

Brussels, 03 April, 2019

## **Draft Minutes**

### **Meeting of the Expert group on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)**

**18 February, 2019, Brussels**

#### **1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting**

The agenda and the minutes were approved.

#### **2. Nature of the meeting**

The meeting was not public but webstreaming was arranged within Commission Services including JRC-Ispra.

#### **3. List of points discussed**

##### **3.1. Update on the performance review exercise**

COM (E. Mac Aoidh, MARE D3) presented technical information on the performance review exercise and the reallocation of the performance reserve in terms of legal framework and process. As regards the reallocation of the reserve, attention was called to the derogation provided by Article 22(5) of the CPR that will enable MS to propose reallocation beyond the provisions of Article 13 of the EMFF Regulation. However, it was emphasised that this derogation is only applicable to the 6% of the performance reserve, all further reallocations must respect the rules of Article 13 of the EMFF Regulation. For the question of EE, it was confirmed that payment claims submitted to COM in 2019 but including expenditures incurred in 2018 will also be taken into account in the calculation of the financial indicator. In this regard, there will be discrepancy between the value of the financial indicator and the value reported in the Annual Implementation Report.

##### **3.2. Draft amendment to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1362/2014 of 18 December 2014 laying down rules on a simplified procedure for the approval of certain amendments to operational programmes financed under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and rules concerning the format and presentation of the annual reports on the implementation of those programmes**

Following the entry into force of the latest amendment of the Common Provisions Regulation and due to the changes to Article 70 thereof, the amendment to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1362/2014 became necessary. (COM (G. Igloi, MARE D3) presented the draft amendment to the COM Implementing Regulation. It was emphasised that the change will not result in additional administrative burden on MS since it affects only the heading and calculation method of a column that is automatically generated in SFC2014.

Experts had no comments on the substance of the amendment and a vote by written procedure will follow

##### **3.3. Presentation of good practice by Member States**

CZ (V. Kohoutková) presented the Czech practice of process evaluation that was to help to improve the quality of implementation and to avoid low absorption and most frequent failures. Main bottleneck was found in the project appraisal process due to high rate of cancelled or returned operations.

Questions and comments from experts focused on communication channels (BE), human resource capacity (DK) and the provisions for the future period in relation to evaluation (EE).

### **3.4. Presentation on simplified cost options**

COM (M. Grosse, EMPL F1) provided detailed explanations to the COM proposal for the future period in relation to simplified cost options.

Experts still articulated difficulties to apply SCOs in practice, in particular with the 15% for indirect costs (BE and FR). Furthermore, they asked for practical examples for the new method of financing not linked to costs.

NL presented the practice of SCOs used in the Netherlands. Some SCOs are used in all ESIF, particularly those off-the shelf SCOs included into the CPR. Additionally, NL developed SCOs for specific EMFF measures, eg. lump sums for PMPs, or for investments under Article 42 of the EMFF Regulation. As a conclusion she suggested to make best use of SCOs already developed in other policies/funds.

DK shared with the experts the outcome of its study prepared by an external contractor on the possibilities to use SCOs. It concluded in not recommending the use of SCOs for investments in the EMFF in DK due to the small size of the sector and large differences among potential beneficiaries.

### **3.5. The EU fish market 2018 by EUMOFA**

COM (Ch. Vande Weyer, MARE A4) presented the report by EUMOFA on the EU fish market in 2018 that is to provide description and factual information on the fisheries and aquaculture market of the EU. A comparative analysis allows to assess the performance of fishery and aquaculture products in the EU market compared with other food products.

For a question it was confirmed that extra-EU export is destined primarily to Nigeria that serves as an entry to port for the whole continent of Africa.

### **3.6. FAME**

Presentation from FAME focused on three elements:

- *Synthesis of Annual Implementation Reports of 2018*

The synthesis provided an overview on the state of play of implementation by the end of 2017 as well as identified typical problems and mistakes in the data provision.

UP 6 is the best performing priority in terms of commitments with 48% of coverage of total planned budget while in terms of financial implementation (ie. declaration of expenditures) UP3 leads.

Technical mistakes with providing values of result indicators or double calculations still occur. These technical problems may result in incapability of aggregation at EU level.

Member States were invited to submit written comments on this draft within two weeks in order to be taken into account in the finalised document.

- *Part C of the Annual Implementation Report*

An orientation document was presented to experts on how to fill Part C of the Annual Implementation Report that is to be completed in 2019 for the first time. The initiative and the document was welcomed. Given that Part C comprises of not structured data (free text boxes), it was confirmed that no automatic data generation is technically possible. FR called attention that overlaps and duplications should be avoided with previous parts of the AIR.

- *Infosys validation tool*

On the basis of experiences with the 2015 and 2016 Infosys data provision, FAME developed in 2018 an IT tool for Member States to validate the data before submission. As a result, number of errors decreased substantially. For the year 2019, a new improved version has been launched and available from the common Sharepoint platform. The most important novelty is the introduction of a plausibility check. No workshop is foreseen this time, explanations are provided in the error reports.

### **3.7. FARNET**

FARNET presentation focused on four elements:

- *Circular Economy*

Outcome of the seminar in November 2018 in Saint-Jean-de-Luz was presented, with special emphasis on the projects showcased. As a follow-up, a Circular Economy guide is expected in March 2019.

- *Smart Coastal Areas*

Information on this upcoming seminar on 2-4 April was provided. Its main objective is to find new ways to tackle existing challenges in climate change, depopulation, lack of services, digital divide and reduced funding. While providing ideas and guidance on “smart” activities carried out/funded by FLAGs.

- *Delivery systems around the EU*

A study is planned with the aim of improving the delivery of CLLD strategy in the next period. Results of a questionnaire to FLAGs shows that the administrative tasks of the FLAGs accumulate around project selection. While the assessment of the questionnaire is still on-going, it will also provide suggestions on what the main barriers of implementation are. The assessment will be followed by case studies in five MS. Final results will be included into a guide by the end of 2019.

- *CLLD conference, December 2019*

Experts attention was called to this conference where other ESIF LAGs will also be invited. Main objective of the conference will be to kick/off the transition to the next period.

Experts welcomed and took note of the information.

### **3.8. Explanatory fishes on post-2020 EMFF**

- Action plan for SSCF

COM (V. Guerre, MARE D3) presented the rationale, content structure and monitoring of action plan for SSCF as proposed by COM. This improved version of current action plans is to demonstrate the preferential treatment for SSCF and the links to important EU commitments.

Experts questioned the need for such a document highlighting the administrative burden it may create on MS. Most of the MS do not see the necessity of specific indicator for SSCF. Experts from MS with no or only a few vessels in SSCF requested more flexibility. Some of them questioned the retention of the current definition of SSCF. Others requested explanation on how the SSCF strategy may be aligned with CLLD strategies.

- Action plan for the outermost regions

COM (V. Guerre, MARE D3) presented the rationale, content and structure of action plan for ORs as proposed by COM, highlighting their links to and synergies with Blue Economy Strategies.

Experts from the three MS concerned expressed strong reservations calling for simplification in programming.

- Sea-basin analysis

COM (V. Guerre, MARE D3) presented the rationale, content structure and timeline of the sea-basin analysis as proposed by COM.

Experts questioned the objective of the document. They called attention to the fact that regional challenges should not be expected to be reflected in the national strategy/programme. Flexibility should be retained so that MS may choose which challenge they wish to target with EU funding. Most of them suggested that it should be a strategic document without going to the level of measures of funding. All experts agreed that the timeline (ie. the adoption of the analysis after the entry into force of the EMFF Regulation) will not allow its application during the programming exercise. Some expert suggested that the sea-basin analysis should feed into the implementation of the direct management part of the EMFF.

- EMFF OP template

At the request of RO PRES, COM (G. Igloi, MARE D3) presented the EMFF OP template that is annexed to the Common Provision Regulation. It was supposed to ease the reading of the regulation as well as facilitating the programming already launched in some of the MS. COM confirmed that for the moment no guidance is foreseen.

### **3.9. AOB**

NA.

## **4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions**

There were no points submitted for the approval of the Expert Group and therefore there was no voting at the meeting.

## **5. Next steps**

As regards the Sea-basin analysis, COM will provide information on the development of the analysis and the evolution of its content so that MS can take it into account in their programming process.

## **6. Next meeting**

Next meeting will take place on 9 April, 2019.

## **7. List of participants**

See annex.