

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

2014-2020

2011/0380(COD) - 20/12/2016

This Commission report is the first in a series of annual reports to the EU institutions on the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds). It provides an overview of the 2016 annual implementation reports on the 533 programmes submitted by Member States and regions for the 2014-2015 period and summarises the available evaluations of these programmes.

The late adoption of the multiannual financial framework for the period 2014-2020 has had an impact on the adoption of legislation governing the ESI Funds. By the end of 2014, 220 programmes had been adopted. However, the majority (313) of programmes were finalised in 2015 181 of which were completed only in the second half of the year.

Progress in implementation: on the basis of the 2016 annual implementation reports covering 2014 and 2015, it appears that the total volume of projects selected for support from the Funds amounted to **EUR 58.8 billion**, or 9.2% of the total volume of investment planned for the 2014-2020 period. The EU's contribution to the selected projects is estimated at EUR 41.8 billion.

- According to the most recent financial data submitted up to the autumn of 2016, **implementation has accelerated significantly** in terms of the volume of project selection. The total financial volume of selected projects more than doubled in nine months, **from EUR 58.8 billion at the end of 2015 to EUR 128.8 billion** (20.2% of planned investments).
- By the end of 2015, the Member States and regions had selected **989 000 projects** ranging from investments in heavy infrastructure to individual support to farms and **fishing businesses**. A total of **274 000 businesses** benefited from the selected operations. More than 10% of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) are operational and local development strategies are selected ;
- At the time of the adoption of the programmes, about 75% of all conditionalities to ensure investment effectiveness (ex ante conditions) were met. In this context, Finland for example adopted national legislation that ensures administrative capacity is available to comply with the implementation of a control inspection and enforcement system required by the common fisheries policy;
- The implementation of programme **structures and procedures** to ensure the robustness and quality of investments throughout the programme life cycle has been important for the successful launch of the programmes.
- Lastly, more than two-thirds of the country-specific recommendations adopted in 2014 in the context of the **European Semester** concerned investments under the ESI Funds and were therefore integrated into the priorities of the Member States' programmes.

Implementation by theme: the report provides an overview of the financial volume and the selection rate of projects for the ESI Funds by thematic objective at the end of 2015. The main findings are as follows:

- in total, around EUR 181 billion was provided for investments in the area of research and innovation, information and communications technology and SME competitiveness, mainly from the ERDF and the EAFRD. The competitiveness of SMEs is a priority under the ERDF, EAFRD and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) programmes. At the end of 2015, support of EUR 7.5 billion was allocated to specific projects (8.9% of the total planned). Around 80% of the EMFF projects planned over the period aim to strengthen SMEs and increase the competitiveness of the fleet and of aquaculture enterprises;

- at the end of 2015, an amount of over EUR 20 billion was already allocated to specific projects in the fields of the **low-carbon economy** (EUR 2.3 billion), **climate change** (EUR 6.6 billion), **the environment and transport** (EUR 7.6 billion), and **energy networks** (EUR 4.1 billion), representing around 9% of the total amount across all the funds contributing directly (ERDF, Cohesion Fund, EAFRD and EMFF). The majority of selected projects aim at protecting and restoring marine biodiversity by increasing physical control of landings and lowering the volume of unwanted catches;
- projects representing more than EUR 11.5 billion (more than 12% of the planned amount) were selected in the field of **employment, social inclusion and education**. In Denmark and Sweden, projects have been selected under the EMFF supporting employability and labour mobility in coastal communities.

The Commission now considers it vital that the **implementation of the new programmes is accelerated** throughout the European Union.

Recent data show a more uniform state of advancement in most Member States and themes. The evolution of these trends will be further evaluated in the 2017 reporting cycle, which will provide a more comprehensive picture of implementation and allow for better reporting on a qualitative level.