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ANNEX

ANNEX

to the

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

**on the financing of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and the
adoption of the work programme for 2024 and 2025**

ANNEX

Work programme for 2024 and 2025 for the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund

1. Introduction

On the basis of the objectives laid down in the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, this work programme contains the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for years 2024 and 2025 as follows:

- (a) for grants (implemented under direct management) (point 2);
- (b) for procurement (implemented under direct management) (point 3);
- (c) for actions implemented under indirect management (point 4);
- (g) for contributions to blending facilities (point 5);
- (h) for other actions or expenditure (point 6).

Legal basis

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

Budget line

08 04 02 EMFAF —Operational expenditure under direct and indirect management.

2. Grants

The global budgetary envelope reserved for grants under this work programme in 2024 and 2025 is EUR 16 208 888 and EUR 22 380 000 respectively.

Priority 1 -Fostering sustainable fisheries the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources

2.1. Scientific advice and data collection

2.1.1. Advisory deliverables provided by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

Description of the activities to be funded by the specific grant directly awarded under a framework partnership , as well as of the objectives pursued and the expected results

Article 26 of Regulation (Union) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) sets out the consultation with scientific bodies. The advisory deliverables provided by ICES are science-based products to support the implementation of policies adopted by the EU and its Member States with respect to management of activities that affect marine ecosystems.

The advisory deliverables shall be related to relevant policy developments and the implementation of the CFP, such as the Maximum Sustainable Yield objective and associated ranges, regionalisation, the Union multi-annual plans or a fleet-based approach to

mixed-fisheries or multi-species management, the Eel regulation (Council Regulation No 1100/2007) and the related national eel management plans, the evaluation of the Deep Sea regulation, the Maritime Policy and the data and marine research needs to support these policies. It should also be aligned with the European Green Deal (EGD) and the related strategies, e.g., the Biodiversity Strategy, the Zero Pollution Action Plan and the offshore renewable Energy Strategy.

ICES is the only organisation which can provide independent and highly specialised scientific advice with best international quality procedures for research-based advisory deliverables on human activities affecting and affected by marine ecosystems in the North Atlantic, including adjacent seas such as the Baltic Sea and North Sea.

Implementation

DG MARE

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Scientific advice is the basis for the design and implementation of management and conservation measures under the CFP, thus contributing to maintaining biodiversity and climate change mitigation/adaptation.

ICES has embedded the ecosystem-based management objective in its advisory process. Ecosystem related factors are already considered in some of ICES assumptions, underpinning advice (such as natural mortality) on a recurrent basis and has been developing the set of ecosystem overviews, which give an outline of non-fishing related activities impacting available resources. In addition to further expanding some recurrent advice to incorporate ecosystem aspects (for eel, mainly), ICES has been requested to deliver non-recurrent pieces of advice on issues with an ecosystem impact such as vulnerable marine ecosystems and bottom trawling.

2.1.2. Improving scientific knowledge to strengthen the science-basis of management decisions under the CFP

Type of applicants targeted by the call for proposals

Public and private research centres, institutes, universities, foundations and scientific bodies which are primarily active in fisheries science or in marine science applied to fisheries management and that are legally established in an EU Member State.

Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals, as well as of the objectives pursued and the expected results

One of the main principles of good governance applied to the CFP is the establishment of measures in accordance with the best available scientific advice (Article 3 of the CFP Basic Regulation). The success of the CFP depends on the availability of scientific advice for the management of fisheries and on the timely availability of relevant supporting data on fisheries. To that end, the EMFAF supports, through shared management, the collection and processing of data by Member States. It also provides the possibility of supporting an effective knowledge-based implementation of the CFP through the provision of scientific advice under direct management.

Other EU financial resources are also available for research projects that could contribute to strengthen the scientific knowledge available in fisheries (e.g. Horizon Europe). Nevertheless, by their nature, those projects are usually large scale and more focused on delivering long-term insights. Thus, they are not always fit to provide immediate scientific advice in a targeted approach and within a shorter timeframe.

The development of scientific knowledge and advice is a continuous process, which is becoming more and more demanding as the advice is required for an increasing variety of fisheries conservation and management issues. For example, multispecies and ecosystem assessments to implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM), multiannual recovery and/or management plans, management strategy evaluation, technical measures and incidental catch of vulnerable and sensitive species. Recent political orientations and commitments with impact on the CFP, such as the EGD, EU farm to fork strategy and EU Biodiversity strategy 2030, as well as the report on the functioning of the CFP, are likely to stimulate the need for even more specific scientific input in support of the policy.

At the same time, the main providers of advice to the European Commission such as STECF¹, ICES, JRC² or scientific committees of RFMOs³ and the national fisheries research institutes on which they depend, have limitations in terms of capacity and resources to improve the existing knowledge and to address the growing needs in scientific advice.

The grants shall aim at developing or strengthening the scientific knowledge needed to support the design of science based for fisheries conservation and management measures, with the aim to, among others:

- Propose new fisheries conservation and management measures;
- Improve the data collection methodology and optimise the collection and use of scientific data;
- Adapt to the upcoming challenges affecting fisheries management;
- Assess and monitor the impact of fisheries on the structure, function and dynamics of marine ecosystems, and their associated services;
- Increase the understanding of stock structures, life histories, food webs and multi-species interactions and EAFM;
- Monitor and assess the impact of fisheries on vulnerable and sensitive species to identify biologically sensitive areas, hot-spots by-catch areas and mitigation measures to monitor and control mortalities;
- Support the EU scientific community in developing and maintaining the relevant expertise to provide high quality scientific advice to fisheries management;
- Support the involvement of policy stakeholders and citizens in the provision of fisheries data, the process of the production of scientific advice, and the communication of scientific results;
- Increase monitoring and understanding on the impact of other human activities and threats to fisheries stocks and linked ecosystems.

The actions can include, inter alia, the collection of samples or data in the field and processing of samples that fall outside the scope of national data collection programmes, harmonisation or improved protocols, trials, meta-analysis, modelling, developing methodologies for stock evaluations, data validation or data preparation to feed into models,

¹ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries

² Joint Research Centre

³ Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

expanding current databases, link existing initiatives and develop networking activities between EU scientists and/or with the EU fishing industry.

The funded actions are expected to improve the knowledge available to the EU (and global) fisheries scientific communities which will in turn have a direct influence on improving the science base of the conservation and management measures designed in the context of the CFP.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Scientific advice is the basis for the design and implementation of management and conservation measures under the CFP, thus contributing to maintaining biodiversity and climate change mitigation/adaptation.

This action aims at supporting the implementation of the CFP and the achievement of its main objectives which include (1) to ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities are sustainably managed, (2) to apply a precautionary approach to fisheries management maintaining living marine biological resources above certain levels and (3) to implement an EAFM.

Overall, the action can contribute to objectives of *Climate Change Mitigation* through the analysis and promotion of efforts to reduce or limit Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and ensuring that fishing activities do not harm the capacity of the ecosystems to sequester GHG: Ecosystem Approach implementation.

The main contribution of this action is made via *Climate Change Adaptation*. Scientific evaluation of the stocks and of the ecosystems in which those fishing stocks are integrated are key to increase the adaptive capacity and resilience of the EU sector and to reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change such as the migration of stocks, the presence of new species and the disappearance of traditional ones in fishing grounds. The integration of climate change effects in fisheries management decision is a reality that requires a solid scientific knowledge which this action aims at improving.

2.2. Advisory councils

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

The Advisory Councils (ACs) established in accordance with Article 43 of the CFP Regulation

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195 (d) of the Financial Regulation, as well as of the objectives pursued and the expected results

The main function of the ACs is to advise the Commission and the Member States on the management of fisheries and the socio-economic and conservation aspects of fisheries and aquaculture by submitting recommendations and suggestions. They also inform the Commission and the Member States of problems in a specific area and propose solutions.

Finally, they contribute to the collection and analysis of data in close cooperation with scientists.

ACs are established in accordance with Article 43 of the CFP Regulation in order to submit recommendations to the Commission and Member States on CFP related matters. Article 48(d) of Regulation 2021/1139 (“EMFAF Regulation”) stipulates that the fund is to support their operational costs and that they may apply for Union support as a body pursuing an aim of general European interest.

There are two general objectives:

- To promote a balanced representation of all stakeholders: the industry (fishing, aquaculture, processing and marketing sectors) on the one hand and other interest groups (such as environmental and consumer organisations) on the other. The aim is to have all stakeholders’ voices heard;
- To contribute to the achievement of the CFP objectives and facilitate the implementation of the CFP and of the maritime policy.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To play a role and represent stakeholders’ voices in the regionalized CFP. This is why they have to be consulted by Member States when preparing joint recommendations on conservation measures;
- To warn the Commission and Member States of specific problems in a specific area;
- To contribute to the supply and analysis of data for the development of conservation measures in specific areas.

The expected results are as follows:

- Improved management of the CFP by involving active and interested stakeholders in the fisheries and aquaculture issues covered by the ACs in policy-making and implementation;
- Relevant advice to the Commission on management issues relating to the fisheries and aquaculture covered by the ACs;
- Improved dialogue between the various parties affected by the CFP.

Implementation

DG MARE

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Scientific advice is the basis for the design and implementation of management and conservation measures under the CFP, thus contributing to maintaining biodiversity and climate change mitigation/adaptation.

2.3. Voluntary contributions to international organisations

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

Regional Fisheries management Organisations (RFMOs):

- Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)⁴
- Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)⁵
- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Convention (IATTC)⁶
- International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)⁷
- Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO)⁸
- North Atlantic Salmon Conservation organisation (NASCO)⁹
- North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC)¹⁰
- Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)¹¹
- South Pacific Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO)¹²
- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)¹³

Description of the activities to be funded by the grants awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195(c) of the Financial Regulation

Articles 28(2)(a) and 29(1) of the CFP establish that the Union shall actively support and contribute to the activities of international organisations dealing with fisheries, including RFMOs and similar arrangements. In this respect, the Union actively supports and contributes, for example, to the development of scientific knowledge and advice, to strengthening fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance, to promoting action necessary to eradicate IUU (Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported) -fishing, and to improving the performance and governance of these organisations. The EU is also a strong supporter of the establishment of marine protected areas which might require support measures for their

⁴ Council Decision 81/691/EEC of 4 September 1981 on the conclusion of the Convention on the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources (OJ L 252, 5.9.1981, p. 26)

⁵ Council Decision (EU) 2015/2437 of 14 December 2015 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) concerning the membership of the Union in the Extended Commission of the Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna

⁶ Council Decision 2006/539/EC of 22 May 2006 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of the Convention for the Strengthening of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission established by the 1949 Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica (OJ L 224, 16.8.2006, p. 22)

⁷ Council Decision 86/238/EEC of 9 June 1986 on the accession of the Community to the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, as amended by the Protocol annexed to the Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the States Parties to the Convention signed in Paris on 10 July 1984 (OJ L 162, 18.6.1986, p. 33)

⁸ Council Regulation (EEC) No 3179/78 of 28 December 1978 concerning the conclusion by the European Economic Community of the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (OJ L 378, 30.12.1978, p. 1)

⁹ Council Decision 82/886/EEC of 13 December 1982 concerning the conclusion of the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean (OJ L 378, 31.12.1982, p. 24)

¹⁰ Council Decision (EU) 2022/392 of 3 March 2022 concerning the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the North Pacific Fisheries Commission

¹¹ Council Decision 2008/780/EC of 29 September 2008 on the signing, on behalf of the European Community, of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (OJ L 268, 9.10.2008, p. 27)

¹² Council Decision of 3 October 2011 on the approval, on behalf of the European Union, of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean (2012/130/Union), (OJ L 67, 6.3.2012, p.1)

¹³ Council Decision 2005/75/EC of 26 April 2004 on the accession of the Community to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

adoption and/or implementation.

Because of their mandates, RFMOs are uniquely placed to implement actions to support the aforementioned priorities, including through scientific programmes, the adoption of management measures and the planning and organisation of meetings. However, RFMOs often rely on subcontracting because the required technical and scientific expertise is not always readily available within their Secretariats or scientific bodies.

The voluntary contributions to the listed RFMOs for the period 2024-25 will aim to support among others:

- science-based decision-making;
- the creation of representative systems of marine protected areas and protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs);
- the fight against IUU fishing;
- improved monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) of fishing activities;
- improved understanding of fishery resources trade flows;
- enhanced data collection and management;
- improved governance and performance;
- participation of delegates from developing countries in the work of RFMOs.

The main activities and expected results include for example:

- development and implementation of scientific advice, including stock assessments and Management Strategy Evaluations for species subject to targeted fishing operations (e.g. jack mackerel, salmon, sharks, tunas including bluefin tuna, toothfish), and scientific research to minimise the impact of fish aggregating devices (FADs) on juveniles and ecosystems;
- establishing and/or implementing marine protected areas and protection of VMEs from significant adverse impacts;
- initiatives to fight against IUU fishing including monitoring of vessel activities and cooperation with international organisations;
- pilot projects and other initiatives to improve MCS of fishing activities;
- mapping of trade flows;
- establishing, finalising and maintaining data collection and management tools and systems;
- performance reviews;
- holding of meetings.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The EU action in RFMOs is fully geared towards the achievement of the Commission priorities for 2019-2024, with special focus on the European Green Deal, notably the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies, and climate change. This includes the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, where RFMOs have mechanisms in place to implement the FAO guidelines.

Climate change was high on the agenda and ICCAT, IOTC and WCPFC are just the most

recent RFMOs to have adopted resolutions to take into consideration the effect of climate change in their deliberations. Climate change is also part of the harvest strategies and MSE being developed in SPRMO or SIOFA or the assessment of the ecosystem under the NAFO program (NEREIDA).

The creation of a representative system of marine protected areas in CCAMLR is a clear example of an action to conserve marine biodiversity, will maintain ocean resilience against such climate change impacts and benefit fisheries through increased egg and larval production, or the spill-over of mobile juveniles and adults. Climate change considerations are integrated across all of CCAMLR's areas of work, in line with CCAMLR Resolution 36/41 on climate change.

Priority 3 - Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities

2.4. Maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy

2.4.1. Maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy and promotion of healthy seas and oceans

Type of applicants targeted by the calls for proposals

- Non-profit organisations (private or public); public authorities (national, regional, local); international organisations, including Regional Sea Conventions; Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs); universities; educational institutions; research centres; profit making entities;
- For projects on maritime spatial planning, public authorities or bodies in charge of maritime spatial planning of coastal Member States can apply. Other legal entities shall be considered eligible applicants provided that they are endorsed by the public authorities or bodies in charge of maritime spatial planning at national level in the related coastal Member States. Further specific eligibility criteria will be detailed in the calls for proposals;
- In line with Article 61(2)(a) of the EMFAF Regulation, legal entities established in a third country are eligible when such third countries are listed in the work programme. The following non-EU countries relate to the relevant sea basin strategies and/or regional cooperation frameworks: Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- For projects in outermost regions, this also includes:
 - the members of the Indian Ocean Commission: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, France (Réunion and Mayotte) and Seychelles,
 - Brazil and the full members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which are the following 15 countries and territories: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago,
 - the contracting parties of OSPAR Convention (15 countries): Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom, together with the European Union.

Description of the activities to be funded under the calls for proposals, as well as of the objectives pursued and the expected results

Political priorities and context:

The Communication on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the Union calls for a transformation of the blue economy along the priorities of the European Green Deal. It recognises the specificities of each sea basin and the need to support regional cooperation between the Union Member States and non-Union countries in order to address common challenges and boost the transition towards a sustainable blue economy. It identifies Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and the protection of marine ecosystems as a prominent condition for sustainable ocean governance.

The Commission's Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy also recognises that MSP and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) act as an enabler and a facilitator for achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal in the maritime realm. RePowerEU has accelerated the planned deployment of offshore renewable energy in all EU sea basins. At the same time the EU Biodiversity Strategy calls for the protection of 30% of EU waters by 2030.

The underlying calls for proposals will also fund actions contributing to the new European Skills Agenda and the twin digital and green transition of the European economy in this context. The actions will contribute to promoting gender equality in the sustainable blue economy, in line with the Union Gender Equality strategy for 2020-2025 .

This will be in synergy with the Horizon Europe programme and specifically the mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030" which also supports regional engagement and cooperation through a number of lighthouses at sea basin levels, and also including the Zero Emission Waterborne Transport partnership with respect to green shipping.

A sustainable blue economy also contributes to the European Green Deal's flagship initiatives Farm to Fork, Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity, Circular economy and Zero pollution action plan.

Objectives pursued:

Support the implementation of the new approach to a sustainable blue economy by promoting regional cooperation in the different sea basins around Europe, in line with the regional thematic priorities agreed by the Member States under the different cooperation frameworks, as well as the implementation of blue economy strategies in the Outermost regions.

With lessons drawn from the Commission's MSP implementation report¹⁴, as well as the lessons drawn on regional cooperation from the implementation of the MSFD, a new generation of MSP crossborder cooperation projects will enable Member States to cooperate on issues of common interest in MSP, notably with regard to environmental protection or assessing cumulative impacts of renewable energy production at sea basin level. They will also support further capacity building, by transferring experiences and best practice, or by developing tools to support MSP activities. Cross-border stakeholder contacts and consultations will be facilitated in the framework of the projects.

¹⁴ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council outlining the progress made in implementing Directive 2014/89/EU establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning, COM/2022/185 final of 3.5.2022.

The calls under this action will also fund consortia that work to strengthen the skill capabilities in the blue economy, to attract new, skilled talent into the blue economy, and to help further and boost digitalisation and greening of jobs in the blue economy.

They will contribute to promoting gender equality in the maritime community, by overcoming existing constraints in all aspects of the maritime sector, in particular, recruitment, training, capacity-building, technical cooperation and promotions, in order to allow for full and safe participation.

Calls under this action will also build on existing smart specialisation strategies under the “S3 Thematic Platform for Sustainable Blue Economy” and foster the creation of interregional partnerships or consortia of partners to work on innovative challenges with business potential in specific blue economy sub-topics or sub-domains.

As a concrete example of ecosystem restoration, the calls will aim at reorienting fishers from fishing (extraction) activities to ocean regeneration activities thus proving the feasibility and interest to reorient fishers to regenerative ocean farmers.

Expected results and main tasks to be carried out:

Regional maritime cooperation:

- The transition to more sustainability in specific blue economy value chains (such as aquaculture, green shipping etc);
- The reduction of marine litter, in line with the Plastics strategy and circular economy and zero pollution action plans, as well as other contaminants and pollutants including underwater noise.
- The protection of marine biodiversity and their habitats, in line with the Biodiversity strategy for 2030, and to contribute to achieving good environmental status under the MSFD, favourable conservation status under the Birds and Habitats Directives and the establishment of a coherent and representative networks of marine protected areas.
- The cooperation between public authorities and the promotion of good practices in terms of maritime policies (including maritime security and marine environmental protection);
- Regional networks and partnerships involving various blue economy stakeholders, research institutes and/or citizens.

Developing a sustainable blue economy in the Outermost Regions

- Support the Outermost Regions, in line with Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), to develop and implement a sustainable blue economy in a variety of sectors, according to the priorities identified in their respective blue economy strategies. The expected project results will need to address/propose solutions in one or several of the blue economy sectors, including training aspects and blue skills.

Maritime spatial planning:

Adaptation of Member States’ maritime spatial plans to new needs and challenges, in particular integrating in their plans the "European Green Deal" and related initiatives in areas such as offshore renewable energy, biodiversity and marine protection, food, mobility or at a more general level, a sustainable blue economy.

- Identifying, estimating and addressing cumulative impacts of ocean stressors in MSP especially by using Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) in relevant sea basins, in order to reach good

environmental status, as set out in Directive 2008/56/EC (Marine Strategy Framework Directive).

- Reinforcing the seabasin dimension of MSP, including through cooperation with non-Union coastal states; making MSP "digital" and pan-European capitalising on existing tools and platforms, such as EMODNET.

Women in the blue economy:

The grants will help increase the participation and representation of women in the different sectors of the blue economy, thus contributing to a gender equal society as a whole. The objective is to overcome the existing constraints in all aspects of the maritime sector, in particular, recruitment, training, capacity-building, technical cooperation and promotions, so that every person can fully and safely participate in the activities of the maritime economy.

S3 Thematic Platform for Sustainable Blue Economy (Smart Specialisation):

Animate and underpin existing smart specialisation strategies with priorities on blue economy sectors and foster the creation of interregional partnerships or consortia of partners to work on innovative challenges with business potential in specific blue economy sub-topics or sub-domains.

Regenerative ocean farming and algae innovation:

Prove the feasibility and viability of setting and operating ocean farms across various Union marine regions, and measure and quantify environmental benefits of regenerative farming of either local seaweed species or seaweed in combination with shellfish, and spur algae innovation by supporting the development and bringing to market new algae-based products and services, thus offering new green employment opportunities.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Those actions will significantly contribute to the development of a sustainable blue economy.

Supporting the conversion of fishermen into regenerative ocean farmers can help the transition towards more sustainable jobs and a more sustainable economy. In addition, accelerating innovation in the blue bioeconomy, and in particular in Algae, to bring new products and services to the market with the aim of creating new profitable and sustainable activities, would be a valuable contribution to the objectives of the European Green Deal and to the restoration of our oceans.

Focusing on equal chances in education and training, the actions will also focus on climate change issues and how this will impact the future of young professionals embracing maritime professions.

The projects financed through the MSP actions will contribute to the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies into the maritime spatial plans of Member States. "Climate Smart MSP" is an area that is gaining priority in the management of the marine. As regards biodiversity, MSP is recognised as a key tool to facilitate the alignment of MSFD with other nature protection legislation, in particular the objective of increased

restoration and conservation areas will be a key feature in future maritime planning.

2.4.2. Regional Maritime Cooperation - Promoting sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean Sea Basin

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195 (c) of the Financial Regulation, as well as of the objectives pursued and the expected results

On 2 February 2021, the EU and the 42 countries of the UfM adopted a [ministerial declaration on the Sustainable blue economy](#) identifying a series of common challenges and priorities for regional cooperation. The ministers tasked the Secretariat of the UfM to reinforce dialogue between the UfM member countries and stakeholders on the sustainable blue economy, maximising regional coordination and partnerships. They reaffirmed the need to provide the secretariat with the adequate support and the necessary means to support the implementation of the ministerial declaration.

This action aims at facilitating the implementation of the 2021 UfM ministerial declaration and boost the transition towards a sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean region.

The grant will support the following tasks to be carried out by the UfM Secretariat:

- The regional dialogue on the transition to a sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean;
- Support and monitoring of the implementation of the 2021 Ministerial Declaration;
- The identification and promotion of projects, in line with the relevant regional priorities, in the field of the blue economy;
- The organisation of events, such as meetings of the UfM Blue Economy Working Group, regional seminars and conferences;
- The preparation of studies and reports on the implementation of the Ministerial declaration;
- Close cooperation and synergies with regional initiatives such as the WestMED Initiative.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

This action will significantly contribute to the sustainable blue economy development in the Mediterranean Sea.

Priority 4 - Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed

2.5. Maritime security and surveillance

2.5.1. Support to European Coast Guard Functions Forum and to the Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum

Type of applicants targeted by the direct awards

- Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum (MCGFF): EU Member States, EU Agencies and Non-EU country authorities that perform Coast Guard Functions around the Mediterranean.
- European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF): EU Member States and EEA (European Economic Area) authorities that perform Coast Guard Functions.

Description of the activities to be funded by the grants awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195 (c) of the Financial Regulation as well as of the objectives pursued and the expected results

The MCGFF and the ECGFF are unique bodies on a European scale to address the implementation of:

- The EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan;
- The Cooperation on Coast Guard Functions at the European level and at the Mediterranean level respectively.

Objectives pursued:

Continuation and enhancement of the cooperation on coast guard functions at the European level (for ECGFF) and at the Mediterranean level (for MCGFF).

Expected results:

- To support the organisation of the ECGFF annual high-level conference and related activities, to enhance sectorial and cross-sectorial cooperation between national authorities performing Coast Guard Functions, the exchange of best practices and the promotion of a dialogue at international, regional and national level.
- To support the organisation of the MCGFF annual high-level conference promoting cooperation and enhanced dialogue on coast guard functions at international, regional and sub regional level.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The actions will support cooperation between all authorities operating in the EU Sea Basins with responsibility in coast guard functions, including "fisheries and inspection control", "maritime environmental protection and response", "maritime accident and disaster response", thereby contributing to the sustainable blue economy development in the EU Sea Basins.

2.5.2. Grant in support of implementing key objectives of the EU Maritime Security Strategy (UXO)

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)

Description of the activities to be funded by the grants awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195 (f) of the Financial Regulation as well as of the objectives pursued and the expected results

The beneficiary will be entrusted to carry out actions aimed at tackling unexploded ordnance at sea (UXO).

HELCOM will be entrusted to develop a mechanism to set up priorities, coordinate actions at sea to neutralize and remove munitions, ensure data sharing among all stakeholders involved and maintain a comprehensive picture of the munitions in the Baltic Sea.

HELCOM has been identified as the most appropriate organisation for coordinating the actions needed to tackle the issue. HELCOM is an intergovernmental organisation and a regional sea convention in the Baltic Sea area. A regional platform for environmental policy making, HELCOM was established in 1974 to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution. The organisation has a dedicated sub group working on this issue that gathers scientists from the Baltic Sea Region. HELCOM has the competence for comprehending the urgency of the situation as it has specialised on this issue for several years now and has an important database. Furthermore, the issue of unexploded munitions is an important problem that can only be tackled by one authority as there is a need for coordination between the Member States around the Baltic Sea. Expected results: Managing the actions needed, including the optimisation of the methods and coordination, to clear UXO from the sea.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

UXO poses a significant threat to the marine environment as toxic contents from both conventional weapons and chemical weapons dumped on the seabed are gradually leaking into the environment.

2.6. International Ocean governance

2.6.1. Support to the Saami Council to raise the awareness about the Saami

Type of applicants targeted by the direct awards

Saami Council

Description of the activities to be funded by the grants awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195 (f) of the Financial Regulation, as well as of the objectives pursued and the expected results

The EU's Arctic policy emphasises the importance of engaging with Indigenous Peoples to ensure their views are respected and promoted in the ongoing development of EU policies affecting the Arctic, including the EU's maritime and fisheries policies.

Arctic Indigenous Peoples are an inherent part of the region. They have a specific culture, which may include local and/or traditional knowledge, customs and/or practices, and language as well. Arctic Indigenous Peoples may live a more subsistence or traditional livelihood, relying on hunting, fishing or husbandry for both food and income sources. They may also live in small yet vibrant and modern communities, with close connections to nature and local ecosystems. They all face first-hand the impacts of climate change in a region that is warming faster than the rest of the planet. Youth in the Arctic also face specific challenges linked to their environment and the communities they live in.

The Saami are the only Indigenous peoples living within the European Union. The Saami Council is a non-governmental, pan-Saami organisation, unique in the Saami context.

The Action contributes to two political priorities of the Commission: the European Green Deal (EGD) and its international dimension, as well as “Making Europe stronger in the world”. While the EU Arctic policy covers the whole region, the focus of this action is the European Arctic.

The objective of this action is to promote dialogue and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples and the youth, in order to foster a more integrated maritime and coastal governance. Specifically, the action will aim to increase the visibility and raise awareness of the challenges faced by local and indigenous communities as a result of the rapidly changing Arctic environment and to enable policymakers to take into account local and indigenous perspectives regarding marine and coastal affairs. To this end, this action is expected:

- Follow on from previous grant and actions identified therein, as applicable
- Make information available about local and indigenous communities living in the European Arctic and their way of life, including through events;
- Present local and indigenous communities perspectives and experiences, in particular on issues and policies of interest to them or affecting them directly;
- Increase awareness of local and indigenous communities views, rights, traditional livelihoods (e.g., fisheries), knowledge, culture and language;
- Enhance dialogue and exchange of information and best practices with stakeholders in the European Arctic and beyond (including with other indigenous peoples and communities).

This action will complement the annual EU Arctic Forum and Indigenous Peoples Dialogue, organised by the European Commission.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

This action aims at enabling policymakers to take into account local and indigenous perspectives regarding climate change and biodiversity conservation. By considering the interests and benefiting of those living in the Arctic, economic development in this area can be made both sustainable and inclusive, maximising the benefits of the green and digital transitions, enhancing circularity, fostering prosperity and well-being.

2.6.2. ISA Scientific project – SsKi

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

International Seabed Authority (ISA)

Description of the activities to be funded by the grant awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195 (f) of the Financial Regulation, as well as of the objectives pursued and the expected results

According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) -Article 143, the ISA is mandated to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area.

Given the objective of the European Green Deal (EGD) to become the first climate neutral continent, the EU has the priority to lead globally on the conservation and protection of our environment, including seas and oceans. Improving knowledge of seabed ecosystems in the Area is the necessary step to establish a solid baseline for the protection of these ecosystems.

The Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative (SsKi) - Innovative Global Knowledge Framework Underpinning Effective Protection of the Marine Environment in the Area – by ISA is a biodiversity mapping project in the Area that seeks to fill the gaps in knowledge of seabed ecosystems, their connectivity and the interrelation between endemism of species and conglomeration of seabed minerals.

SsKi's goal is to describe and characterise one thousand new species from our oceans. These new data on the building blocks of biodiversity - from regions targeted for seabed mining – will enable the creation of new maps of life on the ocean floor to understand the importance and resilience of deep-sea life to anthropogenic change. As such, the initiative is fully consistent with the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

The EU has already contributed to the first phase of this ambitious project through financing the identification of 50 new species from already collected samples by contractors, and the development of toolkits for species identification, and is planning to contribute in 2023 to the second phase to develop underwater image reference libraries.

The third phase of the SsKI will build on phase one and two and will continue developing the underwater image reference libraries and start building a network of deep-sea taxonomic fellows through the organisation of workshops and training opportunities. This third phase will enhance the creation of centres of excellence on deep sea taxonomy for sample processing, including sorting in partnership with relevant regional institutions/programmes.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Given the objective of the EGD to become the first climate neutral continent, the EU has the priority to lead globally on the conservation and protection of our environment, including seas and oceans. Improving knowledge of seabed ecosystems in the Area is the necessary step to establish a solid baseline for the protection of these ecosystems.

Actions covering multiple priorities

2.7. Communication: raising awareness on the maritime and fisheries policies

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

EURONEWS

Description of the activities to be funded by the specific grant directly awarded under a framework partnership as well as the objectives pursued and the expected results

Euronews offers access to a unique platform for raising awareness among general audiences regarding the objectives and results of the EU's maritime and fisheries policies. It is the only television with a pan-European outreach. The services provided by Euronews under the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the Commission are a very strong fit for DG MARE's general communication strategy. The action will underpin notably three overall political priorities pursued under the Commission's maritime and fisheries policies, namely sustainable use of natural resources, the creation of jobs and sustainable growth, and reinforcing the role of the Union as a global actor.

Launched in early 2019, the "Ocean" series has already been a success and demonstrated its potential in terms of quality and reach. A televised series of magazines - in combination with multiplatform digital dissemination - enables the Commission to reach large and new audiences across the Union and beyond. The action also contributes to increasing the Commission's outreach in a broader sense by helping to grow existing social media followership.

A continuation of the series in 2024 and 2025 will contribute to further raising the profile of ocean-related topics, and the related Union policies by showcasing concrete examples of the Union-funded actions, interviews with key players and powerful visuals from maritime settings.

Implementation

DG MARE

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution - description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The "Ocean" magazine on Euronews explores themes such as pollution and marine life, sustainable fishing and aquaculture, climate change and ocean energy. The magazine also gives visibility to policies and projects designed to protect marine biodiversity and the ocean as a whole. The "Ocean" magazine receives an average of four million views per month, contributing to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming.

3. Procurement

The global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts in 2024 and 2025 is EUR 37 500 000 and EUR 36 499 012 respectively.

Priority 1 -Fostering sustainable fisheries the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources

3.1. Scientific advice and data collection

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Studies and services providing (1) scientific advice for fisheries and aquaculture (2) support for the data collection and (3) design, development and maintenance of IT tools for scientific advice and data collection.

This includes, inter alia:

- Establishing a new service Framework Contract for studies providing scientific advice in support of the implementation of the CFP in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea including at the international level within the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).
- Continued services and studies to improve scientific knowledge and advice supporting the implementation of the CFP;
- Cover knowledge gaps that cannot be covered through scientific advisory bodies in support of the sustainable management of EU fisheries and aquaculture;
- Assistance to the CFP regionalisation approach and to its external dimension by handling specific advice needed at particular areas, such as: specific sea-basin, RFMOs, SFPAs;
- Activities to implement EU legislation and policies on the data collection framework, in the form of an assistance mechanism for the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) for data collection;
- Continued services to support the alignment of Information Systems with the MARE digital Strategy, corporate IT standards and best practices.

Implementation

DG MARE and CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Scientific advice is the basis for the design and implementation of management and conservation measures under the CFP, thus contributing to maintaining biodiversity and climate change mitigation/adaptation.

The advice and services are sought to support the implementation of the CFP by applying the precautionary and the ecosystem approach, while ensuring coherence with the Union's environmental legislation (e.g. Marine Strategy Framework Directive) and with the Integrated Maritime Policy.

3.2. Control and enforcement

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

With the aim of fostering efficient fisheries control and enforcement, including fighting against IUU fishing, as well as reliable data for knowledge-based decision making, support will be given for:

- Identification of traceability systems and minimum traceability information for prepared and preserved Fishery and Aquaculture Products (FAPs) and algae as well as the implementation of traceability rules, including the use of digital traceability systems for the fresh and frozen FAPs by operators in the supply chain;

- Technical developments and scale-up of the European platform “RecFishing.eu” for catch reporting of recreational fisheries and its transition to a fully digitalised system for improved data of those catches and better management of relevant key fish stocks;
- Expenses incurred in the framework of the meetings of the Expert Group on Fisheries Control and the Expert Group on Compliance, in line with the obligations under the Union fisheries control system;
- Provision of IT Services and supplies, for an Integrated Fisheries Data Management (development, maintenance, operations and support of IT applications, access to databases, IT Security) in order to support the information systems managed or hosted externally and required for Control and Enforcement. This includes the development of the web based application named CATCH to support Member States in implementing the EU IUU catch certification scheme efficiently and effectively as well as the CERTEX project aiming at a complete shift by EU customs to a paperless and fully electronic and interoperable environment as regards fishery products imported to the EU;
- Equipment and materials, including spare parts, required for verification, inspection and audit/fisheries control related tasks in view of a smooth running of activities linked to the field of control.

Implementation

DG MARE, co-delegation to PMO, DG DIGIT, DG SANTE, DG TAXUD

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The ambitious CFP objectives for healthy fish and eco-systems, a profitable industry, viable coastal communities and food security can only be achieved if Member States and the EU as a whole have a proper control and enforcement system in place that ensures that reliable, accurate and complete fisheries data are supplied on time, that Member States have the full control of their fleet, that measures are in place to allow effective controls of fisheries products in the supply chain and that ultimately a widespread culture of compliance allows fishing operators to compete fairly.

Priority 2 - Fostering sustainable aquaculture activities, and processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products, contributing to food security in the Union

3.3. Market intelligence

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

- Running of the European Union Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture products (EUMOFA): Data collection, reports, studies and market analysis, dissemination and communication activities.
- IT information systems for the delivery of market intelligence, including on commercial designations and the consumer information on sustainability performance.
- Provision of methodological and technical support to the policy units for the IT dimension of the actions.
- Eurobarometer study on EU consumer habits regarding fishery and aquaculture products.

- Studies to support current priorities as well as ad-hoc initiatives to support the Commission’s policy and legal obligations to deliver on market intelligence.

The objectives of these actions are referred to in paragraph 1 of art. 42 of the Common Market Organisation (CMO) Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013.

Implementation

DG MARE, CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Market intelligence is one of the pillars of the reformed market policy. It aims at contributing to better inform policymaking and industry strategies through the provision of market data and analyses of market developments. It contributes thereby to the CFP and CMO objectives of sustainable exploitation of living marine biological resources. It supports the Commission to conduct socio-economic analysis on fishing opportunities enabling better programming of production activities (“fish for the market”) and providing global information to institutional and industry actors on production methods, products origin, and consumers habits.

Priority 3 - Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas and fostering development of fishing and aquaculture communities

3.4. Maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy

3.4.1. Maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy and promotion of healthy seas and oceans

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Provision of:

- Studies, scientific, legal and technical support, stakeholders consultation/involvement, missions, inspections, audits, evaluations, impact assessments, methodological and IT support and the like for the design, development and implementation of policies and legislation related to the sustainable blue economy;
- Support, exchange of expertise, synergies and networking to improve the participation of different stakeholders in the implementation of the new approach for a sustainable blue economy¹⁵;
- Support activities (e.g. secretariat, online platforms, organisation of meetings) to the implementation of EU legislation and policies, including the identification and the promotion of blue investments, the exchange of best practices and development of guidance for the sustainable development of blue economy sectors such as aquaculture.

This includes, inter alia:

- The identification and the promotion of blue investments, the exchange of best

¹⁵ COM(2021) 240 final of 17/05/2021: A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU - Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future

practices and the development of guidance for the sustainable development of blue economy sectors such as aquaculture and the blue bio-economy, with specific attention to mitigate their pollution and/or other environmentally harmful impacts;

- Continued services to support the implementation of the EU Sea Basin Strategies, by building on best practices and lessons learned from the past services contracts and by encouraging synergies between the different sea basins, including regional maritime cooperation;
- Support to the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive 2014/89/EU and the related EGD objectives and to the European Blue Forum;
- Provision of studies, online platforms and other activities to support to the design and implementation of Commission initiatives on algae, ocean observation, climate and decarbonisation, energy transition for fisheries and aquaculture; ;
- An Observatory and information system aiming to gather, analyse and disseminate socio-economic knowledge and intelligence for a better understanding and measurement of the EU sustainable blue economy along the value chain and the EU coastal regions;
- External communication, e.g. media-relations, publications, information materials, translations, stakeholder events, workshops, conferences and support to participatory schemes/activities.

Implementation

DG MARE, CINEA, co-delegation to DG SCIC, DGT, DG OP, DG DIGIT, DG COMM

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

This action will significantly contribute to the sustainable blue economy development by helping and promoting investment in sustainable blue economy technologies, monitoring the oceanic contribution to the European Green Deal, ensure that aquaculture in the EU contributes to the green transition as well as the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. MSP strategy is recognised as a strategic tool to facilitate the implementation of climate and biodiversity objectives in particular on marine renewable energy, conservation and restoration of the marine environment (such as the 2030 objectives of 30% marine protected areas by 2030). Blue economy observatories and indicators are supporting climate and biodiversity dimensions as they are delivering on accurate data to conduct analysis for better decision making.

3.4.2. Framework contract for supporting DG MARE's better regulation activities

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

A new service framework contract (FWC) for providing Commission departments with services in order to carry out better regulation-related activities in the fields of Blue economy and CFP (excluding its international dimension), in particular:

- Retrospective evaluations, including fitness checks;
- Prospective evaluations including impact assessments;
- Stakeholder consultations and surveys;
- Assessment of costs and benefits associated with existing and future policies and/or

- regulatory measures in particular regard to administrative burdens;
- Preparation and development of policy measures and tools.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

This FWC will underpin services supporting policy assessment and development in areas such as marine knowledge, decarbonisation of the blue economy, maritime spatial planning and increasing the knowledge on marine biodiversity, climate change effects and the development of policy actions addressing climate adaptation and mitigation in the blue economy and biodiversity protection.

3.5. Marine knowledge

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Actions to support the enhancement of marine knowledge in the EU, including:

- A platform to improve communication, analysis and dissemination of information (Maritime Forum);
- Creation of the skills and competencies to transform the Blue Economy to circular and more sustainable (Blue Skills);
- A better understanding of the importance of the ocean to society (Ocean Literacy);
- Studies to cover specific knowledge gaps and provide insights, data and knowledge.

Implementation

CINEA, co-delegation to DG DIGIT

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Robust marine knowledge is key for assessing and taking action against climate change and protecting biodiversity. This results in providing and disseminating the information necessary to guide and monitor the fight against and adaptation to climate change, and protecting biodiversity in coasts and oceans.

Priority 4 - Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed

3.6. European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet).

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The work planned for EMODnet includes:

- Agregating data, creating data products, developing software further and further interaction with new technologies, ensuring interoperability of all data and compliance with INSPIRE directive requirements;
- Facilitating the implementation of key environmental and maritime legislation; this will include advancements that will support the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and (Marine Strategy Framework) MSFD directives, including providing help to Member States, work in new standards and sharing methodologies;
- Contributing to the Mission Ocean, Seas and Waters by maintaining and expanding the in-situ data availability for the development of research, innovation, Blue economy and ocean literacy;
- Structuring national archives of data so that they all use the same format, standards, nomenclature, baseline and are accessible through internet;
- Streamlining the process whereby marine data is delivered on a voluntary basis for safekeeping to data repositories, from where it can be disseminated; under Horizon Europe this will include all marine research project which collect in-situ data;
- Creating harmonised data products for all European seas and, when possible, beyond;
- Maintaining and developing further cooperation with appropriate international organisations and partner countries on the above objectives or issues; this includes collaborations on international data sharing frameworks and methodologies in the context of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the G7 Future of Seas and Oceans Initiative, the EU4OceanObs partnership and more;
- Outreach to users in order to better understand their needs and develop the network accordingly, including business and industry;
- Coordination, assesment and monitoring of EMODnet;
- Supporting activities related to the Ocean Observation initiative.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Robust marine knowledge is key for assessing and taking action against climate change and protecting biodiversity. This results in providing and disseminating the information necessary to guide and monitor the fight against and adaptation to climate change, and protecting biodiversity in coasts and oceans.

3.7. International ocean governance

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Provision of activities to:

- Develop and implement policies related to international ocean governance (IOG), including studies, events, stakeholders consultation/involvement, evaluations, external communication (e.g. media-relations, information materials, translations, workshops);
- Enhance the exchange of expertise, synergies and networking to foster collaboration with relevant international agreements, arrangements and partnerships and promote

conservation and sustainable use of the seas and ocean at global and regional levels;

- Implement EU legislation and policies to promote cooperation with and coordination among organisations, bodies and institutions in the context of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant international agreements, arrangements and partnerships that aim to promote better ocean governance (e.g. online platforms, organisation of meetings)
- Make sure, in line with the international dimension of the European Green Deal, its IOG agenda, its contribution to rules-based multilateralism and its trade policy, that the EU will use its diplomatic and financial tools to ensure that green/blue partnerships are part of its relations with other countries and regions, such as Africa and the Arctic.

This includes, inter alia:

- The organisation of match-making events between investors and entrepreneurs operating for example in Africa and active in the sector of blue economy to support the identification and the promotion of ocean governance and blue investments, the exchange of best practices and development of guidance for the sustainable development of blue economy sectors;
- Services to support the implementation of the EU Arctic Policy, by organising events to facilitate and strengthen stakeholders' collaboration in the region and to promote visibility of the EU actions fulfilling its commitments in the region;
- The implementation of ocean partnerships and high-level dialogues between the EU and relevant ocean actors to strengthen cooperation and expand relations in key areas of ocean governance and foster coordination of all actions pertaining to the oceans;
- Support to the implementation and promotion of the UNCLOS and its implementing agreements, as well as other international agreements, arrangements and instruments to promote an efficient ocean governance, through the specific development of dedicated projects, studies and the organisation of workshops;
- Actions to enhance cooperation between marine regions that will take account of and engage with relevant activities of the Regional Seas Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Environment Assembly will seek to enhance collaboration between regional organisations focusing on the marine environment and those focused on economic aspects;
- The launch of a Framework Contract and ensuing specific contracts to cover studies, pilot projects and workshops for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) concluded in March 2023.

Implementation

DG MARE, CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The actions aim to promote and support African countries in transitioning to climate-neutral, inclusive, sustainable and productive blue economies, which will in turn foster innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in sectors like decarbonisation, renewable energies, climate adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity and ecosystems preservation. The actions will also cover international and Arctic-regional cooperation, sustainable and inclusive economic

development, climate change and environmental conservation. The activities also aim at enhancing and improving regional and IOG, as encouraged in the EU's IOG agenda. They will support work on the climate-ocean nexus, such as marine biodiversity and blue carbon conservation, improve regional and international cooperation and coordination for the protection of the marine environment, the sustainable use of marine resources and the transfer of practices within and between regions. This will contribute to the implementation of global climate and biodiversity objectives at the regional and international level. Ocean partnerships and high-level dialogues between the EU and relevant ocean actors will facilitate the achievement of common targets in terms of protection of the marine environment and sustainable use of marine resources and contribute to the climate and biodiversity goals of the EU. Lastly, the implementation and promotion of the UNCLOS and its implementing agreements will function as an outermost tool for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, which will assist in reducing the impacts of climate change.

Actions covering multiple priorities

3.8. Public relations, information and communication relating to the Common Fisheries Policy and the Maritime Policy

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Provision and coordination of information, communication and public relations actions including, inter alia:

- Production of publications, information packs, social media activities, maps and other (audiovisual) materials, including regarding EMFAF;
- Information about CFP and Maritime Policy topics in Member States as well as in third countries;
- Hiring of stands and publicity for the participation in fairs and exhibitions;
- Web development and updating of web-pages, revamping of existing websites, as well as use of the "Europa IT Platform" and "Europa Web Publishing Platform" (EWPP) for MARE websites;
- Organisation of conferences, events, seminars and workshops;
- Purchasing of advertising space;
- Translations.

Finally, this envelope includes a contribution to the Commission's corporate communication, which covers the communication of the Union's political priorities, including fisheries and maritime policies.

Implementation

DG MARE, co-delegation to DG COMM, DG SCIC, DG OP, DGT, DG DIGIT, DG ENV, DG CLIMA, DG RTD, DG REGIO and DG AGRI

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The communication actions aim to raise awareness on the EU actions to make fisheries and aquaculture more sustainable, reduce the emissions of economic activities related to the seas

and ocean, and play a leading role at international level for ocean governance and the protection of biodiversity.

3.9. Evaluations on the implementation and impact of the CFP

General description of the contracts envisaged, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Studies and evaluations on the implementation and impact of the CFP. The evaluations and impact assessments shall be concluded under procurement contracts and entrusted to internal or external experts who are functionally independent.

Implementation

DG MARE, CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Not applicable

4. Actions implemented in indirect management

The global budgetary envelope reserved for actions implemented under indirect management in 2024 and 2025 is EUR 21 230 000 and EUR 18 110 000 respectively.

Priority 1 -Fostering sustainable fisheries the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources

4.1. Control and enforcement: study on conversion factors

Implementing entity

The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)

is the decentralised agency of the Commission specialised in fisheries control and inspection and can provide the necessary expertise. Moreover, this assessment is directly linked to the assessment of the weighing procedures that EFCA is carrying out in 2021-2022.

According to Article 62(1)(c)(iv) of Regulation 2018/1046 (“Financial Regulation”), under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to different Union bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71, such as EFCA.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

After the adoption of the revised fisheries Control Regulation, the Commission will have to draft the implementing and delegated rules. It is therefore essential to acquire the relevant analysis on specific and technical issues of the Union fisheries control system, so as to swiftly adapt the legal framework, complete the harmonisation process and ensure a level playing field across the Union.

The results of this action will serve as a basis for the preparation of the implementing rules of the revised Control Regulation currently under interinstitutional adoption procedure.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The objectives of the CFP for healthy fish and eco-systems, a profitable industry, viable coastal communities and food security can only be achieved if Member States and the EU as a whole have a proper control and enforcement system in place that ensures that reliable, accurate and complete fisheries data are supplied on time, that Member States have the full control of their fleet, that measures are in place to allow effective controls of fisheries products in the supply chain and that ultimately a widespread culture of compliance allows fishing operators to compete fairly.

4.2. Indirect management with International Organisations

4.2.1. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) on behalf of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as the FAO, within the meaning of Article 156 of the Financial Regulation.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Following the progress achieved during the 2017-2020 period with the adoption of the MedFish4Ever and Sofia Declarations, the GFCM 2030 Strategy (“The Strategy”) adopted in 2021 doubled up on GFCM’s ambition towards sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Under this new vision, the GFCM developed a complex work program and work structure, delivering performant results both at the regional and subregional levels, with a growing set of adopted measures and reinforced capacity development mechanisms, covering the five GFCM subregions.

With a view to further operationalise the Strategy, the subregional approach and timely reach its targets, work will focus on:

- Integrated, comprehensive and effective fisheries management gradually addressing all key fisheries by 2030;
- Mitigated negative interactions between fisheries and vulnerable species and habitats, through consolidated comprehensive scientific monitoring plans, dedicated mitigation pilot studies addressing iconic vulnerable species and effective Fisheries Protected Areas;
- Strong monitoring, control and surveillance, including through regional VMS and enhanced inspections schemes, towards better enforcement;
- Innovative development of the aquaculture sector, including through enhanced technology and practices ;
- Promotion of resilient coastal livelihoods through transformation of the fisheries and aquaculture sector ;
- Enhanced national, subregional and regional capacity through the BlackSea4Fish project and the MedSea4Fish projects for the western, central, eastern Med and

Adriatic Sea.

These axes of intervention accelerate progress in key fields by ensuring a solid scientific and management advice to support decision-making, enhanced spatial planning and conservation of biodiversity, reinforced fisheries governance, sustainable aquaculture, effectively sustained small-scale fisheries and a levelled north-south playing field.

More specifically, this contribution is expected to address essential aspects for the green and blue transition, such as adequate management of fleets capacity, energy transition and decarbonisation.

In addition to the GFCM FishForum (February 2024), landmark events such as the mid-term conference on the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (RPOA-SSF) will provide further impetus to the achievement of GFCM 2030 Strategy objectives. These events should provide essential input for advancing the sustainability agenda in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The GFCM Strategy is articulated around five targets, each composed of expected outputs and strategic actions. Two outputs are of particular importance in terms of contribution to climate and biodiversity. One output aims at minimising and mitigating any form of pollution deriving from the activities of the fishing sector, in particular abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, inter alia, by involving the sector in testing new technologies to remove litter, in particular plastics, from the marine environment. This output also consolidates the work on climate change and non-indigenous species, improving the initial assessments of the potential impacts of these threats on the sector, reinforcing monitoring programmes and integrating adaptive measures within management plans. The other output aims at identifying, including on the basis of environmental and socio-economic evidence, new fisheries restricted areas and, once established, enhancing their efficiency and monitoring in order to manage the significant adverse impacts of fisheries on vulnerable species, ecosystems and essential fish habitats. This output also addresses the use of other area-based management measures as well as bycatch- and impact-reduction technical measures, such as those aimed at improving fishing selectivity, deterring depredation and decreasing the mortality of incidentally caught vulnerable species.

In terms of specific actions, this will relate to:

- Establish effective area-based measures to minimise and mitigate impacts on vulnerable species, sensitive habitats and essential fish habitats to meet international spatial conservation targets;
- Launch a roadmap for the revision of the deep-water Mediterranean FRA (Fisheries Restricted Area) in order to adopt appropriate protection and management measures, including a higher depth threshold (e.g. 600m instead of 1000m);
- Develop a Regional Plan of Action on Vulnerable species (RPOAA-VUL) aimed at reducing interactions between vulnerable species and fishing activities;
- Develop and implement research programmes (blue crab, rapana) on these species, including the consolidation of a regional observatory for non-indigenous species;
- Integration of the climate impact on fisheries.

4.2.2. Cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) for the conservation and effective management of fisheries and aquaculture

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as the FAO, within the meaning of Article 156 of the Financial Regulation.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Based on the European Green Deal and its Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies, the EU is strongly committed to the conservation and effective management of fisheries, which is essential for ensuring the achievement of Agenda 2030, including but not exclusively the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to the life below water, climate change, biodiversity, poverty, and food security.

The EU aims to strengthen the international legal framework for the conservation and effective management of fisheries, ensuring sustainability and resilience. This international framework comprises both binding agreements and voluntary instruments managed by the FAO, which facilitate the conservation and management of fisheries at the global, regional and national levels. In that context, the collaboration with FAO consists in supporting global dialogue, cooperation, capacity development and implementation of international instruments, processes and mechanisms to achieve the conservation and effective management of fisheries, to ensure sustainability and resilience.

Main areas of work include activities related to: i) following-up recommendations of the FAO Committee on Fisheries; ii) developing and implementing international fisheries instruments, including associated global and regional processes; iii) strengthening developing countries' policy and legislative frameworks and enhancing capacities, competencies and means to conserve and effectively manage fisheries, including to combat IUU fishing through port State measures (PSMs) and related instruments, guidelines, mechanisms and tools.

As a result, international cooperation should be enhanced; knowledge on specific aspects of the conservation and effective management of fisheries, including IUU fishing, should be increased; the ability of States, in particular developing States, to more effectively conserve and effectively manage fisheries, including through combatting IUU fishing, should be directly and positively impacted; fisheries and aquaculture should become more resilient to biodiversity loss and climate change and their contribution to mitigating these phenomenon should be strengthened; the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to food sustainability, security and safety should be better highlighted; and the concerns related to the use of resources should be better balanced with their conservation.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

This action will contribute to mainstreaming biodiversity and climate change in fisheries and aquaculture. The goals of the action are conservation and effective management of fisheries, including through combatting IUU fishing which will have positive impacts on biodiversity and therefore also on climate change.

4.2.3. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) on behalf of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission IOTC

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as the FAO, within the meaning of Article 156 of the Financial Regulation.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Article 28 of the CFP Regulation establishes how the Union should conduct its external fisheries relations, including its relations with RFMOs. In the context of the IOTC, two priorities shall be pursued: the active support and contribution to the development of scientific knowledge and advice and the strengthening of the functioning of the organisation, while ensuring a coherence with other Union initiatives.

This action will support IOTC in continuing its work towards the promotion of scientific based decisions and will allow the EU to organise and host the meeting of the organisation where conservations and management measures will be adopted.

This action will improve the management of stocks under its purview, consistent with the objectives included in the scientific programme of work of the IOTC and is expected to improve scientific information and advice for the management of tuna, tuna-like and bycatch species caught in IOTC fisheries.

This will be achieved by carrying out and continuing different tasks, including but not limited to, the organisation of meetings of the IOTC, supporting stock assessment of tropical tunas and bycatch species and improving data quality in the IOTC.

The action will therefore contribute to achieve the objectives of the IOTC and the CFP.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Article V.1 of the IOTC agreement states that the objective of the organisation shall be to ensure the conservation and optimum utilisation of the stocks covered by the IOTC and establishing a sustainable development of fisheries based on such stocks.

Through the adoption of binding conservation and management measures, the IOTC shall ensure the sustainable management of the fish stock under its purview and therefore ensure their perpetuity. Sensitive species and other bycatch species caught in association with tuna fisheries also benefit from conservation measures adopted by the IOTC. Furthermore, the IOTC is developing an ecosystem based approach aiming at considering the impact of tuna fisheries on the entire marine ecosystem and management of the fisheries and its ecosystem as a whole.

4.2.4. Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of migratory sharks (Sharks MoU) under the umbrella of The United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI)¹⁶

Implementing entity

¹⁶ Council Decision 82/461/EEC of 24 June 1982 on the conclusion of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (OJ L210, 19.7.1982, p.10) / Council Conclusions 12025/11 Memoranda of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks and Birds of Prey under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as the UNEP FI, within the meaning of Article 156.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

With a view to completing the framework of the MoU, anticipating the effective and successful implementation of the Conservation Plan and the achievement of a favourable conservation status for the species listed in Annex 1 of the MoU, the EU is proposing the creation of a global compendium on the conservation status and the management measures of sharks. The compendium should aim to be a living database for the Sharks MOU Signatories, the Sharks MoU Advisory Committee, the Secretariat and Cooperating Partners to improve overall understanding of the conservation and legal situation of sharks globally.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The specific objective of the project is to provide Signatories to the Sharks MoU with a clear picture of the conservation situation across the globe, therefore helping to identify possible data gaps and conservations issues that would need to be addressed either through direct intervention by the MoU or through the input that Signatories could provide in other fishery management fora, particularly RFMOs.

Priority 2 - Fostering sustainable aquaculture activities, and processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products, contributing to food security in the Union

4.3. Market intelligence

4.3.1. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO): Globefish project

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as the FAO, within the meaning of Article 156.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The contribution to the Globefish project run by FAO supports activities for gathering and providing data, information and market analysis to interested stakeholders of the fishery and aquaculture trade related sectors. Through this project, the FAO analyses and disseminates information on a large number of world markets. The project relies on FAO general budget and bilateral contributions for its functioning. The Commission (DG MARE) is one of the members of Globefish together with France, Spain, Norway, Alaska, United States, Canada and New Zealand.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Not Applicable.

Priority 3 - Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas and fostering development of fishing and aquaculture communities

4.4. Maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy

4.4.1. European Environment Agency (EEA): technical support to the digital platform for ocean observation

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(iv) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to different Union bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71, such as the EEA.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

With the objective to improve the transparency and collectiveness of ocean observation in the EU, this action will support the construction, maintenance and operation of a digital platform built according to findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable principles. The digital platform will be built on the Reportnet 3 infrastructure, which is hosted in the compartment of a cloud infrastructure operated by the EEA. The EEA will provide the necessary technical support for the use of this infrastructure.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The digital platform will significantly help climate and biodiversity mainstreaming by allowing Member States to monitor climate and biodiversity more efficiently and by producing performance indicators on greenhouse gas emissions from ocean observations.

4.4.2. Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO): International engagements on Ocean Literacy

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as IOC/UNESCO, within the meaning of Article 156 of the Financial Regulation.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

This action will finance the international collaboration on ocean literacy within the framework of the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), with the view to supporting efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health and raise awareness among populations of the invaluable contribution of the ocean to climate and human health and prosperity.

The action will ensure work based on identified common challenges and proposals for actions at an international level. It will also complement the efforts at European level to enhance ocean literacy among EU citizens and raise the level of awareness on ocean protection and preservation currently undertaken through the work of the ongoing EU4Ocean coalition.

Work and collaboration carried out in the previous three-year term will carry on in the coming years, consolidating the collaboration with other UN bodies and beyond Europe and establishing the EU as a global player in terms of ocean literacy. It will continue to provide services that will enhance and expand the activities already delivered at the European level by the EU4Ocean coalition and provide an international perspective to its work.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

This cooperation will boost ocean literacy for the protection and sustainability of the ocean and of marine biodiversity and acknowledgement of its contribution towards climate change mitigation. Enhanced public knowledge and engagement and ocean advocacy will contribute significantly towards promoting and ‘popularising’ scientific findings of the marine research and observation, bridging marine knowledge with authentic community engagement and raising public awareness on the threats human activity poses to ocean health, in qualitative and quantitative ways.

- 4.4.3. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) on behalf of European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC): developing Europe-wide management advice to protect vulnerable and endangered fish species from unsustainable predation by cormorants

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as FAO, within the meaning of Article 156.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The Communication of the Commission Strategic Guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030 recognise the management of predators, especially cormorants, as one of the challenges for aquaculture. This concerns freshwater aquaculture, where damage by predators can jeopardize its profitability. Besides continuous concerns raised from the aquaculture producers, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU have also called upon the European Commission to react, by proposing an EU-wide cormorant management plan (in the EP Resolution and the Council conclusions).

The European Commission considers that preventive measures are available to Member States to limit the damage by cormorants to fisheries and aquaculture and does not plan to put in place an EU-wide management plan for cormorants. However, the Commission would like to support the efforts of stakeholders in different Member States to cooperate and produce management advice for reducing the impact of cormorant predation on fish, fisheries and aquaculture.

The EIFAAC adopted a Resolution “On measures to support the protection of vulnerable and endangered fish species from unsustainable predation from cormorants”. Following this resolution, EIFAAC is requesting support for several actions to produce management advice for reducing the impact of cormorant predation, including the organisation of a Cormorants stakeholder Conference. As a Regional Fisheries Body of the FAO, they benefit of the valuable regional approach to this issue and are best placed to coordinate the

development of the management initiatives at the European level.

This action is expected to compile and analyse information on the status of cormorant predation in Europe, and on the measures applied to reduce its impact. It will also produce management advice for reducing the impact of cormorant predation on fish, fisheries and aquaculture. The objective is to contribute to the adoption of effective management measures by EU Member States and relevant actors, while ensuring the implementation of relevant environmental EU legislation.

Expected results:

- Summary report on the use of Article 9 derogations (Birds Directive), regulations and management measures to reduce the impact of cormorants on fish population, fisheries and aquaculture that are in place in the EIFAAC member countries;
- Overview report on the status of cormorant predation of fish, conflicts, and experiences with management of cormorant populations in EIFAAC member countries;
- A European conference organized to produce management advice for reducing the impact of cormorant predation on fish, fisheries and aquaculture;
- Draft European-wide cormorant management plan;
- Strengthened network of researchers, managers and other stakeholders on cormorant issues.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Sustainable aquaculture in ponds and wetlands, which often takes place in Natura2000 areas, contributes to preserve these ecosystems and their biodiversity, as well as their benefits in terms of mitigation of climate change b, for example, retaining water in case of drought or protecting from coastal erosion. Predators such as cormorants can pose a considerable challenge to aquaculture activities, to such extent that it jeopardizes their economic sustainability. This in consequence can lead to the abandonment of this activity, with the consequent negative effect on the ecosystem and biodiversity in these areas. This action will contribute to producing management advice for reducing the impact of cormorant predation on fish, fisheries, and aquaculture, thus contributing to preservation of aquaculture activities in areas where it helps to conserve biodiversity. Concerning fisheries, there are indications that the current level of cormorant predation of fish is negatively affecting aquatic biodiversity. Cormorant predation can affect some vulnerable fish populations such as grayling (*Thymallus thymallus*).

4.4.4. The European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD): Contribution to the Blue Mediterranean Partnership (BMP)

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as the EBRD, within the meaning of Article 156.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The BMP is a joint initiative of the European Commission, the Union for the UfM, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) beneficiary countries as well as bilateral and multilateral donors such as EU Member States.

The primary objectives are to:

- Support sustainable Blue Economy investments that crowd-in public and private sector finance in the Mediterranean;
- Enhance capacity on sustainable and innovative Blue Economy practices and in the design and delivery of projects in the Mediterranean;
- Create and reinforce enabling environments for sustainable Blue Economy investments through the development of strategies, policies and regulatory frameworks in the Mediterranean.

The expected results are:

- Support the implementation of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy;
- Promote the EU's Sustainable Blue Economy policy, as well as policies relating to offshore renewable energies, decarbonisation and aquaculture, notably in the Mediterranean.

Projects supported under the BMP will complement existing initiatives in the region and be consistent with the EC's renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, dated 9 February 2021, Barcelona Convention system, the Economic and Investment Plans (EIPs), the relevant national strategies, policies for a sustainable Blue Economy of the Beneficiaries, the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, issued on 2 February 2021, as well as the new Ministerial Declaration under the WestMED Initiative, adopted in June 2023.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

This action will significantly contribute to the sustainable blue economy development in the Mediterranean Sea.

Priority 4 - Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed

4.5. Maritime security and surveillance

4.5.1. European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA): Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) operational phase

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(iv) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to different Union bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71, such as EMSA.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Implementation of:

- The EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) and its Action Plan;
- Maritime Security and Surveillance priorities, in particular the full implementation and operation of the Common Information Sharing Environment for the maritime domain;

Objectives pursued:

- To steer and run the operational phase of CISE;
- To support the Commission and stakeholders during the operational phase of CISE.

Expected results:

- Implementation of a key deliverable of the EUMSS (CISE);
- Enhanced EU maritime domain awareness thanks to a fully operational CISE.

Contribution to better preserve marine resources and the sustainable exploitation of oceans. CISE helps exchange information between different communities responsible in maritime surveillance, including authorities in charge of marine environment protection, pollution response and fisheries control.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

This action significantly contributes to the preservation of marine resources and the sustainable exploitation of oceans.

4.6. International ocean governance

4.6.1. Support to international institutions to raise awareness and ensure synergies in the implementation of the Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction agreement (BBNJ) and the international ocean governance (IOG) agenda

Implementing entities

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as the those listed hereunder, within the meaning of Article 156.

- United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) under the United Nations Secretariat (UNS)
- Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
- Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC UNESCO)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Political priorities and context:

The negotiations on an international legally binding instrument under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) concluded in March 2023. Other deliverables under the IOG agenda could also be supported through key international institutions.

Objectives pursued and expected results:

The EU will notably prepare the implementation of the BBNJ Treaty internationally, through support to key international institutions that will facilitate its implementation, for instance:

- DOALOS will have to build an interim secretariat and support the BBNJ while the official secretariat is being designated, in accordance with article 50 of the Agreement under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- FAO will investigate synergies and the role of RFMOs in the BBNJ implementation, getting relevant actors around the table;
- Convention on Biological diversity (CBD), through its Secretariat at the UNEP will explore synergies between CBD and BBNJ on:
 - the benefit sharing arising from the utilisation of marine genetic resources and the use of Digital Sequence Information (DSI), considering the multilateral mechanism established by the CBD for the sharing of the benefits arising from the use of DSI;
 - the identification of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) based on the CBD work around the Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs).
- IOC UNESCO which is the competent international organisation for on marine science and marine technology.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The finalisation and implementation of the BBNJ Treaty is a priority for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity. Its implementation will contribute to this goal and to reducing the impacts of climate change.

4.6.2. Contribution to the World Bank PROBLUE Trust Fund

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as the World Bank Group, within the meaning of Article 156.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Engaging with the World Bank with the aim to build capacity towards sustainable blue economies is part of the EU's IOG agenda. As a follow up of the EU contribution to the trust fund PROFISH (2018-2020), this action will ensure continuous EU involvement in PROBLUE's partnership council, with the objective of supporting IOG and facilitating donor coordination. The expected results are greater coordination, coherence and complementarity at global level between the World Bank's portfolio and EU programmes. This could be achieved through active participation of the Commission in PROBLUE, notably to the Partnership Council meetings, with the objective to promote the Union's IOG strategy, bring focus on the Union's experience and activities and work on increased complementarity between the World Bank's portfolio and the Union programmes.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

PROBLUE supports the development of integrated, sustainable and healthy marine and coastal resources. The Multi-donor Trust Fund's activities are divided into four main pillars (fisheries and aquaculture, marine pollution, oceanic sectors and seascape management) and special attention is given to the climate and marine biodiversity aspects.

4.6.3. Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC UNESCO): Support of the promotion of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) worldwide

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as IOC/UNESCO, within the meaning of Article 156.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

MSP is a key tool for countries around the world to create improved conditions for the sustainable development of the ocean. In 2016, the Commission and EEAS jointly announced an action to promote maritime spatial planning at global level as part of the EU's IOG agenda.¹⁷ In 2017, DG MARE and the IOC/UNESCO signed a Joint Roadmap to accelerate MSP processes worldwide. As part of this partnership, IOC-UNESCO developed internationally agreed guidelines on maritime spatial planning, which were finalised in 2021. Lending further support to MSP processes is planned in the EU's IOG agenda adopted in 2022 where the EU makes a pledge to “step up cooperation with IOC-UNESCO to promote MSP worldwide through a new partnership based on a joint five-year roadmap”. Hence, this action aims at consolidating the progress of implementing MSP worldwide, notably by supporting the implementation of the actions foreseen in “Updated Joint Roadmap to accelerate Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning processes worldwide” – MSP roadmap (2022-2027).

IOC-UNESCO is the leading global organisation for marine science within the UN system and is coordinating the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). Its objectives are to promote international cooperation and to coordinate science-based programmes for the management and protection of the marine environment. It has continuously documented MSP practices around the world, and developed technical

¹⁷ JOIN(2016) 49 final

guidance on MSP design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and built capacity of coastal nations around the world.

The action will enable the implementation of international guidelines and tools developed by the previous phases of MSP globally at national and regional level as well as the development of further tools on MSP. It will strengthen the global community of MSP practitioners and contribute to specific tailored capacity needs on MSP and further enhance the integration of climate, biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic dimensions into national and transboundary MSP processes. Furthermore, the action will include concrete actions regarding the exchange of knowledge between MSP practitioners and stakeholders, such as through the organisation of new editions of the MSP forum.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

MSP is an important tool for the sustainable development of seas, likely accelerated by the implementation of the European Green Deal and related legislation and strategies. The objective of this action is to promote the use of MSP and related processes by non-EU countries and at international level, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life below water) and the recently adopted EU's 2022 IOG agenda.

4.6.4. The International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL)'s Environmental Security Programme: Support to the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Implementing entity

According to Article 62(1)(c)(ii) of the Financial Regulation, under the indirect management mode, the Commission may entrust budget execution tasks to international organisations or their agencies, such as INTERPOL, within the meaning of Article 156.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

IUU fishing is one of the greatest threats to sustainable fisheries. It is estimated that 19% of the worldwide marine catches stem from IUU fishing activities and amount to a value of 10 billion euros.

The fight against IUU fishing is one of the priorities of the EU under the European Green Deal, in particular in the context of the Farm to Fork strategy to ensure sustainable food value chains. It is a key element of the Union's IOG agenda as well as of the EU Biodiversity strategy. Finally, the Union's actions to fight IUU fishing are a concrete contributor to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 14.4).

The EU has a clear interest and international obligation to fight IUU fishing. It is the largest importer of seafood (60% of its supply) and needs to ensure a level playing field for legitimate operators and legal products on its market. Since 2010, the EU has been the clear global leader in efforts to combat IUU fishing.

In view of the strong internal and international mandate, it is our goal to strengthen the EU's stance as a global leader and guiding force in the fight against IUU fishing.

The Commission is seeking to strengthen multilateral actions to curbing IUU fishing by strengthening the instruments that allow to track and identify vessels and nationals engaging in illegal practices and, sometimes, also crimes connected to the fisheries sector,

and increasing the role of key international agencies such as INTERPOL.

The project will help in identifying, deterring and disrupting IUU fishing activities and crimes connected to the fisheries sector. It will further raise awareness of IUU fishing and crimes committed through the value chain, coordinate law enforcement operations and support intelligence gathering and investigation of crimes linked with IUU fishing. This project will build up on and further support the existing actions which have been put in place since 1st September 2022 within the framework of an ongoing project under EMFAF with Interpol on this very same issue. While the type of deliverables is expected to remain the same for this new project (case-specific investigative support, analytical and operational support, capacity building, awareness raising), their content will either build up on the results achieved during the first project and/or address new and/or other cases in relation to IUU fishing activities and crimes connected to the fisheries sector. The expected results will continue to complement the work carried out by the European Commission in fighting against IUU fishing which remains one of the priorities of the EU and also contribute to the strengthening the IOG framework in supporting relevant international organisation involved in this field.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

IUU fishing constitutes one of the most serious threats to the sustainable exploitation of living aquatic resources and jeopardizes the very foundation of the CFP and international efforts to promote better ocean governance. IUU fishing also represents a major threat to marine biodiversity which needs to be addressed in accordance with the objectives set out in the Communication from the Commission — Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 — and beyond. This action is also in line with the objectives set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Some of today’s sea uses endanger food security, fishers’ livelihoods, and the fishery and seafood sectors. Marine resources must be harvested sustainably and there must be zero-tolerance for illegal practices. The EU action should be targeted at eliminating IUU fishing which causes the most serious damage to the marine environment, the sustainability of fish stocks and the socioeconomic situation of fishermen abiding by the rules on conservation and management of fisheries resources.

5. Contribution to blending facilities

The overall budgetary allocation reserved for blending facilities in 2024 and 2025 is EUR 18 000 000 and EUR 18 000 000 respectively.

Priority 3 - Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas and fostering development of fishing and aquaculture communities

5.1. Maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy

5.1.1. InvestEU Blue Economy instrument

Amount allocated to the blending facility

2024: EUR 18 000 000; 2025: EUR 18 000 000

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The financial instrument for the blue economy under InvestEU is enabled by a top-up contribution of €140 million from the EMFAF for the period 2021-2027 (indicatively, EUR 20 million per year), complementing an earmarked contribution from the InvestEU Guarantee Fund. The EMFAF contribution will be matched by InvestEU resources and EIF/EIB funds, which will together amount to approximately €485 million of the public investment over seven years. This is expected to raise around €1,5 billion of risk-finance to be made available for investments into innovative and sustainable Blue Economy companies. The instrument is aligned with the geographical scope of InvestEU and thus allows for participation of financial intermediaries with a legal affiliation in any third countries eligible under the InvestEU Programme provisions, as laid out in Regulation (EU) 2021/523 establishing the InvestEU Programme and the Agreement between the European Union and the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund on the EU Guarantee under the InvestEU Regulation signed on 9 March 2022.

Implementation

Co-delegation to DG ECFIN

Entities participating in the blending facility

European Investment Fund and European Commission (represented by DG ECFIN)

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming by supporting and promoting investment in innovative and sustainable blue economy technologies. InvestEU Fund is designed with meeting the EU objectives on climate and environment as one of its main priorities, and is subject to targets on contribution to these objectives.

6. Other actions or expenditure

Priority 1 -Fostering sustainable fisheries the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources

6.1. Scientific advice and data collection

6.1.1. Administrative arrangement in the form of a Service-level agreement with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in the area of fisheries data and scientific advice (Fishman)

Amount

EUR 1 400 000 in 2024; EUR 1 400 000 in 2025

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Provision of scientific, technical and administrative support facilitating the efficient functioning of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), support for the data collection framework (DCF) implementation in the fisheries sector and additional scientific activities in support of the CFP.

Provision of services related to the collection, management and use of data, to the organisation and management of STECF expert meetings and the management of annual

work programmes related to fisheries scientific and technical expertise, to the processing of data calls and datasets and to the preparatory work aiming at delivering scientific opinions and advice.

Implementation

DG MARE

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Scientific advice is the basis for the design and implementation of management and conservation measures under the CFP, thus contributing to maintaining biodiversity and climate change mitigation/adaptation.

The CFP requires the provision of best available scientific advice for policy, for which the STECF is one of the main players. The STECF has been requested to deliver advice on marketing standards for fisheries and aquaculture products but also work on sensitive species (i.e. sharks), depending on MARE needs for advice. The STECF work is underpinned by the data collected under the DCF. The JRC, via the Administrative Arrangement in the form of a Service-level agreement, is contributing to the STECF and DCF work, including on biodiversity.

6.1.2. Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)

Amount

EUR 1 200 000 in 2024; EUR 1 200 000 in 2025

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The implementation of the EU policy for fisheries and aquaculture requires the assistance of highly qualified scientific experts, particularly in the application of the marine and fisheries biology, fishing technology, fisheries economics or similar disciplines, or in connection with the requirements of research and data collection in the fields of fishing and aquaculture.

A permanent STECF set up by a Commission Decision C(2016)1084 provides the necessary assistance to DG MARE on these matters. The Commission Decision foresees the payment of compensation to the members of the STECF and/or the experts invited by the STECF in the form of special allowances for their assistance and expertise.

Implementation

DG MARE and co-delegation to PMO

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Scientific advice is the basis for the design and implementation of management and conservation measures under the CFP, thus contributing to maintaining biodiversity and climate change mitigation/adaptation.

The CFP requires the provision of best available scientific advice for policy, for which the

STECF is one of the main players. STECF has been requested to deliver advice on marketing standards for fisheries and aquaculture products but also work on sensitive species (e.g. sharks) depending on MARE needs for advice. The STECF work is underpinned by the data collected under the DCF.

6.2. Control and enforcement

6.2.1. Training, missions and meetings

Amount

EUR 600 000 in 2024, EUR 600 000 in 2025

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Training of European Commission officials/agents involved in fisheries control, missions to ensure the implementation of the rules of the CFP and reimbursement of experts of the Expert Groups on Fisheries Control and on Compliance in line with the obligations under the Union's fisheries control system of the expert groups on fisheries control.

Implementation

DG MARE and co-delegation to PMO

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The CFP objectives for healthy fish and eco-systems, a profitable industry, viable coastal communities and food security can only be achieved if Member States and the EU as a whole have a proper control and enforcement system in place that ensures that reliable, accurate and complete fisheries data are supplied on time, that Member States have the full control of their fleet, that measures are in place to allow effective controls of fisheries products in the supply chain and that ultimately a widespread culture of compliance allows fishing operators to compete fairly.

Priority 3 - Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas and fostering development of fishing and aquaculture communities

6.3. Maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy

6.3.1. External expertise for the evaluation of EMFAF direct management actions and monitoring of projects

Amount

2024: EUR 50 000; 2025: EUR 50 000

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The objective is to support the evaluation of grant applications and procurement tenders under the directly managed EMFAF calls for proposals and procurement procedures and, where appropriate, the monitoring of running or completed projects, by acquiring the assistance of independent external experts.

Implementation

CINEA

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

Not applicable

Horizontal actions covering all priorities

6.4. Communication

6.4.1. Communication services provided by the Publications Office

Amount

EUR 10 000 in 2024; EUR 10 000 in 2025

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Production, distribution and storage services provided by the Publications Office (PO).

Implementation

Co-delegation to PO

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming contribution – description of how this action contributes to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in qualitative and quantitative ways

The topics of the publications are linked with the priorities of the Directorate-General for maritime affairs and fisheries which include making fisheries and aquaculture more sustainable, reducing the emissions of economic activities related to the seas and ocean, and playing a leading role at international level for ocean governance and the protection of biodiversity. The topic of climate and biodiversity can therefore be expected to be covered in the majority of publications.