and failure of the different programmes. These reasons are further expanded upon in the following sections relating to each priority axis.

	Success factors	Failure factors
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efficient administration - Interest from the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited access to co-financing (public/ private) - Late OP and/or MCS approval - Insufficient stimuli for the beneficiaries to submit applications (information, communication) - Inefficient administration/ administrative burden
Axis 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Classic" measures, existing since 1992 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial crisis has hampered the use of measure 1.3 (investments on board) and 1.4 (small-scale fisheries). - Hygiene requirements, deck repairs, etc., are not vitally important for the improvement of the operation of the vessel
Axis 2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of a precise definition and unsuitability of animal health and public health measures
Axis 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good cooperation between actors (DE) - Measures perceived as useful and flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HU: Managing Authority thinks the delayed launch may contribute to the success of the realisation of the strategic objectives with regard to the fact that the Managing Authority maintains that the first step should be technological development and then, when the sector is ready to satisfy increased demand, marketing programmes stimulating fish consumption can be launched. - Administrative burden, which is related to the procurement procedures – for example, if only one bidder enters the procurement procedure, additional time is required to ascertain the validity of prices.
Axis 4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New measure introduced in the OP 2007-2013: some time to adapt has therefore been necessary - Allocations are too small to warrant implementation for some regions - The local governments are not interested in the measure "Development of communities", since it is not possible to fund the most important infrastructure, for example, renovate roads (LV) with the present amount of available funding.

5.2 Effectiveness of Axis 1

This section provides a summary of main analyses, conclusions and recommendations made in response to the evaluation question EQ7: What are the preliminary results achieved by the Axis 1 projects (when applicable) in relation to mid-term targets of the OP?

Axis 1 sets up measures for the adaptation of the Community fishing fleet. This section seeks to assess the progress made under this priority axis, and more precisely regarding the likely results and effects of the implementation of the programme on the adjustment of fishing effort. Evaluation reports were supposed to focus especially on the measures implemented to respond to the fuel crisis, in particular when Fleet Adaptation Schemes have been adopted. Special attention was also to be paid to the consistency between conservation measures and the expected socio-economic impacts.

a. Overall state of implementation and effectiveness

General overview

The financial data presented by measure do not match the financial data provided for the axis as a whole, as sources are different. For the Axis, official data validated by the Commission was sourced, but this is not available at the measure level, therefore other sources were combined to analyse the effectiveness by measure (Interim evaluation of the EFF, January 2011 and national evaluation reports).

Table 2: State of implementation of Axis 1 as at 31.12.210 (in Euros)

MS - Axis 1	EFF programmed (€)	EFF committed (1) (€)	% EFF committed
Spain	442 907 458	208 752 994	47%
Poland	168 841 292	71 839 521	43%
Italy	165 493 714	66 645 718	40%
France	65 621 494	51 527 000	79%
Portugal	53 065 134	31 708 884	60%
Danemark	40 365 342	30 700 000	76%
Ireland	34 766 000	27 450 000	79%
Latvia	20 860 942	14 496 270	69%
Belgium	11 500 000	13 034 535	113%
Sweden	13 666 201	12 463 926	91%
UK	39 634 805	10 978 286	28%
Netherlands	16 913 233	8 715 236	52%
Estonia	15 264 531	8 319 195	55%
Greece	77 272 459	7 600 000	10%
Lithuania	13 667 647	4 288 467	31%
Cyprus	2 200 000	2 906 660	132%
Romania	9 975 000	1 188 214	12%
Malta	2 175 000	894 110	41%
Finland	3 445 000	759 926	22%
Germany	8 145 000	473 658	6%
Bulgaria	8 000 970	22 744	0%
Slovenia	2 164 029	0	0%
TOTAL	1 215 945 251	574 765 343	47%

(1) source: annual report, except for France, Germany and Slovenia: evaluation report

22 MS have implemented Axis 1. Spain is by far the most significant beneficiary of this axis, with around 36% of total committed EFF. The first 5 MS (Spain, Poland, Italy, France and Portugal) represent approximately 75% of the total amount committed under Axis 1 of the EFF.

Overall, the commitment rate is 47%, however significant differences can be observed across MS:

- The 5 lowest rates are found in Slovenia (no project approved), Bulgaria (<1%), Germany (6%) and Greece (10%),
- The 5 highest rates are found in Cyprus (132%), Belgium (113%), Sweden (91%), Ireland (79%) and France (79%),
- Among the 5 main beneficiaries the average commitment rate is 54%, but varies from 40% in Italy to 79% in France.

Under-achievement or delays in the implementation also result from various factors:

- Delays in implementing measures 1.1 or 1.2 can be related to the **obligation of drafting a FEAP** (Bulgaria, Germany, UK)
- Delays in implementing other measures are usually related to a **lack of interest from the sector (administrative burden, lack of co-financing, etc...)**. For instance, in Slovenia, where only measures 1.3 and 1.4 were programmed, a public call for proposals was launched but they did not receive one single application.

MS with the highest rates of commitments have generally focused on measure 1.1 (permanent cessation of activities): 100% in Ireland, 97% in the Netherlands, 79% in France, 78% in Denmark and Belgium. This measure was indeed well-known throughout the sector and fairly easy to implement, as most MS already had adjustment plans that could fall under the definition of a FEAP according to article 21 of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1198/2006. Besides, the economic crisis and the Reg. 744/2008 also fostered the use of measure 1.1.

By measure

Financial data by measure is not available for all MS, therefore the figures presented in the following table are not exhaustive, but they represent over 95% of EFF committed. As shown by these figures, permanent and temporary cessations represent by far the 2 main measures of Axis 1 in terms of financial execution (together 86% of EFF commitments for Axis 1).

Table 3: Financial achievement by measure

	Commitments Total (€) – 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF (€)- 31.10.2010	Payments Total (€)– 31.10.2010	Payments EFF (€)- 31.10.2010	No. Projects (€) – 31.10.2010
TOTAL	664 943 280	458 418 147	520 629 869	360 222 162	11 896
1.1	367 136 230	258 120 099	282 984 364	202 185 102	410
	55%	56%	54%	56%	3%
1.2	210 069 828	137 502 512	195 964 368	130 303 072	7 931
	32%	30%	38%	36%	67%
1.3	58 345 521	42 801 101	25 633 940	16 699 717	2 374
	9%	9%	5%	5%	20%
1.4	4 512 138	1 589 806	2 781 512	869 905	415
	1%	0%	1%	0%	3%
1.5	24 879 563	18 404 629	13 265 685	10 164 366	766
	4%	4%	3%	3%	6%

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

Achievement rates by measure are only available for 7 MS representing 73% of achievements (Malta, Poland, Portugal, Latvia, France, Spain, Sweden).

According to available data, achievement rates are also higher for measure 1.2 (80%) and 1.1 (63%) and lower for measure 1.5 (34%), 1.3 (27%) and 1.4 (7%). The level of achievement for measure 1.2, and to a lesser extent measure 1.1 can be attributed to the introduction of Reg. 744/2008 or the "Fuel Package", which allowed the public financing of permanent and temporary cessation for purely economic reasons and provided more flexible rules for temporary cessations.

Overall effectiveness

MS	Priority axis 1: Measures for the adaptation of the Community fishing fleet	Measure 1.1: Permanent cessation of fishing activities	Measure 1.2: Temporary cessation of fishing activities	Measure 1.3: Investments on board fishing vessels and selectivity	Measure 1.4: Small-scale coastal fishing	Measure 1.5: Socio- economic compensations for the management of the fleet
BG	Weak	Balanced		Weak		
CY	Good	Good		Good		Good
CZ						
DE	Weak	Weak		Balanced	Balanced	Weak
DK	Good	Good		Good		
EE	Balanced	Good		Balanced	Balanced	Balanced
ES	Good	Good	Good	Good	Weak	Good
FI	Good	Weak		Good	Good	Weak
FR	Good	Good	Good	Weak	Weak	Balanced
GR	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak
HU						
IE	Good	Good				
IT	Balanced	Good	Balanced	Weak	Weak	Weak
LV	Good	Good		Weak		Good
MT	Balanced	Balanced		Balanced		Balanced
PT	Balanced	Good	Good	Weak	Weak	Weak
RO	Weak	Balanced				Weak
SE	Good	Good		Good		
SK						
SL	Weak			Weak	Weak	
UK	Balanced	Balanced		Balanced		

Table 4: Assessment from the Commission's desk officers

Source: Desk officer's assessment sheets

The overall assessment from desk officers, based on the national evaluation reports, is that Axis 1 is rather effective (budgetary consumption is high, although the impact on the resource is not assessed here): good level of commitments for 8 MS, balanced for 5 and weak for 5. In MS where the overall appreciation is "weak", it is, in most cases, related to overall administrative difficulties that made the implementation of the EFF cumbersome for all priority axes (Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Slovenia). This is not the case for Germany, but this MS did not focus on Axis 1 and it had an issue with developing a FEAP when it wished to implement temporary cessations (cf. chapter on temporary cessations).

The assessment of financial consumption of measure 1.1 – permanent cessations is good (10 answers out of 17). It is weak only in Germany, Finland and Greece. In the first two MS it was not implemented, and in Greece it is related to red tape issues.

Measure 1.2 – temporary cessations was only implemented in a few MS, but the assessment is also rather good (3 answers out of 5). It is weak only in Greece.

On the contrary, the assessment of the effectiveness of the Measure 1.3 – investments on board is poorer (7 “weak” out of 16, and only 5 “good”). Generally speaking, the number of applications received was not as high as expected.

Measure 1.4 – small-scale coastal fisheries is the measure with the poorest assessment under Axis 1 (6 “weak”, one “good” out of 8 answers). The measure was implemented in only a few MS. The only country where it was considered to be successful is Finland, where it was used mainly to purchase seal-proof gears.

The assessment for measure 1.5 – socio-economic measures is also weak (6 “weak” out of 12 answers and only 3 “good”). The number of applicants is not always as high as expected, especially regarding the actions for “young fishermen”.

b. Implementation of Fishing Effort Adjustment Plans (FEAP)

According to article 21 of the above mentioned regulation, FEAPs may cover:

- *recovery plans, management plans, MS or commission emergency measures, other MS measures related to conservation, adjustment of fishing capacity (Art 5 to 16 of EC regulation N° 2371/2002),*
- *the non-renewal of a fishery agreement between the Community and a third country or a substantial cut in fishing opportunities under an international agreement or other arrangement.*

Furthermore, the priority shall be given to recovery plans (defined in Article 5 of EC Regulation N° 2371/2002), which deal with the most sensitive fisheries, and the possibility to receive support for temporary cessation of activities is restricted (cap level, no seasonal cessations)

The purpose of this new framework was clearly to foster a real strategy at the MS level in terms of adapting the fishing effort, in line with conservation measures. The EFF was not meant to support purely economic restructuring on a first-come first-served basis.

In 2008, the original framework was modified to take the economic crisis into account. The Reg. 744/2008 (“Fuel Package”) entered into force and introduced the Fleet Adaptation Scheme (FAS), allowing implementing measures 1.1 and 1.2 under more flexible rules.

It is difficult to judge, based on national reports, whether the obligation of having a FEAP to benefit from measures 1.1 and 1.2 actually fostered the implementation of real strategies in line with environmental issues as far as adjusting the fishing effort is concerned. Indeed, in most MS the use of Fishing Effort Adjustment Plans (FEAP) as a strategic tool for Axis 1 is barely mentioned in evaluation reports. As was observed in the previous Interim Evaluation of the EFF, in most cases, FEAPs encompass all fleet management plans and decommissioning schemes. Rather than the implementation of an overall strategy, the difference then with the FIG programme is that permanent and temporary cessation of activities cannot receive support outside these plans.

The enforcement of the strategy mainly relies on the adequacy of selection criteria within decommissioning scheme, as shown by the example of Poland. According to the evaluation report, the measure 1.1 clearly aimed at adjusting the Polish Baltic fleet to “available resources”. This was based on one FEAP submitted to the Commission in 2008, in order to “adapt the fishing fleet to the available fishing quotas and achieve compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union”. More specifically the FEAP overall objective as stated in the report was “the significant and sustained reduction in fishing effort in the Polish cod fishing in 2009-2011”. The Polish FEAP did indeed lay down an overall strategy in terms of fleet management, answering specific environmental issues, especially on cod, and relying on the various tools available (permanent and temporary cessation of fishing activities and modernisation). However, in terms of implementation, procedures did not include selection criteria to target specific segments of vessels for either measure 1.1 or measure 1.2. As a consequence, segments of vessels mainly oriented at fishing cod (12 to 24 metres with fixed gears, 12 to 24 metres and 24 to 40 metres with bottom trawl) represented nearly 60% of

vessels scrapped, but only 46% of the capacity withdrawn both in GT and kW whereas the segment of vessels of 24 to 40 metres with pelagic trawl, mainly oriented at fishing herring and sprats, represented 26% of the vessels scrapped but 53% in GT and 51% in kW of the capacity withdrawn. Besides the fact that this does not reflect the objective of the FEAP, the scrapping of pelagic vessels, in that case, is purely related to economic difficulties as sprat quotas have been under-used over the past few years (catches represented 55% of the quotas in 2010).

Regarding measure 1.2 on the other hand, setting aside aid provided under Reg. 744/2008, the measure was implemented in compliance with the FEAP by reducing the number of special permits for cod, which resulted in the temporary cessation of 430 vessels for a total of about 51 thousand day suspension of fishing.

In Portugal, the evaluation report presents a detailed analysis on environmental issues, but the link with implemented decommissioning schemes is not always very clear. Still, the focus is clearly on supporting the cessation of vessels either fishing stocks under pressure (crayfish, halibut, small pelagics...) or fleet segments using specific types of gears with negative effects on the environment (longline fishing, teeth bar dredges for bivalve fishing). The analysis also presents the reduction of capacity by type of fish and by type of gear. The segment with the most important reduction of capacity (55% in GT and 43% in kW) concerns the fishing of demersal species, especially crayfish, one of the most vulnerable stock.

In a few MS, FEAPs clearly aim at offsetting the economic impact of the reduction of fishing quotas by encouraging the reduction of the fleet, which increases available quotas and therefore economic viability for the remaining fleet. As an example, Ireland relies on one national decommissioning scheme, the 2008 Decommissioning Scheme, focused on whitefish to eliminate excess capacity resulting from decreasing quotas (cod, hake...). Likewise, Latvia has one plan, the "Latvian Fishing Fleet Capacity Adaptation Plan for 2008-2013" that focuses on economic issues resulting from quotas and TACs.

As an example the Irish report provides an analysis of the economic impact of the decommissioning scheme:

"The 2008 Decommissioning Scheme has improved the efficiency of fishing operations. In particular, the weight of fish landed (per KW per day) has increased by 27% between 2007 and 2009, from 1,976 kg to 2,519 kg.

Similarly, analysis for the review shows that fishing incomes in 2010 were back to their 2007 levels. This again suggests that the Decommissioning Scheme has shown some initial success in offering better long-term viability to the fleet by minimising the effect of external factors on fishing incomes."

Quote from the Irish evaluation report

c. Implementation of the "Fuel Package" Reg 744/2008

The following 9 MS implemented Reg. 744/2008: Belgium, Cyprus, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, France, Spain, and Denmark. In Latvia, the OP has been adapted in order to specify new conditions under Reg 744/2008, but there is only one FEAP, which does not seem to refer to the Fuel Package. The only objective related to Reg 744/2008 is the modernisation of 5 vessels with improved energy efficiency (measure 1.3) in accordance with Art. 7 of the regulation, but no project has actually been implemented in that regard.

According to the available data, 17 FAS were implemented, representing at least 142 vessels (data missing in Denmark). Out of the 9 MS, 5 used Reg. 744/2008 primarily for permanent cessations, 1 used it primarily for temporary cessations (Poland) and 2 for both permanent and temporary cessations (Portugal and Spain). Only Belgium mentions the use of partial decommissioning.

The evaluation report for Italy does not assess the effectiveness of the Fuel Package specifically, but in all the other MS where the measure was implemented, it was assessed to have had a positive impact on budgetary consumption, especially Axis 1 (e.g. Denmark, Spain especially for temporary measures, Portugal, Belgium).

Table 5: Answers on Reg. 744/2008 implementation

	Total number of FAS	Number of vessels approved for decommissioning	Did the "Fuel Package" focus on temporary or permanent cessation?
Belgium	1	9	Permanent
Cyprus	1	12	Permanent
Italy	1	21	Permanent
Poland	n.a.	n.a.	Temporary
Portugal	2	23	Both
Romania	1	2	Permanent
France	3	29	Permanent
Spain	6	46	Both
Denmark	2	n.a.	Permanent
Total	17	142	

The case of Denmark is interesting insofar as it did not plan to implement measure 1.1 in the first place. It reviewed its position following the adoption of the Fuel Crisis Package, R. 744/2008 and implemented 2 fuel packages using a wide range of tools authorised by the regulation, in particular the possibility of applying a higher public co-financing rate for measures under axis 1 (modernisation) and 3 (collective actions) in order to improve fuel efficiency for the active fleet. This led to the scrapping of old and energy consuming vessels, an output considered as very positive by both the administration and the fishing industry.

*"Subsidy schemes, "Fuel packages 1 and 2", were introduced for energy-efficient investments for the period from programme modification to end-2010. Fuel package 1 granted a subsidy of up to 60% of fishing vessels investments, apart from engine replacement, deemed to have an appreciable impact on the vessels' energy efficiency. Fuel package 2 granted a subsidy for applications concerning restructuring and fleet adjustment effected by having one or more vessels permanently taken out of fishing. Subsidies are conditional on the vessels restructuring plan documenting that, for the fishing vessels in the restructuring plan, fishing will be continued at the same level at least, but with 30% better energy utilisation within a period of three years."*⁶

The special subsidy scheme under the programme modification thus seeks to promote fleet reduction, at the same time entailing modernisation towards more energy-efficient vessels."

Quote from the Danish National Evaluation Report

MS that chose not to implement Reg 744/2008 did so for various reasons:

- Measures had already been taken at the national level when the regulation entered into force (UK)
- The regulation arrived too late to be useful (Greece)
- It was bureaucratically cumbersome (Sweden)
- The fuel crisis was not considered to have a great impact on the fisheries sector

⁶ Danish Executive Order on Subsidies for Restructuring Commercial Fisheries
<https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=125222#K3>

d. Measure 1.1 – Aid to permanent cessation of fishing activities

According to data provided in the Interim evaluation of the EFF (January 2011), the top three MS in terms of commitment for measure 1.1, Spain, France and Ireland represent 57% of total commitments. The top 5 MS, along with Denmark and Poland, represent 74% of the total. In the case of Ireland, this is the only measure implemented under axis 1.

It is also worth mentioning that the data provided by Spain and Italy in their evaluation reports, as of December 31 2011 is significantly higher (€ 106,738,149 committed EFF for Spain over 485 projects and € 42,134,216 committed EFF for Italy over 173 projects), especially for Italy, which would then be in second position in terms of commitments under measure 1.1.

Table 6: Financial execution for measure 1.1 by MS

Measure 1.1	Commitments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments EFF (€) - 31.10.2010	Nb Projects - 31.10.2010
Spain	162 518 828	87 284 818	111 592 883	58 613 647	na
France	Na	33 336 901	na	26 674 871	na
Ireland	36 605 029	27 453 772	36 605 029	27 453 772	46
Denmark	22 281 879	21 167 785	16 100 000	15 300 000	Na
Poland	27 398 012	20 548 509	26 793 661	20 095 246	62
Italy	37 914 607	18 957 304	13 650 061	6 825 031	95
Portugal	19 574 444	17 913 070	18 410 789	16 981 566	67
Sweden	16 330 921	10 342 480	16 330 921	10 342 480	28
Netherlands	27 400 000	8 300 000	27 400 000	8 200 000	23
Estonia	7 853 384	5 890 038	4 816 649	3 612 487	21
Belgium	7 667 590	5 731 286	7 609 392	5 728 503	9
Romania	1 586 692	1 190 019	1 586 692	1 190 019	5
Lithuania	4 844	4 117	4 745	4 034	33
Malta	0	0	486 703	365 027	9
Cyprus	0	0	1 596 839	798 419	12

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

The following table illustrates the target reduction of capacity for 2015 (2013 in some MS), and the achieved reduction of capacity at the end of 2010. The data is only available in 13 MS and it is not always clear whether the reduction of capacity relates to vessels removed with EFF aid only or to the national fleet as a whole. Where data is available, it is clear that physical targets have been over-achieved in most cases considering the results are mid-term ones, and in a few cases, even 2015 targets have been reached and exceeded (Denmark, Estonia and France).

Table 7: Reduction of capacity resulting from measure 1.1 – 31.12.2010

	Nb of vessels	Final target for the reduction of capacity*		Total reduction of capacity achieved			
		GT	Kw	GT	%	kW	%
Denmark*		7 500	17 000	25 144	335%	79 606	468%
Estonia*	n.a.	2 083	5 334	6 315	303%	12 908	242%

	Nb of vessels	Final target for the reduction of capacity*		Total reduction of capacity achieved			
		GT	Kw	GT	%	kW	%
France	386	15 520	66 441	22 210	143%	88 828	134%
Greece	n.a.	5 610	56 321	5 240	93%	30 853	55%
Ireland	46	8 904	24 950	6 913	78%	19 356	78%
Italy	52	17 920	93 691	6 681	37%	23 137	25%
Latvia	84	6 800	18 100	3 672	54%	8 685	48%
Netherlands	23	10 820	35 968	9 971	92%	35 747	99%
Poland*	61	3 095	11 861	3 014	97%	8 960	76%
Portugal	66	6 000	23 000	5 323	89%	16 337	71%
Spain	n.a.	78 670	252 553	48 243	61%	109 256	43%
Sweden	n.a.	17 096	68 883	11 606	68%	36 085	52%
UK	103	21 284	n.a.	11 472	54%	n.a.	
* Reduction of capacity data are from the Interim Evaluation of the EFF, January 2011 (Results 2009)							

Source: National evaluation reports and Interim Evaluation of the EFF, February 2011

Very few MS provided information on whether projects involving the reassignment of vessels for activities outside fishing or for the creation of artificial reefs had been implemented. The only information available is for the following MS:

- In Spain, in the Netherlands and in Ireland, all the vessels that received support to permanently cease their activities were scrapped.
- In Italy, there are no data on the results achieved. The target was: 85% of the capacity reduction in GT through scrapping, 12% through reassignment for activities outside fishing and 3% for artificial reefs. In terms of reduction of engine power, the objectives were set at 73%, 25% and 2%.

This shows that the possibility of reassigning vessels is seldom used.

There are two main reasons why these targets were already reached or exceeded:

- This measure is well-known and easy to implement for the administrations, since support for decommissioning existed in previous FIFG programs (1994-1999 and 2000-2006). Even though there is a new framework with the obligation of drafting FEAPs, in most cases it has been implemented in the same way as it used to be, so there was no need to communicate on the application process and the eligibility criteria. In Poland, for instance, beneficiaries were apparently waiting for the application process to be launched.
- The economic crisis and the fuel crisis deteriorated the economic viability of the fleet, leading to higher demand for scrapping unprofitable vessels.

e. Measure 1.2 - Aid to temporary cessation of fishing activities

Only 6 MS have supported temporary cessation activities. In some cases, the consumption of this measure mostly came from the flexibility offered by the Reg. 744/2008 (Spain, Poland, and Portugal). On the contrary, in France temporary cessations were mostly related to conservation measures. Main species targeted by temporary cessations were anchovy and cod, and only two applications for temporary cessations out of 800 were related to a FAS.

In Poland, measure 1.2 represents 60% of EFF commitments for Axis 1. In other MS it goes from 39% in Spain to 8% in Sweden.

Table 8: Financial execution by MS for measure 1.2

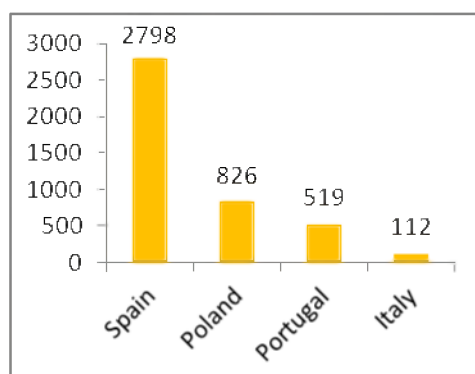
Measure 1.2	Commitments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments EFF (€)- 31.10.2010	Nb Projects - 31.10.2010
Spain	122 899 647	71 489 800	109 844 322	65 218 114	na
Poland	53 416 149	40 062 112	52 916 107	39 687 080	2 546
Italy	24 295 042	12 147 521	24 295 042	12 147 521	4 280
Portugal	7 418 227	7 017 958	6 868 134	6 520 994	505
France	na	5 764 740	na	5 708 982	Na
Sweden	2 040 763	1 020 381	2 040 763	1 020 381	600

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

In terms of physical achievement, limited data is available. In most cases, only the number of boats concerned is provided (cf. Figure below). In France, only the number of fishers is provided; 682 fishers benefited from this measure. In Spain, 2798 vessels received support for 12 017 fishers and 1 088 518 days-boat of temporary cessation (for one given boat, each day of temporary cessation is counted).

It is not possible to assess the impact in terms of reduction of the fishing capacity.

Figure 7: Number of boats concerned by measure 1.2 by MS



As for measure 1.1, this measure was well-known by MS and the fishing communities, which made it easy to implement. In Poland, there was a lot of pressure from the fishing community to implement this measure following the ban on cod. Overall, in the MS where it has been implemented, it is perceived rather positively.

In MS that did not implement this measure, the rationale for not using it is rarely provided, but in some cases, it is deemed ineffective to reduce the fishing capacity due to its temporary character. In Sweden for instance, where it was implemented to a limited extent, it has now been removed as it is seen "merely as 'artificial respiration' by administrators at the Swedish Board of Fisheries". In Germany, there was an intention to grant public aid for temporary cessation in the Baltic Sea but there was no FEAP in place. Germany wished to implement a FEAP targeting a reduction in the fishing capacity of herring in the Baltic Sea but it was refused on the basis that it did not include any final decommissioning, but only temporary cessations. Therefore national support was provided instead under the *de minimis* aid.

f. Measure 1.3 - Investments on board and selectivity

The first three MS, Denmark, Spain and Portugal, represent 58% of the EFF commitments, and the top five, along with France and Italy, represent 81% of EFF commitments. Again the latest data available for Spain and Italy shows a higher level of commitment, with EFF commitments amounting to almost M€ 11 in Spain and almost M€ 6.5 in Italy.

Table 9: Financial execution by MS for measure 1.3

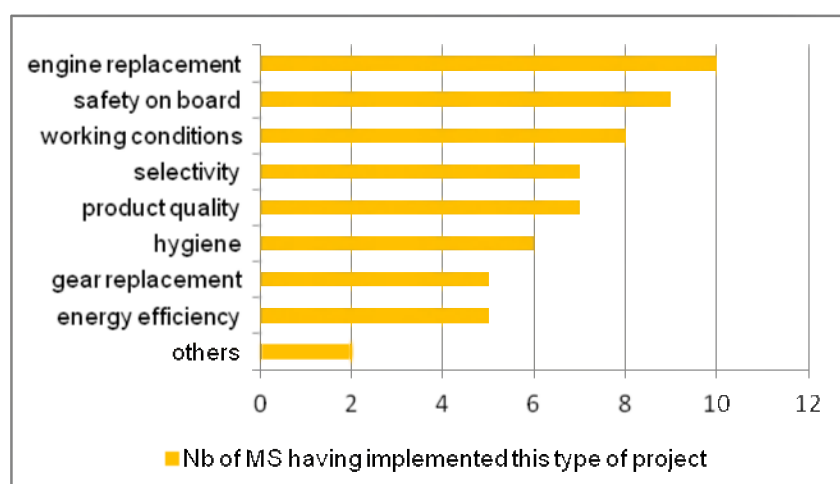
Measure 1.3	Commitments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments EFF (€) - 31.10.2010	Nb Projects - 31.10.2010
Denmark	14 429 530	11 932 886	5 600 000	4 300 000	na
Spain	14 855 415	7 537 984	8 048 328	3 682 407	na
Portugal	7 410 343	5 535 488	3 298 239	2 506 171	450
France	na	5 031 377	na	1 190 327	716
Italy	9 091 015	4 545 507	825 880	412 940	338
Belgium	6 777 812	3 939 755	2 825 271	1 643 562	74
Estonia	1 982 332	1 486 749	803 618	602 713	39
Poland	1 926 574	1 444 930	909 951	682 464	114
Sweden	671 443	335 721	606 320	303 160	159
Netherlands	100 000	300 000	400 000	100 000	8
Slovenia	300 000	300 000	na	na	na
Germany	Na	235 384	na	235 348	25
Finland	770 733	152 577	396 707	78 400	36
Bulgaria	30 324	22 743	4 907	3 680	2
Malta	0	0	4 746	3 559	45
Cyprus	0	0	1 909 973	954 986	368

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

In Denmark, 39% of all Axis 1 commitments (EFF part) concern investments on board. This high rate compared to other MS reflects choices made in the National Strategic Plan. The case of Denmark is also interesting insofar as it is one of the few MS, along with Belgium, to have included measure 1.3 in a FAS, using the possibility of a higher EU co-financing rate for projects aiming at the improvement of energy-efficiency.

Only 8 MS provided the number of boats concerned by each type of project (Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Portugal and Spain). Considering that three of the five main beneficiaries did not provide this information, the synthesis at EU level would not be representative. However, combining quantitative and qualitative information available, it is possible to conclude that the most widely implemented projects were those concerning the replacement of engine, generally in order to improve energy efficiency, the safety on board, and the working conditions.

Figure 8: Types of projects implemented under measure 1.3



In Denmark, projects have concerned quality improvement (catch handling, insulation and cooling systems) and safety on board. It was mentioned that too few applications related to projects on selectivity and discards.

In Spain, the focus was on safety on board with 1741 boats concerned over 2632 (66%).

In Portugal, projects concerned mostly the engine replacement (49%) and the working conditions (46%). Furthermore, it is highlighted that the replacement of engines often results in improving the safety on board and the working conditions. On the other hand projects on selectivity did not seem to interest the sector. As of the end of 2010, only one project was on selectivity through the replacement of gears.

In France, improvements of safety on board, on working conditions and the replacement of engines represented 69% of the projects.

In Belgium, projects involving replacement of gears are also aiming to improve selectivity. Applications under this measure increased with the entry into force of Reg. 744/2008.

In the UK, the financial data by measure is not available, but measure 1.3 has been widely used in Scotland and England. In particular, investments aiming at reducing fuel consumption were perceived as one of the answers to the fuel crisis (the UK did not use Reg. 744/2008). Other investments on board concerned gear replacement, the safety on board, and improving quality and hygiene. The UK also highlights the fact that the different types of projects can overlap. For instance, projects on gear replacement in a lot of cases result in an improved selectivity.

« Few vessels have installed new engines despite this being highlighted as a suggested modernisation to reduce fuel usage. The reduction in fuel prices after the 2008 peak and the requirement to replace with a new, but with at least 20% lower capacity engine have resulted in less uptake than expected. This may alter in the second half of the programme as fuel prices have shown substantial increases from 2009 levels.

Gear purchases have been associated with increased selectivity. In the large scale fleet there has been the funding of more selective whitefish trawls to avoid cod by-catch and in the inshore fleet, the funding of gillnets to target other species such as turbot and move away from cod.

(...)

Other vessel improvements have related to replacement machinery such as winches and net drums on the basis of crew safety and handling efficiency improvements as well as general upgrades of fish rooms to improve quality and hygiene standards. »

Quote from the UK national evaluation report

Besides the overall lack of projects on selectivity or discards highlighted by a few MS, three major issues have been mentioned as far as the implementation of measure 1.3 is concerned:

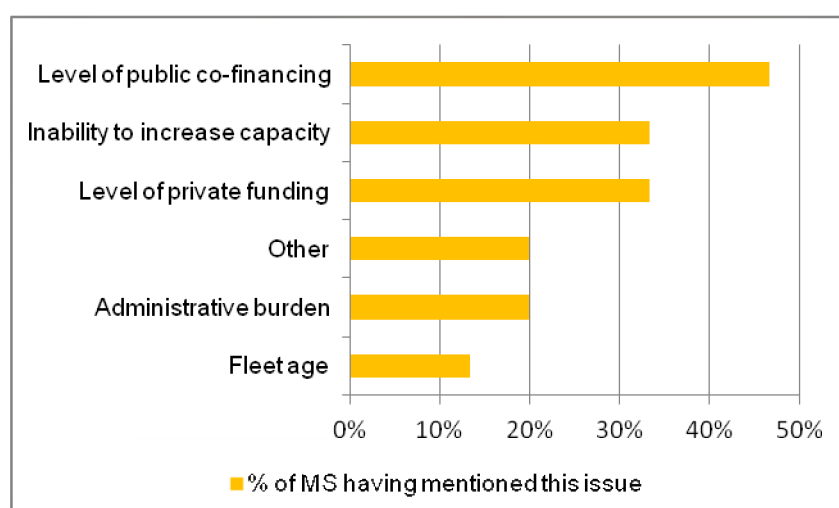
- The difficulty to find match-funding, which has been worsened with the economic crisis; depending on the MS this is viewed as a lack of public financing or a lack of private funding, resulting particularly from the difficulty of access to bank loans.
- The prohibition to fund projects that would increase the “ability to catch fish” has hampered the implementation of measure 1.3, (Italy, France, the UK, Latvia and Germany pointed this out).
- Administrative burden has also been mentioned, especially in the EU-12.

The figure below illustrates the share of MS having encountered the different issues regarding the implementation of measure 1.3, based on the answers from 15 MS.

In the category “other”, the three following issues were mentioned:

- The lack of training among crews and vessel captains (Portugal)
- The low interest from the sector (Bulgaria)
- The fact that the crisis had favoured scrapping over modernisation (Estonia)
- There is a specific issue to Latvia, where not only the vessel has to be at least 5-years old, but also has to be in the fishing vessel list of the Ministry of Agriculture or in the Latvian Vessel Register for at least five years, which excludes acquired used from other countries.

Figure 9: Issues encountered in the implementation of measure 1.3



Impact indicators are scarce. The only impact indicators required under the regulation concerned engine and gear replacement:

- Power of engine after modernisation (kW)
- Reduction of capacity as a result of engine replacement (kW)
- Number of fishing gear replaced

Only 4 MS provided data on the first indicator, 3 for the second and 1 for the last one, which highlights the limits of Annex III Indicators.

Regarding the power of engine after modernisation, it is not clear whether the indicator is for all the vessels modernized or only for vessels where the engine has been replaced, and the figures provided are not consistent. Furthermore, the indicator does not really provide information on impacts.

The contribution of measure 1.3 to the reduction of engines in kW is more relevant as it has a direct impact on energy efficiency and an indirect impact on the fishing effort capacity. However the data is not very conclusive. On a qualitative basis a few evaluation reports state that the measure has

contributed positively to improving energy efficiency and reducing capacity. However the available data tend to show a positive but rather limited impact:

- The replacement of engines in Portugal, where vessels under 12 meters represent 90% of the fleet, represented 43% of the projects implemented under measure 1.3, but the objective was to improve the safety on board, rather than to improve energy efficiency. The obligation of reducing the engine power by at least 20% to benefit from financial support under the EFF only applies to vessels above 12 meters. As a result, the reduction of power coming from the replacement of engines is of about 460 kW for 94 vessels, or an average of about 5 kW per vessel (about 11% of the average power by vessel in this country according to Eurostat).
- Spain, where vessels under 12 meters represent 72% of the fleet according to Eurostat, reduced its total capacity in terms of engine power by 800 kW over 184 vessels (2,4% of modernized vessels), or a reduction of 4.3 kW per vessel, which amounts to about 10% of the engine power of the concerned vessels before the replacement.
- In Belgium (only one vessel under 12 meters according to Eurostat), the action is more targeted at energy efficiency and the impact on power capacity is therefore more significant, with a reduction of 4500 kW for 23 vessels, or close to 200 kW per vessel (35% of the average vessel power in Belgium and 7% of the total capacity of the Belgium fleet in 2006).

g. Measure 1.4 – Small-scale coastal fisheries

Overall this measure has not been well-understood neither by administrations nor by the sector. As a result, financial and physical achievements are far behind targets.

Table 10: Financial execution for measure 1.4

Measure 1.4	Commitments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments EFF (€) - 31.10.2010	Nb Projects - 31.10.2010
Finland	3 680 159	897 886	2 458 843	567 888	295
Estonia	736 544	552 408	265 215	198 911	103
Germany	na	71 079	na	65 761	13
Sweden	95 435	62 033	57 454	37 345	4

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

As shown above, only a very few MS have implemented Measure 1.4. One project was also implemented in the UK, but no financial data is available and Spain had committed around € 6k by the end of 2011.

In Finland, Estonia and Germany, the same types of projects were offered under measures 1.3 and 1.4, but the latter targeted at the small-scale fisheries.

Finland is a unique case as the measure 1.4 represents over 80% of EFF commitments for Axis 1. One of the explicit priorities under Axis 1 was to “prevent damage caused by animals and to improve the conditions for small-scale coastal fishing”. Seal-proof fishing gears and engine replacement comprise a clear majority of the funded projects. In addition to that, a few projects on safety were implemented.

In Sweden, the Operational Programme had a broad scope in terms of the activities that could be supported under this measure and allocated a significant amount in the first OP. However with the revision of the OP in 2010, the budget allocated to measure 1.4 was taken from 2.5 million Euros down to 110 thousand Euros. The fundable projects under this measure could involve innovations for more selective fishing, training, improved management and control of the conditions of access to certain fisheries areas, and voluntary initiatives to reduce fishing effort and conserve resources, as well as seal-proof equipment. Unlike under measure 1.3, projects had to be collective. In fact, the number of applications remained limited and concerned mostly safety and survival courses. The main

issues identified were that the measure did not efficiently contribute to improve the economic viability of the sector and the lack of co-financing.

In Italy, where the small-scale fisheries represent 9% of the capacity in GT and 78% of the employment in the fisheries sector, the measure 1.4 was programmed but no project was implemented due to a lack of interest of the sector and uncertainties regarding implementation procedures.

In general there seems to be a lack of interest and/or knowledge from the sector. There are various reasons: lack of private funding, difficulties in understanding the measure, administrative burden, definition of small-scale fisheries, possibility to rely on other measures... The requirement for collective actions in some MS may also have been a constraint for a sector with a traditionally low level of organisation.

h. Measure 1.5 – socio-economic measures

The top 3 MS, Spain, Poland and France, represent 79% of EFF commitments for measure 1.5, and the top 5 MS, along with Portugal and Italy represent 93%. Regarding Italy however, the data is not consistent with the data provided in the national report, which shows EFF commitments of only € 547k by the end of the year and EFF payments of only € 25k.

These are also the main beneficiaries of measures 1.1 and 1.2, which makes sense considering that socio-economic measures are supposed to offset the negative effects of the reduction of capacity.

Highest achievement rates are 58% in Latvia⁷, 44% in Spain⁸ and 40% in Sweden, 3MS with achievement rates over 50% at mid-term for measures 1.1 and 1.2. In the first case, Latvia only implemented measures 1.2 and 1.5.

Table 11: Financial execution for measure 1.5

Measure 1.5	Commitments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments Total (€) - 31.10.2010	Payments EFF (€) - 31.10.2010	Nb Projects - 31.10.2010
Spain	10 377 792	6 376 547	7 169 872	4 406 458	na
Poland	7 740 606	5 805 454	2 969 901	2 227 426	423
France	na	2 267 650	na	1 413 025	Na
Italy	3 698 352	1 849 176	437 000	218 500	42
Portugal	1 070 397	906 798	855 082	733 328	115
Estonia	520 000	390 000	430 000	322 500	52
Sweden	737 616	368 808	714 060	357 030	33
Denmark	348 993	174 497	300 000	100 000	Na
Germany	na	135 560	na	110 560	8
Netherlands	200 000	100 000	100 000	200 000	35
Romania	26 284	19 713	0	0	6
Finland	159 349	10 278	159 349	10 278	1
Lithuania	174	148	146	124	29
Cyprus	0	0	130 275	65 137	22

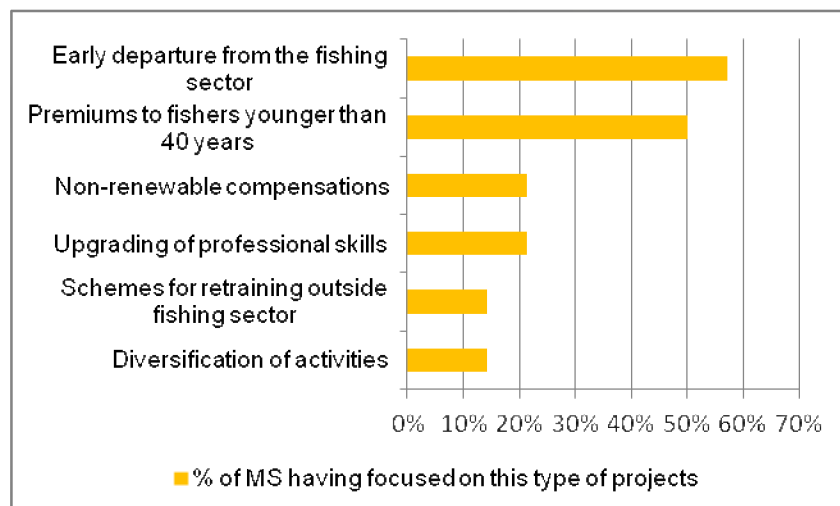
Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

⁷ In Latvia, committed and achieved amounts are not known, but the evaluation report provides achievement rates by measure.

⁸ Based on data available in the national report

The most successful actions have been early departure from the fishing sector and premiums to fishers younger than 40 years. In most cases the number of applications for each type of project was not provided, however 14 MS did provide either the indicators or qualitative information on the nature of the support provided, which is summarised in the following figure.

Figure 10: Main types of projects implemented under measure 1.5



No major implementation issue has been identified for this measure, but some MS have had specific problems:

- Poland has encountered difficulties with interpreting selection criteria for early retirement and had to change its legislation while applications had already been filed.
- In Portugal and Bulgaria, it is assessed that the premium for young fishers is too low to be decisive.
 - In the UK, measures under Axis 3 and 4 are used to mitigate socio-economic impacts rather than measure 1.5

i. Overall conclusions for Axis 1

Although most evaluation reports do not make explicit judgements, out of the 11 reports that do so, 8 assess that Axis 1 has contributed to mitigate the social impact of the economic crisis. In general the reasoning is that the reduction of the fleet capacity combined with an overall improvement of energy efficiency has improved the economic viability of the remaining fleet. Although it has to be pointed out that the improvement in terms of energy-efficiency is not measured.

In terms of the sustainability, too few projects aim at increasing selectivity under measure 1.3, but the reduction of the capacity and the increase of more energy-efficient engines reduce the environmental impact of fishing activities.

The implementation of Axis 1 has been strongly impacted by the economic crisis, which has:

- increased the relevance of measures 1.1, 1.2 (permanent and temporary cessations) and 1.5 (socio-economic measures)
- but hampered the use of measures 1.3 (investments on board) and 1.4 (small-scale coastal fisheries)

There has not been any major implementation issue for measures 1.1 and 1.2 that were well-known by both the administrations and the beneficiaries. Except in Germany, the obligation of implementing a FEAP has not prevented or delayed the implementation of measures 1.1 and 1.2, but there is no evidence that it has encouraged a more strategic implementation either. The selection criteria for applicants under FEAP do not always allow to adequately target the potential beneficiaries. As a result, in some cases, support could still be provided on a first-come first-serve basis.

Yet, overall these measures have contributed to the reduction of the fleet (at least 3 MS have already over-achieved their final targets) even though the net effect of the EFF is not always clear as indicators do not always specify if the reduction of capacity concerns the entire fleet or only the vessels that received support.

The implementation of measures 1.3 and 1.4 have been more mitigated for the former and rather difficult for the latter, in part because of the economic crisis and the resulting difficulty to find co-financing. The possibility to improve co-financing for the replacement of engines with more fuel-efficient engines has not been widely used. In the case of measure 1.4, this issue came on top of the general lack of understanding of the measure. Support to small-scale fisheries has been successful in MS where it was implemented almost as a sub-part of measure 1.3, with the same possibilities but a different target. Projects involving improved selectivity have been fewer than expected.

There is no particular issue regarding the implementation of measure 1.5 but it is difficult to assess to what extent it can compensate for the negative economic situation of some fleet segments. In some MS, in particular in the UK, collective measures or Axis 4⁹ are deemed to be more relevant in that regard.

j. Main recommendations for Axis 1

Recommendations regarding overall implementation procedures and management

One of the main recommendations is to improve result indicators, in particular on Axis 1, as the general reduction of the fleet capacity does not reflect the actual needs or the actual achievements under the EFF. Instead specific fleet segments targeted in the FEAP should be monitored. Spain also recommended to improve strategic indicators for environmental protection. In addition, in terms of economic impacts Latvia recommended to monitor the value-added in the sector (only the turnover per employee is used as an impact indicator).

In some cases, recommendation concern country-specific issues, such as reducing red-tape in Greece, revise the selection criteria for modernisation in Latvia (regarding the obligation of being in the Latvian Fleet Register for 5 years), or reducing the timeframe to actually decommission once the project has been approved in Bulgaria.

Measure 1.1

Besides improving indicators, in Ireland it is recommended to perform a detailed ex-ante assessment before implementing a new decommissioning scheme.

Measure 1.2

Recommendations on measure 1.2 illustrate the divergence of opinions on this measure depending on MS. On one hand, In Portugal, the evaluation highlights the need to reinforce temporary cessations as a key element to make the fishing industry more sustainable. On the other hand, in Sweden it is recommended to remove it as it is ineffective.

Measure 1.3

There are three main recommendations for measure 1.3:

- There is a need to receive clear guidelines from the Commission regarding the eligibility of projects (cf. interpretation of the regulation regarding increasing the ability to catch fish)
- The focus on selectivity should be increased, either through improved or increased communication, relying on methodological notes for instance (Bulgaria, Germany and Italy) or through improved selection criteria, possibly involving the industry in the process (Denmark)
- To remedy the lack of private funding, assistance should be provided to applicants with business planning and accessing match funding such as commercial credit. In addition, where individual applications are likely to be below the minimum threshold project spend and create a large administrative burden, potential for collective actions with industry representatives could be explored (UK)

⁹ According to the UK evaluation report FLAGS have already been selected although the strategies have not been validated yet

Measure 1.4

No specific recommendation has been made regarding the under-achievement of this measure, except increase communication.

Measure 1.5

Recommendations for this measure are specific to the MS context and concern an increase focus or one or the other of the types of operations.

Table 12: Recommendations for Axis 1

BG	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Shorter term for the execution of the contracts and enhanced monitoring, for instance quarterly (measure 1.1)– Revise indicators and determine quantitative targets associated with reduction of the fishing effort (measure 1.1.)– Communicate towards fishermen on the importance of investments in selectivity, safety and hygiene (measure 1.3.)– Improve promotion of measure 1.4 and communicate on good practices
CY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Measure 1.3 seems to cover significant needs of the sector and a new Call should thus be launched– Measure 1.5 related to New Fishermen should be relaunched with additional funding. In addition, the MA should try to agree with specific Cypriot Banks to improve access to bank loans– Simplify application procedures
DE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Conduct studies to explore possibilities and scenarios to secure the future of marine fisheries– Introduce longer periods to promote activities to improve the quality of selectivity
DK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Evaluate the criteria for selective fishery and for the "young fishermen" program to figure out which criteria prevent applications within this area.
EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The final target levels should be adjusted to correspond to the actual situation– The first indicator ("fleet GT and kW") should be changed because the indicator and source data doesn't actually measure the reduction of fishing capacity and the impact of the programme.
EL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Accelerate the evaluation process of proposals submitted under Measure 1.– Urgent completion of regulatory framework for issuing the Calls of Axis 1 (not yet published)– Expand the use of Technical Assistance to accelerate the implementation of the OP
ES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Revise the methodology to calculate the indicator for the reduction of the fishing effort and improve strategic indicators for environmental protection.
FR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Increase allocated funds for axis 1 (in particular for modernization)– The measure 1.4 was not set up : this measure is inefficient and has to be reformed.
IE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– As recommended in the draft Value for Money Review of the 2005-06 and 2008 Decommissioning Schemes, a detailed ex-ante assessment should be carried out to determine the extent to which any further decommissioning is required and any decision to proceed with such a scheme should await the findings of this assessment.
IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– While keeping the same level of expenditure of measure 1.1, speed up the implementation of other measures of Axis 1. In particular, for the measure 1.3, evaluate the need to assign someone who would certify that the operations are realized in coherence with the community provisions.– Need from the Commission to provide the MS with clear guidelines about eligible/not eligible modernisation tools in the shortest delay.– Need from the central MA to set up clear and comprehensive methodological notes to help the regional bodies boosting the implementation.
LT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Assess the fishing effort adjustment in the Lithuanian coastal fishery.– Promote the modernization of fishing vessels– Review the compensation mechanisms for fishermen who lose their jobs as a result of permanent cessation of fishing activities (Regulation No ET. 2792/1999).– Review the compensation for early departure from the fishing sector, size and manner of payment or refuse the implementation of this activity.– Review support measures for young fishermen or refuse the measure.

LV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reduce the requirement for a fishing vessel to be registered in the list of the Ministry of Agriculture or in the Latvian Vessel Register from five years to two years, in order to benefit of measure 1.3 – Reallocate funds from measure 1.3 to other measures of Axis 1 and to measure 2.1 (productive investments in aquaculture) – Revise the payments under socio-economic measures to avoid that the compensation exceeds the actual income of potential beneficiaries – Resolve new needs of the fishery sector by supporting the following position in the European Commission: support construction of fishery vessels; favor economic return and increase support intensity for investments in the equipment of fishing vessels and selectivity. – Improve result indicators so that they are achievable and directly affected by the implemented measures – Tonnage and power of the fishing fleet should be differentiated depending on specific measures (particularly relevant for the Baltic Sea fleet) – In addition to indicators of turnover per employee, added value per employee should be considered.
MT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should investigate the underlying causes of the increase in GT and kW and take the necessary corrective action in order to ensure that the effect of external factors are minimised , if and whenever possible. – Stop measure 1.3 (lack of interest from the sector) and re-allocate funds towards Measure 1.1. – Deliver another round of training to fishermen
NL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Specific attention should be devoted to the certifying of the still available budgets under measure 1.3.
PT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase support to maintain fleet capacity and permit its necessary restructuration - improved fuel use... – Evaluate the possibility to include the issue of vessel construction, the OP only taking into account modernization and restructuration – Reinforce the measure for temporary cessation of fishing activities as it is a key element to make the fishing industry sustainable
RO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The funds allocated to Axis 1 are overestimated and should be re-allocated to Axis 2
SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stop spending on measure 1.1 and investigate what other types of measures may contribute to the objectives of reducing capacity. – Stop measure 1.2 – Adjust selection criteria for measure 1.3 to increase focus on selective gears. – Review the measure for small-scale coastal fisheries – Prioritize support for diversification of activities.
SI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The admission threshold for investments, which is not regulated by EU, should be lowered. – Possibilities should be explored for a greater level of EU co-financing from EFF.
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assistance should be provided to applicants (particularly those under Axis 1) with business planning and accessing match funding such as commercial credit. – Where individual applications are likely to be below the minimum threshold project spend and create a large administrative burden, explore the potential for collective actions with industry representatives.

Source: National interim evaluations

5.3 Effectiveness of Axis 2

This section provides a summary of the main analysis, conclusions and recommendations made in response to the evaluation question EQ8. What are the preliminary results achieved by the Axis 2 projects (when applicable) in relation to mid-term targets of the OP?

Axis 2 establishes measures for aquaculture, inland fishing, processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products. Measures of axis 2 aim to support the development of these sectors. The evaluation reports were expected to assess the extent to which the operations contribute to the achievement of the objectives assigned to this axis (development of competitiveness of operating structures and economically viable enterprises, but also enhancement of the environment).

a. Overall state of implementation

All Member States have implemented Axis 2, except Ireland.

Ireland decided not to adopt Axis 2 for two key reasons:

- a desire to focus EFF support on a few key areas, particularly given the size of the Programme, rather than spreading it across a wider range of support areas;
- the belief, at the time the Programme was originally drafted in 2007 and 2008, that Ireland's good financial position would provide the resources necessary for support under Axis 2 through the Irish National Seafood Programme.

Ireland also wanted to minimise the perceived heavy administrative burden associated with EFF funding.

Among Member states which have programmed Axis 2, only Malta had not committed any amount as at 31 December 2010.

Table 13: State of implementation of Axis 2 as at 31.12.210 (in Euros)

MS - Axis 2	EFF programmed	EFF committed (1)	% EFF committed
ES	322 048 245	136 203 574	42%
PL	146 818 515	94 325 248	64%
IT	106 085 713	39 271 040	37%
PT	78 058 495	36 360 440	47%
LV	46 128 750	33 742 263	73%
EL	59 689 538	20 900 000	35%
UK	33 589 711	19 900 858	59%
LT	22 431 005	17 918 038	80%
EE	24 583 929	16 356 881	67%
DE	57 560 225	15 713 697	27%
DK	37 649 524	12 800 000	34%
FR	59 029 212	11 593 000	20%
RO	105 000 000	11 450 083	11%
HU	24 163 925	9 777 301	40%
CZ	11 926 937	9 756 750	82%
BG	36 004 371	7 373 757	20%
FI	16 990 000	5 258 270	31%
AT	5 164 318	5 164 318	100%
SE	10 932 961	3 930 566	36%
SK	10 467 810	3 361 955	32%
NL	7 379 398	3 229 532	44%
CY	3 250 000	1 812 991	56%
SI	7 141 293	1 512 840	21%
BE	3 500 000	141 149	4%
MT	1 760 250	0	0%
TOTAL	1 237 354 125	517 854 549	42%

(1) source: annual report, except for France, Germany and Slovenia: evaluation report

Spain is the first beneficiary for this axis with 26% of committed EFF. The first 5 Member states (Spain, Poland, Italy, Portugal, Latvia) represent 56 % of programmed EFF and 66% of committed EFF, but only 46% of certified expenditure.

Table 14: State of implementation of Axis 2 by measure

	Commitments Total (€) – 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF (€)- 31.10.2010	Payments Total (€)- 31.10.2010	Payments EFF (€)- 31.10.2010	Nb Projects - 31.10.2010
TOTAL	747 337 844	389 804 307	221 019 878	115 951 419	2 970
2.1	249 865 327	147 388 946	59 817 430	40 125 283	1 679
	33%	38%	27%	35%	57%
2.2	4 554 206	1 850 884	1 984 449	661 448	281
	1%	0%	1%	1%	9%
2.3	492 918 311	240 564 477	159 217 999	75 164 688	1 010
	66%	62%	72%	65%	34%

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011) and national evaluations

Measures 2.3 (fish processing and marketing) and 2.1 (aquaculture) represent 72% and 27% respectively, of paid EFF for Axis 2. Measure 2.2 (inland fishing) accounts for less than 1%.

b. Overall effectiveness

Concerning the EFF programme's state of progress as at 31/12/2010, the overall level of effectiveness is average.

The level of effectiveness can be considered as good in 6 Member states (Cyprus, Finland, Latvia, Malta, United Kingdom and Czech Republic) and poor in 5 countries (Bulgaria, France, Greece, Portugal and Italy). In most Member states, the level of effectiveness is balanced.

	Priority axis 2: Aquaculture, inland fishing, processing and marketing of fishing and aquaculture products	Measure 2.1: Aquaculture	Measure 2.2. Inland fishing	Measure 2.3. Fish processing and marketing
BG	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak
CY	N/A	Good	N/A	Good
DE	Balanced	Balanced	Weak	Balanced
DK	Balanced	Balanced	N/A	Good
EE	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced
FI	Good	Good	Good	Good
FR	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak
GR	N/A	Weak	N/A	Weak
HU	Balanced	Balanced	Weak	Balanced
IE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
LV	Good	Good	Weak	Good
MT	Good	Good	N/A	Good
PT	Weak	Weak	N/A	Weak
RO	Balanced	Good	Weak	Weak
SK	Balanced	Balanced	N/A	Balanced
SL	Balanced	Weak	N/A	Balanced
SE	Balanced	Balanced	N/A	Good
UK	Good	Balanced	N/A	Balanced
ES	Balanced	Good	Weak	Good
CZ	Good	Good	Weak	Balanced
IT	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak

Measure 2.2 (inland fishing) proved to be ineffective in most countries. In only one Member state (Finland) effectiveness is successful, but this country is also –and by far – the biggest user of this measure.

Effectiveness of Measure 2.1 (aquaculture) is poor in some major aquaculture MS (France, Greece, Portugal, Italy) but good in Spain.

Measure 2.3 (processing and marketing) is rather effective in 7 Member states (including the biggest beneficiary of the measure, being Spain), rather ineffective in 6 Member states and with mitigated results in 7.

c. Measure 2.1 – Aquaculture

State of implementation

17 Member states have committed more than €1M of EFF in aquaculture projects in the first period of the programme, out of which 11 have committed more than €5M in EFF subsidies.

It is worth emphasising that the weight of contributions to freshwater aquaculture is very significant. Indeed grants have been strongly requested not only for marine shellfish and finfish farming but also for inland pond aquaculture. And the projects regarding inland aquaculture represent more than 50% of overall EFF commitments in measure 2.1.

Axis 2 - State of implementation as at 31.12.2010

Measure 2.1	Commitments Total	Commitments EFF	Payments Total	Payments EFF	Nb Projects - 31.10.2010
Poland	34 264 552	25 698 414	8 691 489	6 518 617	217
Romania	31 596 035	23 697 026	0	4 310 287	25
Spain	41 077 919	21 569 518	12 714 125	5 883 020	na
Italy	20 277 571	10 955 453	6 342 604	3 171 302	179
Hungary	12 536 071	9 395 357	4 301 891	3 226 418	61
Portugal	20 958 692	8 795 711	966 155	710 271	37
Czech Republic	11 321 019	8 490 764	3 846 481	2 884 860	350
Denmark	16 617 450	8 308 725	3 000 000	1 500 000	na
France	18 340 764	7 826 019	na	2 203 000	na
Germany	8 313 741	5 190 227	5223442	3 382 483	376
Estonia	6 800 090	5 100 067	1 432 744	1 074 558	21
Bulgaria	4 622 826	3 467 119	306 230	229 672	13
Slovakia	2 647 571	1 985 678	1 605 665	1 204 248	22
Sweden	3 912 089	1 942 863	1 990 678	982 158	79
Netherlands	5 700 000	1 900 000	1 200 000	500 000	40
Austria	3 315 842	1 675 771	2 027 170	1 023 610	148
Finland	7 375 856	1 296 329	5 452 465	962 494	90
Belgium	186 094	93 047	0	0	2
Lithuania	1 145	858	557	418	7
Cyprus	0	0	715 734	357 867	12
Total	249 865 327	147 388 946	59 817 430	40 125 283	1 679

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011) and national evaluations

Aqua-environmental measures

Projects concerned

The measures offered by the MS under aqua-environmental measures (measure 2.1.1) are not always clearly specified in the OPs or in the evaluation documents. Only 6 of them (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Spain, France, Lithuania) specify that conversion to organic farming is part of aqua-environmental measures. EMAS labeling is mentioned in three MS (Cyprus, Spain, Lithuania), construction of farms in Natura 2000 territories in only two (Latvia and Romania). Environmental management of farming ponds is also an aqua-environmental measure in France and Latvia.

Implementation issues

Most Member states do not refer to any specific issues regarding the implementation of aqua-environmental measures. Three of them (Bulgaria, France and Poland) mention the lack of understanding of the measure; Bulgaria underlines the difficulty to apply for it, the vagueness of definitions and the need for external consultants.

One Member state (France) quotes as a problem the fact that the support to organic farming goes only to conversion but not for the consolidation of already organic farms.

Other implementation issues referred to by Member states are:

- the lack of compliance with local legislation on the protection of nature and landscape (Czech Republic),
- the inapplicability of the measure for managing the public maritime domain (France),
- the length of authorization procedures in the case of water-environmental investments (Hungary),
- the absence of interest of project managers (Portugal),
- the uncertainties on Natura 2000 management and custody (Romania).

Public health and animal health measures

There is no use of the measure dedicated to health measures (measure 2.1.2) to date.

France underlines that the eligibility criteria of the public health measure are not adapted to the reality of the shellfish farming sector and that the animal health measure is considered ineffective by the finfish farming sector. The latter plans subsidies for eradication of diseases only within the limits of a national plan but can be mobilized neither for individual or local eradications nor for prevention actions.

Issues affecting the aquaculture sector

Among the main issues affecting the aquaculture sector, the disease issue is the most quoted (in 6 out of 20 evaluations usable in this respect). Other issues frequently mentioned are the difficulty to obtain bank loans (5 MS), the problem of licenses leading to the uncertainty of concessions (4 MS), the increased competition from third countries (4 MS) and the lack of national strategy (4 MS). Other issues also mentioned are the technical difficulties with growing new species, the weight of the tradition, the administrative burdens, the lack of sectoral statistics, and the support to some non-profitable species.

There is good potential for developing aquaculture if the permit system for aquaculture can be adjusted at the same time with the running of the operational programme to become more permissive. A dialogue has started with environmental authorities through the Aquaculture Development Programme that runs alongside the operational programme. The development programme has considerable potential for increasing the effectiveness of EFF funding. Without increasing production volumes in aquaculture, the effectiveness of the EFF programme remains modest.

Quote from the Finnish National Evaluation Report

Results

Projects implemented predominantly concern extension and modernisation of existing farms. Construction of new farms is limited to a few new Member states (Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia).

Thanks to EFF support, production capacity has increased in many MS, but this has not always brought about production increases due to external factors such as the financial crisis, price of wild fish and low-priced imports.

Data available do not allow the evolution of the sector's profitability to be determined. Out of 9 Member states providing information on this point, 4 observe an increase in the profitability of the sector over the period, 4 a decrease and 1 no particular change.

Only seven Member states have a profitability indicator (Austria, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Sweden and Slovakia), and major fish farming countries have none. This indicator varies to a large extent from one Member state to another, and therefore comparison is not possible: ranging from

"average annual earnings of farms" (Hungary) to a combination of four economic and financial ratios (profit/revenues, revenues/total assets, assets/equity, return on equity (Slovakia) through a position on a 1-to-4-scale to indicate the contribution of the projects to industry competitiveness" (Portugal).

A few MS (Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Spain) record an increase in the number of jobs over the period. The total number of jobs created due to the EFF in these four countries amounts to 285, half of these in Spain.

<u>Jobs created</u>					
	Austria	Bulgaria	Germany	Spain	Total
Women	4	14		19	
Men	18	65		122	
Total	22	79	43	141	285

Environmental results are very limited. In the 14 MS for which analysis is possible, the number of productive investment projects exceeds by far the number of aqua-environmental projects: 2 340 vs. 383.

<u>Number of EFF-supported projects in the aquaculture sector</u>															
	AT	CZ	DE	ES	FR	LT	LV	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SK	SI	Total
Number of productive investment projects	140	332	407	292	744	7	27	0	50	241	37	27	26	10	2 340
Number of aqua-environmental projects	15	0	11	4	48	19	27	0	11	210	25	13	0	0	383

The highest proportion of aqua-environmental projects is observed in the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia).

Environmental impact assessment

In most cases the obligation of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) generally does not appear to have prevented some potential beneficiaries from applying, even if the procedure has sometimes been deemed as too slow and likely to hamper project completion. Nevertheless, for three Member states (Hungary, Malta, UK) this obligation can have negative effects on applying.

"Environmental impact assessments partly hinder the realisation of aquaculture projects since applicants occasionally fail to allow for the time needed for this, thus they miss the deadline for submission."

Quote from the Hungarian National Evaluation Report

For instance in the United Kingdom aquaculture production requires a license from environmental agencies and any change to production amounts requires some form of assessment. For new projects an EIA is a standard requirement, but expansion does not always require this (with opportunities to move into vacated, licensed sites). Therefore insisting on an EIA for EFF funding is reported to have dissuaded some prospective applicants of small projects.

Out of the 8 national evaluations usable in this respect, 7 refer to the delays caused by the assessment as a main problem. Other problems quoted are the cost of the impact assessment (1 case) and the lack of adaptation of standard EIA to the aquaculture sector (1 case).

Poland also highlights a problem specific to projects implemented in the regions situated within or at the border of NATURA 2000: in this case the procedures for obtaining the relevant permits, preceded

by the assessment of environmental impact of the project, may affect the implementation time of the operations.

d. Measure 2.2 – Inland fishing

The measure has been implemented and significantly used in only a few Member states (Finland, Italy, Germany, Estonia, Sweden).

With 61% of overall EFF commitments and 65% of overall EFF payments, Finland is by far the major user of the measure. In Finland inland fishing represents 8,2% of all EFF payments made for Axis 2 (EU average : 0,8%).

Measure 2.2	Commitments Total	Commitments EFF	Payments Total	Payments EFF	Nb Projects - 31.10.2010
Finland	3 347 491	1 125 775	1 596 827	432 453	100
Italy	365 173	183 771	17 517	8 759	57
Germany	233 804	153 798	178 592	112 996	41
Poland	204 819	153 614	38 617	28 963	12
Estonia	126 518	94 888	4 598	3 448	10
Sweden	124 971	62 486	83 859	41 930	23
France	79 200	39 600	0	0	na
Austria	68 880	34 440	61 720	30 860	19
Lithuania	3 350	2 512	2 719	2 039	19
Total 9 MS	4 554 206	1 850 884	1 984 449	661 448	281

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011) and national evaluations

Projects are mostly related to existing fishing facilities. 8 national evaluations present elements of information on the nature of projects. In 4 of these 8 Member states concerned, projects have predominantly related to existing fishing facilities. In two Member states projects relate to new fishing facilities and in the other two, they concern fishing vessels.

Some implementation issues regarding inland fishing measures are mentioned. Red tape is the most quoted: inland fisheries investments are quite small and transaction costs are proportionally too high. This issue is followed by the level of public co-financing and the low investment capacity (due to the small size of companies).

Poland also highlights that the objectives of the measure are not in congruous with the specificity of activities of potential beneficiaries, which resulted in little interest in the early stage of programming and consequently in the reallocation of funds to measure 2.2 (aqua-environmental measures). Latvia stresses the lack of laws governing the management of public waters, which complicates the implementation of projects.

An increase in the number of jobs has been recorded in two MS: Austria and Finland. The increase is marginal in Austria (1 job created). But in Finland the increase is much more significant: the number of jobs in inland fishing was 248 (number of fishermen of category I) at the beginning of the programming period, the objective was 300 in 2013 with an interim target of 250 in 2010. At the end of 2010 the number of 312 jobs was reached, equating to a 26% increase.

e. Measure 2.3 – Fish processing and marketing

State of implementation

Significant commitments have been achieved in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Estonia and Germany, which represent 90% of overall EFF commitments for measure 2.3.

Spain is by far the main user of this measure with 50% of overall EFF payments made.

State of implementation

Measure 2.3	Commitments Total	Commitments EFF	Payments Total	Payments EFF	Nb Projects - 31.10.2010
Spain	234 841 400	114 566 800	83 561 126	37 795 441	na
Portugal	51 673 015	27 391 303	9 844 539	6 834 781	67
Poland	34 036 631	25 527 473	8 119 367	6 089 525	103
Italy	55 468 112	28 131 815	8 311 070	4 155 537	135
Estonia	14 882 567	11 161 926	4 585 783	3 439 337	60
Germany	28 014 398	10 369 673	8 753 651	5 833 552	132
Finland	40 307 562	5 209 793	25 277 342	3 193 080	263
France	10 079 987	4 439 931	na	1 605 000	na
Denmark	6 255 034	3 127 517	3 000 000	1 500 000	na
Romania	3 784 731	2 838 548	na	523 388	4
Sweden	3 851 950	1 925 975	2 512 702	1 256 352	80
Austria	3 467 740	1 734 335	2 954 280	1 477 605	94
Czech Rep	1 835 383	1 376 537	583 683	437 762	26
Netherlands	2 400 000	1 300 000	500 000	400 000	10
Slovakia	1 383 299	1 007 474	53 283	53 283	9
Hungary	536 296	402 222	42 520	31 890	3
Belgium	88 000	44 000	44 000	0	1
Lithuania	12 206	9 155	3 318	2 488	7
Cyprus	0	0	1 071 335	535 667	16
Total	492 918 311	240 564 477	159 217 999	75 164 688	1 010

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011) and national evaluations

Implementation issues

The three major implementation issues have been the administrative burden, the difficulty of access to bank loans and the restriction of the measure to SMEs.

The targeting of SMEs is an appropriate target for most Member states but may have limited the demand for support in some cases.

To solve the problem of access to credit a few Member states (Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, and Portugal) have set up a loan fund.

A few other solutions have been considered to facilitate implementation. For instance in Finland discussions have been launched with environmental authorities in order to relieve the environmental restrictions

Results

Projects implemented are predominantly aiming at increasing production capacity (type of project quoted in 11 out of the 16 evaluations usable), improving production systems in processing facilities (also quoted in 11 evaluations), improving hygiene/working conditions in processing facilities (quoted 10 times) and improving environmental conditions in processing facilities (7 times).

To a lesser extent projects implemented concern improving systems in marketing facilities (quoted in 3 national evaluations), construction of new marketing establishments (quoted 2 times), improving hygiene/working conditions in marketing facilities (2 times), improving environmental conditions in marketing facilities (1 time) and processing/marketing products waste (1 time).

« As regards the fish processing sector, the intermediary target (+7% for the turnover of the fish processing companies) is difficult to monitor at constant scope: the 2010 Annual Execution Report gives an account of 300 companies and 14 000 jobs for the starting year, decreasing in 2008 (214 companies, 12 000 jobs) and increasing in 2009 (311 companies, 15 590 jobs). Anyhow this objective is little meaningful as the rise in the cost of raw materials has led to an increase of the sales but in the same time to a drop in margins. Indeed margins have been eroded because the actors of the fish processing sector acted as a buffer between upstream operators and large retailers. This situation has been detrimental to the financial performances of processing companies.»

Quote from the French National Evaluation Report

Impact on employment

EFF has positive impacts on employment in the fish processing and marketing sector. In the 5 Member states represented in the table below (and which represent 69% of overall EFF commitments), EFF has contributed to the creation of more than 3 400 jobs.

	Austria	Czech Rep.	Germany	Spain	Portugal	Total
Women	18	10		1 323		
Men	25			1 448		
Total	43	10	304	2 771	349	3 477

Source: national evaluations and annual execution reports

But such positive effects have not been noticed in all Member states that have dedicated significant amounts to the implementation of this measure. In Finland for instance the activity of the processing sector has increased (the amount of fish used rose from 65 000 t to 75 000 t – thanks to imported raw materials) but employment did not keep pace: the number of jobs in the marketing/processing sector decreased from 1 950 to 1 730, whereas the interim target for 2010 was 2 050.

Concerning the environment, most national evaluations stress that the EFF has not encouraged a greater focus on the environment (this point is also valid for aquaculture and inland fishing). There is clearly a greater focus on this area but it is not stated that it is encouraged by EFF.

f. Overall conclusions for Axis 2

The production capacity of operating structures in the aquaculture sector has increased in many Member states, although actual production has not increased accordingly, due to external factors.

Profitability is not monitored in the major fish farming Member states.

The projects implemented in aquaculture under Measure 2.1 have been dedicated primarily to productive investments.

The requirement for an environmental impact assessment has hampered the implementation of aquaculture projects in a limited number of Member states.

The implementation of aqua-environmental measures did not experience major problems. On the other hand the implementation of animal health and public health measures has been hampered by their unsuitability. For instance in France the eligibility criteria for the public health measure are not adapted to the reality of the shellfish farming sector. And the animal health measure, which plans subsidies for disease eradication in the framework of a national plan, is considered as ineffective by the finfish farming sector because it can be mobilized neither for individual or local eradication actions

nor for prevention actions.

Inland fishing measure 2.2 has been implemented only in a few Member states and did not have any noticeable impacts except in Finland (which is by far the main user of the measure).

Projects implemented in inland fisheries concern mostly existing fishing facilities.

Implementation has been hampered by the weight of administrative burden (for small projects) and low investment capacity of stakeholders.

Measure 2.3 has drawn the biggest portion of the funds programmed for Axis 2.

Projects implemented mostly concern increasing production capacity, improvement of production systems and improvement of hygiene and working conditions in processing facilities.

Administrative burden, difficulty of access to bank loans and restriction of eligibility to SMEs have been the main implementation issues.

Projects granted have positive impacts on employment but indicators and national evaluations do not enable an assessment of the extent to which they contribute to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the industry.

g. Recommendations for Axis 2

The main points reported by national evaluations in terms of recommendations on Axis 2 on the whole concern administrative procedures and indicators:

- **a further simplification of administrative procedures is requested**, especially in the context of the targeting of SMEs; an advance payment opportunity should also be introduced in order not to exclude small companies from eligibility to EFF grants due to lack of own resources.
- **result indicators should be amended since they widely depend on external factors and do not allow the net impacts of the measures to be clearly measured**

As regards measure 2.1 (aquaculture) there is no clear position of Member states : some of them recommend to focus EFF support on innovative technologies and diversification of species, whereas others recommend funding branches and companies which need it most.

As regards measure 2.2 (inland fishing), it is often recommended to include it in the Axis 1 dedicated to the fleet (and in the Axis 3 measure 3.3 for projects devoted to landing facilities).

For measure 2.3 (processing and marketing) differences also exist between Member states which recommend to make EFF support also possible for larger companies and MS which appeal for a strengthened focus on SMEs.

Some MS specific recommendations are as follows:

Table: Recommendations for Axis 2

DE	– Coordination for environmental measures in fish farming
AT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Always consult the different concerned actors and intermediate bodies– Decrease the cost of evaluation– Improve the communication network between the actors– Maintain or increase the level of financing– Make a long-term plan (in order to create a better monitoring)– Iron out the differences between the Austrian regions– Put the emphasis on durability
BG	– Assess market potential for species likely to be helped and define specific aid limits

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Intensify control on farms to better focus subsidies on efficient farms – Decrease administrative burden for small projects – Expand the number of indicators for project appraisal and hire external evaluators
CY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Organize events/seminars targeting aquaculture companies and focusing on the need to respect and protect the environment
CZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reduce administrative complexity – Stress more strongly gender equality in selection criteria – Provide equal access to potential support also to medium-sized companies
DK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Make a status of present projects under axis 2 to figure out what is the reason behind cancellation of projects. – Evaluate future aquaculture applications more on the basis of economic viability. – Include extra help from expert consultants with key knowledge about the sector.
EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduce indicators which really measure the impact of the programme.
EL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Publish full regulatory framework for issuing the Calls of Axis 2 – Expand the use of TA for supporting the Managing Authority and (mainly) the Special Implementation Service of the OP for Fisheries for accelerating the implementation pace of the OP
ES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adjust methodology to calculate indicator on added value of processing industry and improve strategic indicators for environmental protection.
FI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage innovative aquaculture pilot projects using new species and new technologies. – Strengthen cooperation of aquaculture companies and environmental authorities in order to relieve the restrictions limiting the growth of the sector.
FR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reform public health or animal health measures – Create a new dynamic of information toward the potential beneficiaries (especially processing sector)
IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create a work group within the Direction Committee in charge of coping with and resolving process uncertainty.
LT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assess the fishing effort adjustment in the Lithuanian inland waters fishery. – Promote the modernization of inland water fishery vessels by organizing meetings with local experts. – Identify the list of priority fishing infrastructure objects in the Curonian Lagoon. – Give priority to the processing of locally caught raw materials. – Limit the maximum amount of support to 1-1.5 mil. Lt for a single project.
LV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review and supplement the indicators included in the supervision system, making possible to evaluate the economic rationale of projects and their impact with consideration of set goals.
PL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review the measures that may lead to increased profitability and growth in the aquaculture sector. – Use best practices to develop more effective methods and tools in the aquaculture sector. – Focus on support for projects that lead to reduced environmental impact. – Identify the initiatives that have led to increased profitability and efficiency in the processing industry and prioritize the granting of applications that improve the profitability of the industry – Develop clear targets and indicators for inland fisheries in order to invest in projects that benefit the target area of Managing Authority and Intermediate Body and limit autonomy of regional branches.
SI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Organise joint events (workshops) with aquaculture operators and national institutions to present best practices from other countries as well as possibilities offered by new technologies with minimum environmental impact.
PT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage the most innovative projects – Support more projects related to internationalization and international commercialization
SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review the measures that may lead to increased profitability and growth in the aquaculture sector. – Use best practices to develop more effective methods and tools in the aquaculture sector. – Focus on support for projects that lead to reduced environmental impact. – Identify the initiatives that have led to increased profitability and efficiency in the processing industry and prioritize the granting of applications that improve the profitability of the industry – Develop clear targets and indicators for inland fisheries in order to invest in projects that benefit the target area.
SK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support the introduction of new technologies, the extension of product ranges and the building of new farming facilities. – Favour the establishment of small sales outlets directly at the farm – Support the protection of stocks against predators.
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prioritise collective industry actions, new developments, innovation, bio-security and fish health. – Set new targets specific to the priority areas and sub-sectors.

Source: National interim evaluations

5.4 Effectiveness of Axis 3

This section provides a summary of main analysis, conclusions and recommendations made in response to evaluation question EQ9. What are the preliminary results achieved by the Axis 3 projects (when applicable) in relation to mid-term targets of the OP?

The objective of Axis 3 is to support measures of common interest with broader scope than measures normally undertaken by private enterprises and which contribute to meet the objectives of the CFP, such as collective actions, projects aiming at protection of aquatic fauna and flora, investments in fishing ports, landing sites and shelters, operations to promote fisheries and aquaculture products, pilot projects, etc.

a. Overall state of implementation and effectiveness

A wide range of projects may qualify for funding from Axis 3, which is dedicated to supporting measures of common interest with a broader scope than measures normally undertaken by private enterprises. The aim of this Axis is to foster cooperation and organisation amongst stakeholders in order to contribute to an improved competitiveness and productivity of organisations, as well as to enhance the sustainability of the fisheries sector.

Table 15: State of implementation of Axis 3 as at 31.12.210 (in Euros)

MS - Axis 3	EFF programmed	EFF committed (1)	% EFF committed
AT	50 000	50 000	100%
BE	7 900 000	2 312 832	29%
BG	20 002 426		0%
CY	12 924 418	8 285 849	64%
CZ	13 824 404	5 382 000	39%
DE	68 687 844	31 686 704	46%
DK	36 515 266	25 500 000	70%
EE	21 209 664	11 123 332	52%
EL	32 320 240	5 513 610	17%
ES	298 755 660	100 121 596	34%
FI	14 783 827	5 181 497	35%
FR	83 049 416	38 428 000	46%
HU	8 944 392		0%
IE	6 000 000	276 844	5%
IT	108 207 428	14 947 797	14%
LT	9 249 241	1 350 157	15%
LV	24 153 000	16 615 389	69%
MT	4 095 079		0%
NL	16 903 461	9 488 495	56%
PL	146 818 515	85 228 264	58%
PT	90 026 920	44 142 847	49%
RO	30 000 000		0%
SE	19 132 681	11 224 482	59%
SI	7 574 097	5 181 062	68%
SK	2 536 292	0	0%
UK	49 620 896	29 083 742	59%
TOTAL	1 133 285 167	418 147 084	37%

(1) source: annual report, except for France, Germany and Slovenia: evaluation report

With a total commitment rate of 37% (EUR 418 147 984 of commitments) at the end of December 2010, the implementation of Axis 3 was equivalent to Axes 1 and 2.

All MS have programmed EFF funds towards Axis 3 measures. However, five MS (Bulgaria, Hungary, Malta, Romania and Slovakia) have not made any Axis 3 commitments as at December 2010. Two of these MS seem to have committed a few projects Measure 3.3 since, as presented in their respective evaluation reports (Development of the port Midia infrastructure in Romania and two Maltese projects for the upgrading of port infrastructure at Marsaxlokk).

The MS that have committed the most funds to Axis 3 projects to date are Spain, Poland, Portugal, Germany and France. Spain has the largest Axis 3 budget (26% of the total Axis 3 EFF budget).

From a priority measure perspective, the table below illustrates the commitments to date towards each measure within Axis 3 (*NB: no data was provided per measure for UK; and data for Slovenia and Latvia reveal some inconsistencies between measure level and total Axis level data. For this reason, these three MS have been excluded from the Measure-level analysis*).

Table 16: State of implementation of Axis 3 by measure

	Commitments Total – 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF - 31.10.2010	Payments Total – 31.10.2010	Payments EFF - 31.10.2010	No. Projects – 31.10.2010
TOTAL	561 410 232	360 198 015	201 028 493	108 871 608	1 989
3.1	124 688 096	88 068 095	41 770 691	29 594 171	1 169
	22%	24%	21%	27%	59%
3.2	56 124 374	38 220 203	18 784 485	4 296 235	134
	10%	11%	9%	4%	7%
3.3	217 058 000	147 170 530	70 271 503	41 279 761	276
	39%	41%	35%	38%	14%
3.4	99 866 212	44 564 331	54 980 278	23 689 676	234
	18%	12%	27%	22%	12%
3.5	62 719 525	41 697 842	14 267 511	9 534 752	175
	11%	12%	7%	9%	9%
3.6	954 026	477 013	954 026	477 013	1
	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

The projects funded to date under Axis 3 focus mainly on ports infrastructure (Measure 3.3) highlighting the need to improve the quality of existing infrastructure, collective actions (Measure 3.1) and pilot projects (Measure 3.5). Measure 3.6 (Modification for reassignment of fishing vessels) is the least used measure to date.

Concerning the EFF programme's state of progress at the end of December 2010 the overall effectiveness is mitigated.

The level of effectiveness is considered as good in seven MS (Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Latvia and Sweden) and poor in eight countries (Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia).

	Priority Axis 3	Measure 3.1	Measure 3.2	Measure 3.3	Measure 3.4	Measure 3.5	Measure 3.6
BG	N/A	N/A	N/A	Weak	N/A	N/A	N/A
CY	Good	Good	Good	Good	Balanced	N/A	N/A
CZ	Balanced	Balanced	Weak	Weak	Good	Weak	N/A
DE	Balanced	Good	Balanced	Balanced	Good	Good	N/A

	Priority Axis 3	Measure 3.1	Measure 3.2	Measure 3.3	Measure 3.4	Measure 3.5	Measure 3.6
DK	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	N/A
EE	Good	Good	Balanced	N/A	Good	Balanced	N/A
EL	Good	Weak	Balanced	Good	Weak	N/A	Weak
ES	Weak	Good	Weak	Good	Good	Weak	Weak
FI	Good	Good	Weak	Good	Good	Good	N/A
FR	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Balanced	Weak	N/A
HU	Balanced	Weak	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
IE	Weak	Weak	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
IT	Weak	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Weak
LT	Weak	Weak	Weak	N/A	Weak	N/A	N/A
LV	Good	Good	Weak	Balanced	Good	N/A	N/A
MT	N/A	N/A	N/A	Balanced	N/A	N/A	N/A
PT	Weak	Balanced	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak
RO	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SE	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	N/A
SI	Weak	N/A	N/A	N/A	Balanced	N/A	N/A
SK	Weak	Weak	N/A	N/A	Weak	N/A	N/A
UK	N/A	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced	N/A

Source: Desk officers' assessment sheets

b. Measure 3.1 Collective action

Under Measure 3.1 the EFF can fund projects of common interest which are implemented with the active support of operators themselves, or by organisations acting on behalf of producers, or other organisations recognised by the MS.

Table 17: State of implementation – Measure 3.1

Measure 3.1	Commitments Total 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF 31.10.2010	Payments Total 31.10.2010	Payments EFF - 31.10.2010	No. Projects – 31.10.2010
Spain	55 176 589	33 274 950	23 842 557	14 004 632	na
France	Na	15 810 537	na	5 600 201	na
Denmark	19 637 584	10 362 416	2 600 000	1 300 000	na
Portugal	10 738 018	7 854 839	823 133	644 024	47
Estonia	10 259 226	7 694 419	4 636 258	3 477 193	10
Finland	8 294 598	3 569 570	6 532 230	2 788 933	897
Netherlands	8 700 000	2 500 000	700 000	400 000	35
Sweden	4 773 909	2 386 955	1 271 080	635 540	31
Poland	1 572 191	1 179 143	217 151	162 863	18
Lithuania	1 297 858	973 394	368 282	276 212	9
Germany	1 327 085	766 877	286 166	201 081	7
Belgium	1 190 872	595 436	434 628	72 650	6
Italy	852 240	426 120	54 244	27 122	20
Ireland	867 925	407 925	0	0	na
Czech Rep	na	265 515	4 961	3 720	19

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

Within this measure, there was a particular interest in projects related to the upgrading of professional skills (Poland, Sweden) and to the promotion of partnership between science/research units and businesses (Belgium, Poland, Czech Republic).

In Spain and Denmark, the priority is given to market transparency, improving traceability and certification. In France and Ireland, environmental considerations were also presented as a priority, with the significant funding of projects related to development and implementation of various Environmental Management Schemes. In Ireland, for example, funding under the Environmental Management and Certification Grant Aid Sub-scheme has been helping vessels to get Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification, which is increasingly becoming a prerequisite requirement from processors in the markets.

In Finland, premia to fishermen that have committed themselves to follow the provisions laid down in the Finnish Seal Management Plan are funded from Measure 3.1, which is not considered as good practice as this reduces the available funds for other measures (those premia could be paid from the national budget).

As to the main beneficiaries of the Measure 3.1, producer organisations were particularly targeted (in Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal), as well as universities, public research bodies and education bodies.

“Many of the applications and approvals made for general cMEPS projects have had either BIM or another State agency (e.g. Marine Institute, SFPA) as a lead applicant or beneficiary. This might suggest that it has been more difficult to generate projects from the industry that have a “common interest” or “collective action” element.

At the same time, it should also be noted that these projects often have industry partners too, with many projects being developed following consultation with industry. In some of these cases, State agencies act as lead partners because industry partners do not have the technical ability or resources to complete the projects unaided.”

Quote from the Irish National Evaluation Report

Concerning implementation issues, the Measure has generally been well understood. In some MS, the level of public co-financing was seen as an obstacle to successful implementation (mainly in Belgium, Ireland, and United Kingdom). Some MS (Bulgaria, Slovakia) mention in addition the underdevelopment of the fisheries sector (few producer organisations, no traditions in building partnerships between businesses, organisational and economic weakness of existing organisations) as an obstacle to the successful implementation of this Measure.

“The scale of public matched funding available, in particular, appears to be putting a significant brake on the level of activity under the Axis, and it seems likely that it will continue to do so for the remaining years of the Programme.”

“Very little impact can be expected given the low implementation.”

“However, consultations with key informants have nonetheless suggested that the limited spend to date has still had some real impacts at a project level. For example, funding under the Environmental Management and Certification Grant Aid Sub-scheme has been helping vessels to get Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification, which is increasingly becoming a prerequisite requirement for processors in the markets.”

Quote from the Irish National Evaluation Report

c. Measure 3.2 Promotion and development of aquatic fauna and flora

EFF support under Measure 3.2 covers projects intended to protect and develop aquatic fauna and flora such as the construction or installation of static or movable facilities, the rehabilitation of inland waters or the protection and enhancement of the environmental framework of NATURA 2000.

Table 18: State of implementation – Measure 3.2

Measure 3.2	Commitments Total 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF 31.10.2010	Payments Total 31.10.2010	Payments EFF - 31.10.2010	No. Projects – 31.10.2010
Germany	15 286 010	10 231 720	497 057	1 397 921	39
Poland	10 449 451	7 837 089	337 507	253 130	3
Spain	8 385 665	5 526 909	2 260 974	1 436 952	na
Sweden	7 607 383	3 691 982	14 810 834	740 240	21
Denmark	6 577 181	3 288 591	700 000	300 000	na
France	na	2 313 256	na	78 935	na
Portugal	2 818 995	2 114 246	0	0	2
Greece	1 400 853	1 330 810	0	0	1
Belgium	2 589 285	1 294 643	0	0	8
Czech Rep	326 048	244 536	0	0	43
Cyprus	334 814	167 407	171 305	85 652	2
Italy	306 000	153 000	6 808	3 404	7
Estonia	22 689	17 016	0	0	1
Finland	20 000	9 000	0	0	1

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

The projects financed to date under this measure relate to:

- spawning grounds and migration routes (Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Portugal, Poland)
- eel restocking (Czech Republic, United Kingdom)
- setting up of protected marine areas (France, Spain)
- rehabilitation of inland waters (France, United Kingdom)
- artificial reefs (Greece)

Projects under this Measure were implemented mainly by public administration bodies (Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom) varying from local municipalities, prefectures, environmental agencies, etc.

Participation of scientific bodies during different phases of implementation is highlighted as a good practice. In Poland, for example, the established system of verifying the applications by the Team of Experts on Protection and Development of Living Aquatic Resources was seen as very beneficial with regard to securing the issues connected with protection of the natural environment, since this element was one of the most important criteria in choosing the projects to be implemented. In Estonia, the priorities of the activities within the measure have been agreed by the occupational fishing committee, which consists of scientific bodies and public bodies.

Measure 3.2 is the second least used Axis 3 measure. To date, no projects have been financed under this Measure in Latvia, Malta and Romania. As for other measures, low level of public co-financing is mentioned as an obstacle to the implementation of projects in Belgium, Sweden and UK. In Poland, the Measure 3.2 funds were mainly used to build fish ladders – the administrative decision which established an obligation to build fish ladders (very costly) encouraged beneficiaries to search additional sources of finance. As a result, on 31 December 2010 the total value of submitted

applications for this measure reached 240% of the assigned financial limit. In Greece, the recent changes in the administrative/prefecture map of the country have resulted in implementation delays - as some of the main beneficiaries of Measure 3.2 were Prefectures.

d. Measure 3.3 Fishing ports, landing sites and shelters

EFF funding for Measure 3.3 covers investments in existing ports or landing sites, which aim at improving existing infrastructure or offer new services, such as computerisation of auction facilities, modernisation of ice distribution installations, safety improvements to landing areas, etc.

Table 19: State of implementation – Measure 3.3

Measure 3.3	Commitments Total 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF 31.10.2010	Payments Total 31.10.2010	Payments EFF - 31.10.2010	No. Projects – 31.10.2010
Poland	58 590 288	43 942 716	16 363 680	12 272 760	29
Portugal	39 891 764	28 727 928	8 684 672	5 836 798	63
Greece	23 499 849	22 324 857	2 980 800	2 831 760	15
Spain	45 356 454	19 536 274	17 680 928	6 455 458	na
Cyprus	16 236 883	8 118 442	11 730 110	5 865 055	3
France	na	7 357 041	na	394 720	na
Denmark	13 208 054	6 604 027	4 000 000	2 000 000	na
Italy	7 215 668	3 607 834	469 042	234 521	21
Germany	3 258 620	2 848 638	1 699 529	2 700 832	5
Finland	6 496 675	2 450 901	4 693 815	1 703 393	34
Sweden	2 927 462	1 463 731	1 968 927	984 463	16
Belgium	376 282	188 141	0	0	3

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

The projects funded in MS to date mainly relate to investments in:

- fishing ports (Germany, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden).
- landing sites (Latvia, Spain, Malta and Portugal).
- small fishing shelters (Cyprus, Greece).

The main beneficiaries of Measure 3.3 projects were port authorities – varying from trust ports to local authorities and private companies, as harbours in the EU MS are owned and managed under a variety of different structures.

Measure 3.3 was the most used measure among Axis 3 measures in terms of commitments. In Greece, Measure 3.3 projects had the highest commitment of the whole EFF, representing 83% of Greece's total EFF commitments to date. The established rule of financing 100% qualified investment costs in port infrastructure is considered as an important spur to carry out new investments in Poland. Similarly, in Slovenia, the level of co-financing under this measure was higher than under other measures prescribed in OP Fisheries and was therefore also more attractive for beneficiaries.

In terms of implementation issues, some MS mention delays which were caused by:

- ownership and land property problems (Bulgaria and Romania),
- the obligation to create regional patterns about the adjustment of fishing ports (France),
- the change of the Ministry responsible for the Managing Authority (Greece),
- technical problems (Portugal),
- insufficient communication and coordination between the municipalities and the fishing sector as the end user (Slovenia).

Other MS indicate the weak legitimacy of the investments funded under this Measure. In Bulgaria, for example, project selection undertaken according to "first applied - first approved" principle, is considered ineffective as it does not guarantee implementation of the highest priority projects. Similarly, in Poland, the absence of expert technical evaluations led to a situation where investments were financed in ports, which had not served Polish fishing sector for several years or their role was disproportionately low in relation to the cost of planned investment.

e. Measure 3.4 Development of new markets and promotion campaigns

EFF funding under this Measure can help market fish and aquaculture products, in particular those which are normally discarded or are of no commercial interest and those caught and produced using environmentally friendly methods. EFF funds can also support campaigns to improve the image of the fishing industry.

Table 20: State of implementation – Measure 3.4

Measure 3.4	Commitments Total 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF 31.10.2010	Payments Total 31.10.2010	Payments EFF - 31.10.2010	No. Projects – 31.10.2010
Spain	71 253 769	23 117 521	41 823 399	11 696 902	na
Czech Rep	6 141 267	4 605 950	4 669 805	3 502 353	13
France	na	3 753 458	na	2 767 597	na
Poland	4 809 511	3 607 134	2 077 774	1 558 330	38
Portugal	2 015 020	1 428 850	739 473	519 338	9
Denmark	2 604 027	1 302 013	1 400 000	700 000	na
Italy	2 596 917	1 298 458	81 500	40 750	41
Estonia	1 499 329	1 124 497	953 235	714 926	17
Netherlands	2 400 000	1 000 000	900 000	400 000	22
Germany	1 797 086	905 676	557 614	571 884	19
Belgium	1 766 000	883 000	542 763	542 763	5
Sweden	1 548 977	764 079	869 407	438 258	38
Finland	931 958	396 932	110 929	45 791	14
Lithuania	502 351	376 763	254 378	190 784	4

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

Within this measure, there was a particular interest in:

- campaigns for fisheries and aquaculture products (Italy, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden);
- operations to promote quality certification (France, Germany, Portugal and Spain);
- campaigns to improve the image of fisheries (France, the Netherlands and Spain);

The main beneficiaries of these projects were producer organisations (Estonia, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom) and to a lesser extent local public administration and associations (Poland and Portugal).

In the Czech Republic, Measure 3.4 was the most successful measure under Axis 3 in terms of both the number of decisions issued (85% of axis 3), and the level of disbursement (nearly 100% of axis 3). The 'Ryba domácí' communication campaign (press, radio, TV, cooking courses, internet, etc.), which was launched in 2008, has positively influenced the whole sector. The resulting development of freshwater fish consumption in Czech Republic is apparent.

As to the implementation issues, the level of public co-financing is mentioned as an obstacle to successful implementation by Belgium and Italy. In Poland, while the procedure applied to selection of

operations is considered to be transparent, it does not employ any criteria for selection of promotional activities in terms of best achievement of objectives. As a result, activities in promotion of fish and fish products were carried out in a highly random nature and in many cases there was no clear connection to the fish market, particularly the domestic one. In addition, the selection criteria do not take into account the interest of environment protection. An example may be eel promoted in a situation, where Poland implements Eel Management Plan and the European Commission introduced restrictions on trade in European eel until the end of 2011.

f. Measure 3.5 Pilot operations

Research projects or pilots to test features like innovative technology, methods to reduce by-catches and discards and alternative types of fishing management techniques qualify for funding under Measure 3.5.

Table 21: State of implementation – Measure 3.5

Measure 3.5	Commitments Total 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF 31.10.2010	Payments Total 31.10.2010	Payments EFF - 31.10.2010	No. Projects – 31.10.2010
Germany	24 079 527	17 063 235	2 157 197	4 964 438	57
Spain	13 612 611	4 701 483	3 623 531	1 461 419	Na
Netherlands	1 700 000	4 400 000	5 000 000	1 100 000	38
Portugal	5 354 179	4 008 971	695 498	521 624	8
Sweden	4 445 651	2 222 825	1 286 214	657 071	7
Denmark	3 986 577	2 187 919	900 000	400 000	Na
Italy	4 053 415	2 026 708	0	0	0
France	na	1 960 820	na	165 766	na
Poland	1 983 730	1 487 798	193 945	145 459	3
Finland	1 868 242	657 879	318 786	109 996	26
Belgium	985 960	492 980	92 340	8 979	6
Czech Rep	436 168	327 126	0	0	11
Estonia	213 465	160 099	0	0	1

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

Grants from this Measure were used to fund:

- Tests on innovative technology (Germany, Portugal and Spain). In Belgium, for example, funding was used to develop an ecological filter for purification of waste waters.
- Operations to develop and test methods to improve gear selectivity/reduce by-catches and discards (Estonia, Germany and Sweden). In France, projects were aimed at improving energy efficiency of boats. In United Kingdom a trawl net manufacturer seeking to develop more selective trawl gear was supported under this Measure.
- Other projects included aquaculture pilot projects to promote new species and better aquaculture technology (Finland and Poland), halibut culture development (United Kingdom).

Scientific research organizations, universities, NGOs as well as private entities are the main beneficiaries of the projects implemented under this Measure.

Very few implementation issues are mentioned by the MS with regard to this measure. Poland reports a limited potential number of beneficiaries with relatively few institutions, which professionally tackle problems of fisheries in a scientific manner in Poland.

g. Measure 3.6 Modification for reassignment of fishing vessels

Measure 3.6 funding can support the modification of fishing vessels for their reassignment for training or research purposes in the fisheries sector or for other activities outside fishing.

Table 22: State of implementation – Measure 3.6

Measure 3.6	Commitments Total 31.10.2010	Commitments EFF 31.10.2010	Payments Total 31.10.2010	Payments EFF - 31.10.2010	No. Projects – 31.10.2010
Sweden	954 026	477 013	954 026	477 013	1

Source: EU Interim evaluation of EFF (February 2011)

This measure has not been adopted in numerous MS: Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and UK. The only project implemented to date (end 2010) related to changing of a vessel for school or research purposes in Sweden.

The most probable reason for this has been the lack of interest on the part of beneficiaries in this form of support, which is perceived as more complicated than Measure 1.1 (Public aid for permanent cessation of activities).

h. Overall conclusions for Axis 3

Axis 3 is very diverse in nature, and is dedicated to supporting measures of common interest with a broader scope than measures normally undertaken by private enterprises. The spirit of Axis 3 is to foster cooperation and organisation amongst stakeholders in order to contribute to an improved competitiveness and productivity of organisations as well as to the sustainability of the fisheries sector with projects that complement fisheries sector operations.

Axis 3 projects to date have focused predominantly on ports infrastructure (measure 3.3), collective actions (measure 3.1) and pilot projects (measure 3.5).

A large proportion of MS consider Measure 3.3 to be very relevant due to the need to develop the adequacy of fisheries infrastructure. Many MS are making significant investments in infrastructure of ports, to bring them up to modern standards and increase the effectiveness of fishing and processing.

It was also commonly agreed that measures encouraging cooperation and collective actions (3.1) remain very important in developing a sustainable fisheries sector. On the other hand, measures 3.2 and 3.6 were less relevant and/or effective for a large number of MS.

However, whilst Axis 3 measures were generally viewed as useful and flexible, for a number of MS it is too early to determine the effectiveness of the measures considering many projects have only recently been launched. Economic impacts of collective actions are uncertain and likely to be low if the measure does not target clear objectives.

i. Recommendations for Axis 3

The main points reported by national evaluations in terms of recommendations on Axis 3 on the whole concern:

- **Strategic planning:** developing multi-annual planning of activities, implementing a simple risk assessment for individual projects, improving transparency and relevance of financed project by involving external experts to project evaluation, consulting relevant stakeholders, defining more precisely the priorities, etc.
- **Administrative procedures:** further simplifying administrative procedures and providing continuous support to beneficiaries, introduce more interim payments, etc.
- **Indicators:** amending, clarifying result indicators.

Some MS specific recommendations are as follows:

Table 23: Recommendations for Axis 3

DE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development and testing of more environmentally friendly fishing gear as part of pilot projects – Increase the research about economic innovative practices – Increase coordination of pilot projects – Improve the presentation of the results of pilot projects in public
AT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Always consult the different concerned actors and intermediate bodies – Decrease the cost of evaluation – Improve the communication network between the actors – Maintain or increase the level of financing – Make a long-term plan (in order to create a better monitoring) – Iron out the differences between the Austrian regions – Put the emphasis on durability
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Make sure that the sustainable investments result in a more sustainable fleet and sector (a sustainability label for ships could be a good option)
BG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Better define priorities under measure 3.3 (create a list with ports and wharfs, which have to be reconstructed in order to comply with sanitation requirements) – Simplify the project elaboration and ensure better support to beneficiaries (e.g. allow applications based on preliminary design, not necessarily based on technical project). – Provide more interim payment, having in mind the long completion period of a project and all obstacles for funding utilization.
CY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete the "Land Planning Survey for the construction of 3 Artificial Reefs in the marine areas of Pafos, City of Chrysochous and Famagusta" to avoiding delays – Undertake additional studies (land planning, feasibility studies etc) – Launch Measure 3.5 as quickly as possible as activities under this measure have significant adding value
CZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Include the development of equal opportunities in the current version of selection criteria – Consider reallocation between axes to better reflect the beneficiaries' interest
ES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Decrease the objective for marine protected area due to the low impact of the measure. – Add indicators on port modernisation. – Improve strategic indicators for environmental protection
FR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reinforce the support to the activities of the producers' organisations (and of other actors too). – Continue to develop the pilot projects. – Reinforce the monitoring system of achievements and results
GR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Expand the use of TA for supporting the Managing Authority and (mainly) the Special Implementation Service of the OP for Fisheries for accelerating the implementation pace of the OP
IE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Update the brochures on overall Measures and Sub-measures, in particular to reflect changes to the Measures and Sub-measures, e.g. changes to the project selection system. – Encourage greater use of Axis 3 for pilot/demonstration projects with a view to broadening the range of beneficiaries and enhancing impact.
LV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure supervision of compliance of the activities of beneficiaries within the Measure 303 "Investments in fishing ports and landing sites" with the goals of the OP by establishing a working group (including representatives from the fishery sector, local governments and other involved parties) and by defining the minimal necessary fish landing amount in fishing ports and landing sites within a specified time period. – Review the indicators included in the supervision system in order to ensure the possibility to evaluate the economical rationale of projects and their impact with consideration of set goals: – Clarify achievable result indicators pursuant to the essence of the measure defining indicators which are best at characterizing the impact of the measure: – Define changes of proportion of pre-processes and processes fish in total fishery product amount must be defined in addition to existing indicators. – Define the growth of exported amounts or the proportion in the fishery processing sector in addition to the existing indicators which would reflect the impact of new market promotional measures.
NL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Spend more funds on projects under 3.1 and 3.5 which contribute significantly to a more sustainable fisheries sector – Increase the rate of commitment (launching new calls for projects in 2011 and 2012). – All means have been invested in the eel-sector. This is short-sighted according to the evaluator. The evaluator thus suggests to analyse if these measures could be beneficial for other fish species. In this case discussions should be opened with the EC.
PL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop the multi-annual Programme for the Promotion of Fish at the level of the Managing Institution, including a plan of promotional activities at national and international levels in order to use the funds more efficiently – Organise a competitive bidding in order to choose the best promotion projects that are consistent with the Programme for the Promotion of Fish. The evaluation committee should comprise independent experts. In order to keep promotional activities, consistent and complementary.
PT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Understand the reasons why there so few innovative and differentiating projects in every measure - projects are

	portrayed as traditional answers to long-known issues
RO	– Accelerate the implementation of Axis
SK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Despite the efforts of some fish farmers over a number of years, it has not been possible to establish a functioning producer organisation in aquaculture. The evaluators propose the reallocation of funds to Measure 3.2. Intervention under this measure is the closest to the impact originally intended, which is to strengthen the market, or to other Annex 3 measures (animal health measures under Article 32 and Article and collective actions under Article 37 of Council Regulation (EC) 1198/2006). – Define the strategy for the information campaign under Measure 3.2 (with specified baselines and quantified targets). – After contracting external service providers, the MA must remain the active bearer and coordinator of the overall information campaign. For this role, more staff would be needed at the MA, which would actively stimulate and manage cooperation between partners, and would collaborate with the Ministry of Health SR in the preparation of healthy diet programmes, and the Ministry of Education, etc.
SE	– Revise the objectives of Measure 3.6, and the indicators that will measure the objectives. Only one grant has been given to support the conversion of vessels to new areas. It is not linked to any goal and is recommended to prioritize this out of the program because only one application has been submitted so far.
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implement a simple risk assessment for individual projects. Where necessary mitigate for high risk projects such as breaking funding amounts down into smaller definable project milestones. – Targeted promotion of pilot projects to ensure potential beneficiaries are aware of the existence and eligibility criteria of the pilot project measure.
EE	– The implementation of pilot operations should be encouraged.
FI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Exploit more efficiently fish of little value to fulfil the developing needs of consumers and fish processing industry. – Reassess the premiums paid for fishermen under measure 3.1 in the sense that the financing should come from the national budget.

Source: National interim evaluations

5.5 Effectiveness of Axis 4

This section provides a synthesis of main analysis, conclusions and recommendations made in response to evaluation question EQ10: How far has the Axis 4 implementation process progressed in the country (groups operational, groups formed but not implementing local strategy, groups not yet formed, ...) ? How did the national institutions, in particular the Managing Authority, adapt to the territorial character of Axis 4? To what extent did the instruments/measures of the EFF contribute to an efficient implementation process? To what extent did the support by FARNET foster the implementation of Axis 4?

a. Overall state of implementation

21 of 26 MS decided to implement Axis 4. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Slovakia and Austria did not program funds for Axis 4.

Overall, major delays occurred in the implementation of this axis due to its innovative character. We distinguish 3 groups of MS below:

- **MS still in the process of selecting and approving groups and strategies.** This category of MS comprises Italy, Slovenia, Ireland, Romania and United Kingdom.

Romania and United Kingdom have already approved some groups (9 in Romania and 7 in the United Kingdom¹⁰) however local development strategies are yet to be produced by the selected FLAGs.

Ireland has planned to implement a pilot FLAG, which should be operational by 2012.

In Italy, 4 regions (out of 20) did not program for Axis 4. At the time of this evaluation, only 2 regions (Marche and Sardinia) had commenced the group selection process.

In these 5 MS no commitment has been made under Axis 4 according to available data.

- **MS with approved FLAGs and strategies but where no projects have been implemented.** This group includes 6 MS (Poland, Greece, Bulgaria, Belgium, Cyprus and Lithuania).

Greece, Lithuania and Cyprus have already committed funds. In Cyprus 100% of programmed EFF under Axis 4 has been committed, as only one group was planned and this group has been approved.

- **MS with approved FLAGs and projects implemented.** This group includes 10 MS (Germany, Portugal, Latvia, Estonia, France, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Netherlands). More than 650 projects have been approved in these MS. Some have already commenced whilst others have not yet been launched. All these MS have committed funds for Axis 4, the lowest commitment rate being 0.3% in France, and the highest being more than 50% in Denmark. The average commitment rate is approximately 15% in these 10 MS.

Among these MS, 7 had approved expenditures as at 31.12.2010 (Denmark, Netherlands, Estonia, Spain, Sweden, Finland and Germany)

At the EU level, 211 FLAGs have been created in 16 MS and more than 650 projects have been approved. According to FARNET, by the end of the summer 2011, approximately one thousand projects had been selected and were in progress.

Only 6% of programmed EFF under Axis 4 have been committed. This very low rate can be explained by the significant delay in setting up procedures and in approving FLAGs, strategies and projects.

¹⁰ In the United-Kingdom, 6 FLAGs have been established in England and Northern Ireland, and the selection process is still in progress in Scotland and Wales.

Table 1 – Financial and physical state of implementation

	Programmed EFF (1)	Committed EFF31.12.2010 (1)	Commitment rate % (1)	Number of groups programmed (2)	Number of groups approved (2)	Number of projects approved (3)
Cyprus	1 000 000	1 000 000	100,0%	1	1	N/A
Denmark	12 461 279	6 300 000	50,6%	17	17	230
Nederland	4 987 125	1 839 405	36,9%	6	6	21
Germany	19 438 000	4 322 991	22,2%	23	23	47
Estonia	19 281 513	2 902 341	15,1%	8	8	48
Spain	49 212 447	7 186 593	14,6%	25	22	17
Greece	33 300 000	4 750 000	14,3%	13	8	0
Portugal	17 403 406	2 288 287	13,1%	7	7	116
Sweden	8 199 720	1 034 442	12,6%	14	14	1
Finland	3 606 000	403 434	11,2%	8	8	113
Latvia	28 911 476	1 924 734	6,7%	24	24	63
France	5 699 644	223 000	3,9%	11	11	29
Lithuania	6 693 770	150 666	2,3%	10	10	0
Poland	234 909 000		0,0%	48	48	0
Bulgaria	12 001 456		0,0%	6	3	0
Belgium	1 900 000		0,0%	1	1	0
UK	11 598 450		0,0%	20	0	0
Romania	75 000 000		0,0%	14	0	0
Italy	23 338 856		0,0%	20	0	0
Eire	1 500 603		0,0%	6	0	0
Slovenia	2 164 029		0,0%	1	0	0
Total	572 606 774	34 325 893	6,0%	283	211	685

Source: (1) annual report, except for France, Germany and Slovenia: evaluation report, (2) Farnet, (3) National mid-term evaluation

FLAGS characteristics:

18 MS have selected more than 211 FLAGS combined.

Reports emphasise that the composition of FLAGS varies to a large extent from group to group. Nevertheless, 5 evaluation reports provide information about the average composition of FLAGS (see table below). In Germany, the private sector seems to be under-represented, accounting for 26% of representatives. In Denmark, the composition of FLAGS is well balanced between the private sector, the public sector and the civil society; and in Bulgaria the civil society dominates largely (63% of representatives).

In Latvia, a rule was set up for each FLAG that the public sector had to represent less than 50% of the members and the civil society and the private sector combined had to represent greater than 50%.

Table 2 – FLAGs composition

	% private	% public	% civil society
Germany	26%	38%	36%
Bulgaria	18%	18%	63%
Greece	58,7% together with civil society	41%	
Denmark	32%	26%	41%
Latvia		<50%	>50%, together with the private sector

Source: National evaluation reports

Project characteristics:

In the Netherlands, there is no common theme across projects because Axis 4 has been interpreted very broadly by the FLAGs. In the other 9 MS with approved projects, 5 main types of projects have been implemented¹¹:

- Operations for supporting small fisheries communities and tourism related infrastructure (7MS: Germany, Portugal, Latvia, Sweden, Estonia, Denmark, France) ;
- Operations for strengthening the competitiveness of the fishery areas (5 MS: Germany, Sweden, Estonia, Finland, Denmark) ;
- Operations for diversifying activities (5 MS: Portugal, Latvia, Sweden, Estonia, Denmark);
- Operations for the contribution to the running cost of the groups (4 MS: Portugal, Spain, Estonia, Finland);
- Operations for restructuring and redirecting economic activities (4 MS: Portugal, Latvia, Sweden, Denmark).

Operations for supporting small fisheries communities and tourism-related infrastructure constitute the most common type of project implemented

National evaluations provide some project examples:

- In Denmark: tourism related infrastructure (direct sales, smokehouse, pleasure dinghies, and museum), breakout building (bathroom, toilet and waiting room), creation of refrigeration facilities and ice supply, creation of facilities for new types of fisheries and products.
- In Germany: tourism related infrastructure (hike and bike path, toilet facilities and exhibition), diversifying (fishing tourism, direct sale), infrastructure modernization, etc.
- In Portugal, 2 examples are given: creation of the local brand "Rio de Aveiro" and creation of the "Centro do Mar" in Northern Portugal.

“Projects example: Reinstating Sønderho Harbour and environs

Subsidy

In 2009, through LAG West Jutland, Fanø Municipality and Sønderho Harbour Association received an undertaking for support of € 76,647.7¹² for 2 out of a total of 11 sub-projects to reinstate Sønderho Harbour and surrounding environment. The project is expected to run to a total of around €2m¹³.

¹¹ 3 main types of projects / MS

¹² 1 DKK = 0,13447€

¹³ 1 DKK = 0,13447€

The project content

The two projects being supported under the EFF Programme through LAG West Jutland are the reconstruction of an old navigation beacon and a wall chart exhibition about the maritime history of the Wadden Sea since the 1600s. The beacon, Kåveren (or “æ kåver”, as it is referred to in the local Jutland dialect) blew over in a storm in 1935 and was one of two direction finders that marked a line of sight to help ships on their way in and out of the port. Today the beacon has no practical function for shipping, but its reconstruction will help tell the story of Sønderho as one of the most important towns in the country during the age of sailing ships. The harbour’s great historic significance is precisely the focal point of the wallchart exhibition, which constitutes the other sub-project being supported, and opens in the harbour at the start of June 2011. The focal point for both projects is to strengthen and convey the area’s culture and history.

The total project, of which the activities mentioned constitute only a minor portion, have the overall aim of re-creating Sønderho Harbour as the natural harbour and living environment it once was. In this connection the most important of the sub-projects must be said to be the excavation of the 4 kilometre-long tidal trench connecting Sønderho with the Wadden Sea. As a result of silting up, ships have been prevented from sailing through here for the past two decades, which is seen as the primary cause of the harbour environment in Sønderho slowly but surely languishing. The excavation is presumed to amount to about € 1.6m¹⁴. The project manager saw no chance of support for a project of that size under the local LAG and thus chose to apply for aid for the excavation through the A.P. Møller Fund.

Effects and experiences

The project as a whole is expected to recreate the harbour environment around Sønderho, so as to once again make it attractive to the residents of the island, Wadden Sea sailors and, especially, tourists. Specifically, it is estimated that the project will be able to create between 20 and 40 new jobs in the tourism sector. The reinstated harbour will, according to the project leader, form a natural component of the newly established Wadden Sea National Park, as it will create more and better opportunities for experiencing this at close quarters. The two sub-projects will be instrumental in re-creating the culture and history around the harbour, which is an essential supplement at a time when the knowledge economy is among the most important driving forces in tourism.

Quoted from Danish National Evaluation – Danish Technological Institute

Gender criteria:

Overall, gender has not been considered in the selection criteria. Only in Greece was a rule implemented for project selection, but it was not restrictive: private projects proposals receive extra recognition if they focus on employment of women. The same system was set up in Poland for the FLAGS selection.

In Portugal and Sweden some FLAGS stated that they were working on the topic of gender equality. In the first case, 2 FLAGS have incorporated the topic of gender into their rules. In Sweden it seems that the common approach is to focus on achieving equal representation on the board of the group.

b. Procedures, positive factors and challenges in the implementation process

Systems and procedures set up to support Axis 4 implementation

¹⁴ 1 DKK = 0,13447 €

Most MS organised events or training in order to communicate with local actors in preparation for group selection. For example in Denmark, 7 regional information meetings took place in fishing areas, and guidelines on the creation and operation of FLAGs were established. In Slovenia, events such as general presentations and workshops were organised. In Poland, 3 training cycles were offered to local organisations and institutions intending to set up a FLAG (information training in Axis 4, procedure to set up status of a FLAG as an association, local development strategy).

The selection of areas, groups and strategies was either a one-stage or two-stage process, depending on the MS or region. In the first case, groups and strategy are approved at the same time. 8 MS have chosen a one-stage process: Greece, Latvia, Spain, Sweden, France, Slovenia, Finland and Belgium. In the two-stage process, groups were pre-selected through an expression of interest process. They received seed-funding in order to define their strategy, which was selected through a second competitive call for proposals. 11 MS have adopted the two-stage process: Germany, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark, Cyprus, Poland, Romania, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Netherlands.

Few national evaluations report on strategy selection. In Denmark, the FLAGs interviewed considered that developing the local strategy was a laborious and difficult process. Several FLAGs had asked for help from regional authorities or business councils. In Germany, the strategy was established in half of the cases by the regional manager and in the other half by business councils. It was initially seen as a burden but subsequently judged positively by FLAGs. In the Netherlands, development strategies were developed in consultation with LEADER representatives.

There is limited information on financial procedures in national evaluation reports. Nevertheless in Germany, it is stated that the co-funding procedure can be an issue in Länder, where co-funding was planned at municipality level.

Procedures have been set up to support Axis 4 in all MS where this Axis has been programmed. Events and training have been organised, usually with the support of the Axis 5. The selection process consisted of one-stage for 8 MS and two-stages for 11 MS.

Positive factors in the implementation process:

According to national evaluations, the main success factors have been the strong involvement from local authorities (quoted by 7 of 12 MS), the local experience from LEADER (quoted by 9 of 13 MS) and the support provided by FARNET (7 of 14 MS). Only 5 MS referred to the strong involvement from fishery communities.

For example the Leader experience has been used in the following ways:

- In Greece, FLAGs were integrated into existing Leader groups.
- In Denmark, 10 groups chose to set up a joint association with a common secretariat and executive board, but a separate project selection committee, since the group also acts as an action group under the Rural Development Program.
- In the Netherlands, most of the FLAGs are also or were previously LEADER+ groups. The development strategies were drafted in consultation with Leader representatives.
- In Finland, many FLAGs are connected with existing Leader groups, but they have a separate management board. This has increased cooperation and networks with other rural developers as well as the awareness of Leader actors regarding the fisheries sector.
- In Germany, FLAGs are sometimes affiliated with LEADER groups. Both groups are often working together. Furthermore, a small number of projects were initiated by FLAGs and subsequently funded by LEADER, because EFF-funding was not yet available.

FARNET is quoted by 7 national evaluation reports as being useful for the implementation process. Events and information dissemination are considered positive. Some criticism has been made regarding delays in the setting up of FARNET (Netherlands) or in the publication of information materials (Germany). In Latvia, the services offered by FARNET were not widely used.

At the time of this evaluation, 8 MS had set up an official National Network (Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Spain, France, Portugal and Netherlands). It is considered as useful by all these MS with the exception of Estonia. In Latvia the Fisheries Co-operation Network started in April 2010 within the framework of Priority Axis 5, to provide support to existing FLAGs and other representatives of the

fisheries sector (seminars, exchange of experience, information support). In the Netherlands, the BPV (Administrative Platform for Fisheries Communities) operates as a specific network for the fisheries communities. Greece, Lithuania and Germany have planned to set up a similar network.

Overall the implementation of axis 4 has fostered networking both within individual MS as well as amongst MS.

Main challenges:

The main challenge mentioned in the national evaluations is the delays in setting up procedures. The two other main challenges referred to are the access to private financing and the lack of interest from the sector.

The economic crisis has also caused delays in Ireland, Greece and Denmark (especially in aquaculture projects). Furthermore, the financial choice made at the beginning can be a challenge: in Poland the major issue seems to be the difficulty to spend the entire budget programmed, given the delay in setting up procedures. On the other hand, in Italy, according to the national evaluation, the lack of funding partly explained the delay in implementation.

c. Overall level of effectiveness

In relation to the EFF programme's state of progress as at 31/12/2010 the overall level of effectiveness is mixed for axis 4.

The level of effectiveness can be considered as good in 5 Member states (Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Sweden). In these MS, projects have started and the implementation of Axis 4 has fostered networking. The level of effectiveness can be considered as poor in 6 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, United Kingdom), where the implementation of Axis 4 has only just commenced. In most of Member states, the level of effectiveness is mixed.

	Priority axis 4: Sustainable development of fisheries areas
DE	Good
DK	Good
EE	Good
FI	Good
SE	Good
CY	Mixed
ES	Mixed
FR	Mixed
GR	Mixed
LT	Mixed
LV	Mixed
PL	Mixed
PT	Mixed
RO	Mixed
NL	Mixed
BE	Poor
BG	Poor
IE	Poor
IT	Poor
SL	Poor
UK	Poor

On the whole, impacts are barely perceivable at this stage, let alone measurable. Most of the national evaluations conclude that it is too early to determine effectiveness. Nonetheless the implementation of Axis 4 has fostered networking within fisheries areas and increased activity at the local level (events, training, etc.). Impacts are expected before the end of the programming period.

3 evaluation reports mention the creation of jobs as a result of implemented projects: 4 to 6 in Germany, 48 in Latvia and 2 in Finland.

d. Overall conclusions for Axis 4

21 MS have implemented Axis 4. At the end of 2010, 10 MS have approved FLAGs and projects, in 6 MS the project selection process is still ongoing and in 5 MS the FLAG selection process is in progress. 211 FLAGs and more than 1000 projects have been approved in 16 MS.

The main positive factors in the implementation process are the strong involvement from local authorities and the LEADER experience. FARNET is also considered as useful, nevertheless some criticism has been expressed regarding the delays in the publication of informative materials.

Axis 4 has fostered networking with the establishment of 8 national networks since the implementation of Axis 4, and 3 other planned Networks.

The main challenges have been the delays in setting up procedures, access to private financing and the lack of interest from the sector. The financial crisis has hampered the good development of Axis 4 implementation in Ireland, Greece and Denmark.

The impacts cannot be assessed sufficiently at this stage.

e. Recommendations for Axis 4

The two main recommendations reported by national evaluations are to increase the involvement of the private sector and to improve information dissemination to the fishery sector. Both are linked as improved information to the private sector has the potential to contribute to reinforced involvement. More information should be provided on eligible projects under Axis 4 and on best practices. This could be made at the national level through existing National Fisheries areas Networks or through the establishment of such a network, or at the EU level through FARNET.

Regarding the implementation of a National Fisheries areas Network, Bulgaria and Finland recommend to develop a new plan for financing National Fisheries area Networks under Axis 5.

More specific recommendations were made at the national level.

Germany	National co-financing should be improved in Länder, where no co-financing was planned at this level. Moreover, the national evaluation emphasize that the requirement of the article 45 §4 of EFF regulation 1198/2006 ("the majority of the operations shall be led by the private sector) would not be completed because most of projects are currently led by the public sector. It would be positive to give more flexibility to this article 45, or at least to clarify it.
Bulgaria	A new plan for financing National Fisheries Network under axis 5 has to be developed. Furthermore a monitoring plan for strategies is necessary.
Italy	Due to the difficulties to set up procedures for regional bodies, it is also recommended to set up clear and comprehensive methodological notes to help regional bodies boosting the implementation.
Nederland	Time should be invested in the creation of a quantitative indicator for this axis.
Portugal	Strategy contents (objectives, indicators and targets) should be readjusted based on the amount of funding allocated to each FLAG.
Latvia	The national evaluation considers that the criteria for the area selection and for allocating budget per FLAG should be revised. Additional qualitative criteria should also be defined for the selection of FLAG strategies. The possible timeframe for the actual project realisation should be limited. Moreover the opportunity to implement larger projects (financially) should be created.
Denmark	The national evaluation judged that administrative requirements should be harmonized between EFF and the Rural Development Program in order to simplify EFF requirements.

5.6 Effectiveness of Axis 5

This section provides a synthesis of main analyses, conclusions and recommendations made to answer evaluation question EQ11. To what extent has the use of Axis 5 (Technical assistance) contributed to the effective implementation of the program?

Axis 5 does not directly contribute to support the fisheries and aquaculture sector but can be used to finance public services that manage the funds made available under EFF. This question aims at assessing how technical assistance is used and to what extent it contributes to the successful implementation of other Axis.

a. Overall state of implementation and effectiveness

Table 24 : State of implementation of Axis 5 as at 31.12.210 (in Euros)

MS - Axis 5	EFF programmed	EFF committed (1)	% EFF committed
AT	45 000	45 000	100%
BE	1 300 000	298 046	23%
BG	4 000 485	143 890	4%
CY	350 000	480 403	137%
CZ	1 355 334	390 000	29%
DE	2 034 348	894 562	44%
DK	6 683 758	500 000	7%
EE	4 228 402	1 497 628	35%
EL	5 250 000	125 157	2%
ES	18 967 097	9 301 344	49%
FI	624 000	175 853	28%
FR	2 653 318	292 000	11%
HU	24 163 925	556 672	2%
IT	21 217 143	10 757 568	51%
LT	2 671 745	2 312 471	87%
LV	4 961 395	913 576	18%
MT	342 000	21 962	6%
NL	2 395 200	170 642	7%
PL	36 704 628		0%
PT	7 931 294	2 903 713	37%
RO	10 739 207	404 423	4%
SE	2 733 240	1 744 914	64%
SI	2 596 835	242 957	9%
SK	684 426	469 950	69%
UK	3 384 027	450 372	13%
TOTAL	168 016 807	35 093 103	21%

(1) Source: annual report, except for France, Germany and Slovenia: evaluation reports

There is only one MS (Ireland) which has decided not to program EFF funds on the priority Axis 5.

Case of Ireland:

"It is notable that the Programme has not provided for funding under either of the other two Axes supported under the EFF – Axis 2 (Aquaculture, Inland Fishing, Processing and Marketing) or Axis 5 (Technical Assistance). There appears to have been a conscious decision made to do this, which was done for two key reasons. These include:

- *a desire to focus EFF support on a few key areas, particularly given the size of the Programme, rather than spreading it across a wider range of supports;*
- *the belief, at the time the Programme was originally drafted in 2007 and 2008, that Ireland's strong Exchequer position would provide the resources necessary elsewhere for (a) supports under Axis 2, through the Irish National Seafood Programme, and (b) the kind of technical and administrative support provided for under Axis 5;*
- *a desire to minimise the perceived heavy administrative burden associated with EFF funding."*

Quoted from Irish National Evaluation

The overall commitment rate is quite low (21%), but the use of this Axis within the different MS is particularly heterogeneous. Whereas Poland has not committed any fund, Austria has committed its overall envelope dedicated to technical assistance and Cyprus has committed 137% of the programmed EFF funds.

Six MS reach a commitment rate superior to 50% while 9 MS have committed less than 10% of the programmed amount. This shows the high level of heterogeneity in this axis implementation and a very different vision of the added value of technical assistance among the different MS.

b. Overall conclusions for Axis 5

Globally, the effectiveness of Priority Axis 5 implementation is moderate. The achievement of MS is very heterogeneous even if it is often quite high. Nonetheless, most of the evaluation reports highlight the usefulness of the technical assistance for OP implementation and information of the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries.

The main types of projects financed under this Axis are the followings:

- Communication campaigns (in 20 MS)
- Improvement of administration capacities (18)
- Information/publicity (16)
- Training for implementation officers (monitoring, payment, assistance to beneficiaries...)
- Improvement of monitoring system
- Assistance to project selection
- Networking facilitation
- Studies

Overall, Axis 5 credits have mainly been used in support of programme management and to finance communication and information campaigns. These are the two main areas of utilisation of EFF funds.

A more detailed analysis of communication and management issues is realised in the dedicated section on the overall management and implementation of the programme.

c. Recommendations for Axis 5

Most recommendations are related to the improvement of communication campaigns and of the management of the OP. They have been therefore already presented in the section related to the programme management.

Several reports mention that the priority Axis 5 should be more utilised by the MS, in order to make more communication actions, more studies on the fisheries sector and to deliver a better management of the Fund. It is for instance recommended to use the funds of this Axis to improve management computerised tools and the coordination of the different databases (Latvia).

Suggestions to use the funds for more trainings for the administrative personnel is also frequently mentioned, as well as the mere increase of staff working in the implementation bodies of the programme.

It is also recommended in several reports that Axis 5 should fund specific communication and support activities related to the measures of other axes which have difficulties to be implemented or for which the most funds are still available.

In the Austrian, Bulgarian and Dutch reports, it is suggested that MS shall develop a long-term plan related to Technical support activities, with a clear budgeting plan.

Lastly, Romanian report recommends that a number of studies should be drafted by using Axis 5, such as studies regarding the sector (market studies, fish consumption...) or studies on the socio-economic profile of the communities.

6 Cross-cutting issues

The principles of gender equality and environmental protection are included to a variable degree within the programmes, both at the management and monitoring systems level and the individual operations level. These issues are generally addressed through the following three means:

- Through participation – of women's groups or environmental organisations – within Monitoring committees. A certain number of evaluation reports also estimate the number or percentage of female attendees at Monitoring Committee meetings;
- Through establishing and applying specific objectives and selection criteria– to favour either women's participation and/or sustainable development;
- Through the use of specific indicators that allow measurement of the extent to which these gender equality and environment principles are sufficiently taken into account (for example, as regards gender, to measure women's participation in the programme or to assess the impact of the programme on women's employment).

Generally speaking, sustainable development is effectively taken into account by EFF programmes, whilst the consideration given to gender and equal opportunity issues is more variable. This is demonstrated in the tables below:

- Less than half of the national MCs (11) include women's organisations whilst the vast majority (22) include the active participation of environmental organisations;
- Specific selection criteria appear to more systematically address environmental issues (at least 16, compared to 10 for gender issues);
- Few EFF programmes have defined indicators to monitor results and impacts of programmes on women (8), whilst more have addressed environmental impact (12).

GENDER ISSUE

MS	Participation in MC	Existence of specific selection criteria	Existence of specific indicator(s)
Austria	no	yes	yes
Belgium	yes	yes	no
Bulgaria	yes	N/A	yes
Cyprus	yes	N/A	N/A
Czech Rep	no	no	no
Denmark	yes	yes	no
Estonia	no	no	no
Finland	no	N/A	N/A
France	no	N/A	N/A
Germany	no	no	no
Greece	yes	no	no
Hungary	yes	yes	no
Ireland	yes	N/A	no
Italy	yes	yes	yes
Latvia	no	no	N/A
Lithuania	no	yes	yes
Malta	yes	yes	no
Netherlands	yes	no	no
Poland	no	N/A	yes
Portugal	no	yes	yes
Romania	N/A	N/A	no
Slovakia	no	N/A	N/A
Slovenia	no	N/A	N/A
Spain	yes	yes	yes
Sweden	N/A	yes	yes
UK	no	no	no
TOTAL	11	10	8

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

MS	Participation in MC	Existence of specific selection criteria	Existence of specific indicator(s)
Austria	no	no	no
Belgium	yes	yes	yes
Bulgaria	yes	N/A	N/A
Cyprus	yes	N/A	N/A
Czech Rep	yes	yes	yes
Denmark	yes	yes	yes
Estonia	yes	yes	yes
Finland	yes	N/A	N/A
France	no	N/A	N/A
Germany	yes	yes	yes
Greece	yes	yes	no
Hungary	yes	yes	no
Ireland	yes	N/A	yes
Italy	yes	yes	yes
Latvia	yes	yes	yes
Lithuania	yes	yes	yes
Malta	yes	yes	no
Netherlands	yes	yes	no
Poland	yes	N/A	no
Portugal	yes	yes	yes
Romania	N/A	N/A	N/A
Slovakia	yes	N/A	yes
Slovenia	N/A	N/A	N/A
Spain	yes	yes	yes
Sweden	yes	yes	yes
UK	yes	yes	no
TOTAL	22	16	13

Source: National interim evaluations

Gender

The overall contribution of EFF programmes to the promotion of equal opportunity is neutral or marginally positive.

The influence of women in the consultation and decision making process of programmes is not fully ensured at EU level due to an unbalanced discussion of gender issues within EFF programme partnership structures and the variable extent to which women's groups are incorporated into Monitoring Committees. Even when women are well represented through a specific structure or organisation, their role is perceived as limited due to technical constraints or underrepresentation:

- In Greece, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality is invited to participate in MC meetings. However the evaluation report notes the absence of other women's organisations (non-governmental) playing a more active role;
- In Cyprus, the technical capacity of women's organisations is considered as limited, preventing them from contributing significantly.

Despite the absence of women's organisations as official members of MCs, some reports highlight the satisfactory representation of women within management and monitoring structures, which at least suggests that EFF management systems are non-discriminatory:

- For instance in Latvia, the main membership of the MC comprises 26 % of women and 51 % with advisory rights.
- In the Czech Republic, women are represented not only in the MC but also in the MA which guarantees, according to the evaluation report, sound supervision of equal opportunities of men and women in the sector.

In relation to the inclusion of gender equality within the EFF strategy, **most EFF Programmes do not directly seek to address gender issues as part of their core objectives for all axes, and instead mostly focus on some particular measures and actions. The gender issue is thus particularly emphasized in most axis 4 strategies**, where the principle of equal opportunity is a core objective.

Even though management and monitoring structures generally strive to achieve a better gender balance, they do not implement any affirmative action in favour of women.

Only a few MS seem to have defined clear specific measures to favour the employment of women in the sector, generally targeting subsectors whose nature of work poses less constraints for women, e.g. processing:

- In Hungary: gender equality is taken into consideration through a scoring system of the measures in fish processing and fish rearing; if the application for support is submitted by a woman or the business is managed by a woman, additional points are awarded. This has enabled the employment of an increased proportion of women in the sector through EFF-supported investments.

In terms of results and impacts of the EFF programmes on gender equality, limited data is available to demonstrate any clear contribution of the programmes to the promotion of women. In many cases, when they do exist, gender indicators are monitored only at the level of programme impacts (employment of women in the sector) and not collected at project level (Czech Republic for instance). In addition, in some MS (such as Finland), targets set for gender equality could not be monitored because of the lack of coherent information on the proportion of women actually linked to the industry.

As a result, no clear conclusion can be reached, although certain reports (such as for Denmark) note that some improvements in terms of safety and working conditions for the fishery and aquaculture industry, making the work less physically demanding, has probably improved the scope of work for women in the sector. When projects and operations have been undertaken to address gender integration, they have not been on a sufficient scale to have any impact at the OP level.

Environment

The overall contribution of EFF programmes to environmental sustainability is improving, although it remains unclear.

At EU level, there is a rather strong focus on environmental sustainability within the overall programme objectives, through a focus on well-managed fisheries, a sustainable fisheries industry and/ or a healthy and diverse marine environment.

Monitoring of environmental impact is part of most EFF programmes, as environmental impacts are generally addressed in the approval of projects and measured through related indicators.

Most measures within the different axes have a strong focus on environmental issues, such as for instance:

- Under Axis 1, the realignment of catching capacity with resources available, but also the prioritization (to a certain extent - see below) of vessel modernizations that have environmental benefits such as a reduced fuel use or an improved gear selectivity and reduced discards (UK, Ireland)
- Under Axis 3, the focus on development of EMS type standards (environmental management systems)

Environmental interests are mostly clearly represented within Programme partnerships, through the participation of institutional bodies as well as non-governmental organisations. However in a few MS, their role and influence is perceived as being weak, as is the case in France and Greece.

In addition, the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) undertaken to verify environmental compliance as part of the preparation for the Programme did not result in the identification of any significant negative environmental issues.

However, measures specifically dedicated to environmental sustainability did not succeed as expected (aqua-environmental measures especially) and many objectives linked to achieving environmental goals have not yet been achieved. This is particularly the case for objectives of priority axis 1, relating to increased use of selective gear. **As a result, even though most evaluation reports assure that EFF programmes do not increase the impact on the environment, they sometimes do not clearly contribute to a reduced impact.**