

# DossierTècnic

Innovation and knowledge transfer

April 2024

## The European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund: a tool for the implementation of the Catalan Maritime Agenda

Generalitat  
de Catalunya



Rural  
Cat



Page 03 Closure of the 2014-2020 period of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Page 17 2021-2027 period of the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) Page 26 We talk to: Toni Abad

General Directorate of Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

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## The European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund must contribute to maintaining sustainable fishing and aquaculture from the environmental, social and economic aspects.

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The European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) is the financial instrument, 70% co-financed by the European Union, which is used for the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy, the Integrated Maritime Policy, the achievement of the environmental and the mitigation and adaptation to climate change goals in the European Union.

In Spain, the EMFAF is articulated through a common operational programme that concentrates the actions and priorities at state level and the different autonomous communities.

The application in Catalonia of the EMFAF is also aligned with the Maritime Agenda of the Country. Catalonia is a maritime region, although in recent decades we seem to have forgotten that we are a seafaring society. The Maritime Agenda adopted by the Government in recent years has made it possible to turn this situation around, and has returned our gaze to face the sea, while recognising the link of the economy, leisure and the well-being of the citizenry to the maritime dimension.

In this regard, the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia) in 2018 designed and approved the Maritime Strategy of Catalonia (EMC) to fully develop the potential of the country's blue economy while guaranteeing environmental, social and territorial balance. The EMC's second multi-year plan was recently approved.

The good execution of the EMFF (2014-2020) in Catalonia has allowed us to increase our financial plan within the frame-

work of the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (2021-2027), becoming one of the main financial instruments to implement the EMC in the coming years

The EMFAF must contribute to maintaining sustainable fishing and aquaculture from their environmental, social and economic aspects. Thus, the generational transition, decarbonisation, compensation to guarantee the competitiveness of the primary sector, the modernisation and adaptation of the primary activity towards sustainability, and the diversification of production, will all be priorities in the operational period we are embarking upon. As a novelty in this period, a specific EMFAF line will be promoted aimed at consolidating the fisheries co-management model in Catalonia.

The EMFAF will also influence the promotion of the consumption of fishery products, with special attention to local, zero-mile products, and the modernisation and innovation in the fishery product processing industry while seeking the guarantee of food supply of so-called "blue protein". The participation of the primary sector in the sale and marketing of fishery products will be one of the priority objectives of this period, promoting the establishment and consolidation of Fisheries Producers' Organisations.

The consolidation of the Catalan Research Institute for the Governance of the Sea (ICATMAR) will allow the achievement of EMFAF's objectives in terms of data collection, evaluation and dissemination of oceanographic knowledge. Thus we will have reliable and up-to-date information on the physical environment, the state of the populations and socio-economic parameters of fishing activity (professional and recreational), the impact of marine litter on local fishing grounds, which will allow us to guarantee sustainable fishing activity, monitor the effects of climate change at sea, carry out maritime activities efficiently and manage the maritime environment.

Finally, with the implementation of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) throughout the Catalan fishing coast, we will strengthen the territorial deployment of the EMC in Catalonia.

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# CLOSURE OF THE 2014-2020 PERIOD OF the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The EMFF programming period in Catalonia 2014-2020 (in force until 31 December 2023) has been a success. As a result of the good execution of the EMFF in Catalonia, the financial plan initially allocated has increased by 20%. More than €60 million of public subsidy, 77% co-financed by the European Union and 23% by the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia), have boosted 1,616 operations in the territory.

In addition, the figure of €12.6 million has been allocated to compensation for the temporary stoppage of the fish-

ing activity of the Catalan fleet, 50% co-financed by the EMFF and 50% by the Ministry, and in all 2,576 operations of this measure have been financed.

27.2% of the actions developed with the EMFF correspond to Priority 1 Promotion of sustainable fishing, which received 26.6% of public aid. 5.9% of the actions correspond to Priority 2 Promotion of sustainable aquaculture, which received 14.1% of the aid. 18.6% of the actions correspond to Priority 4 developed by the 2 Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) existing in the EMFF period (FLAG Costa Brava and

FLAG Mar de l'Ebre), which accounted for 12.3% of the subsidies. 42.7% of the actions correspond to Priority 5 Promoting the marketing and processing of fishery and aquaculture products - which include compensation to deal with the Covid-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine, which have received 33.9% of public aid. 7.5% and 0.3% of the EMFF financial plan have also been allocated to Priority 3 Promoting the application of the Common Fisheries Policy and to Priority 6 Promoting the application of the integrated maritime policy, respectively. Finally, 5.3% of the fund has been allocated to technical assistance.

	Contribution by the EMFF (euros)	Contribution by the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia) (euros)	Total of subsidies (euros)	Contribution from private sources (euros)	Total investment (euros)
<b>Final EMFF</b>	46,081,395	14,061,272	60,142,666	37,790,370	97,933,037
<b>Initial EMFF</b>	38,257,840	12,047,747	50,305,587	41,599,439	91,905,025

Table 1. EMFF financial plan in Catalonia. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

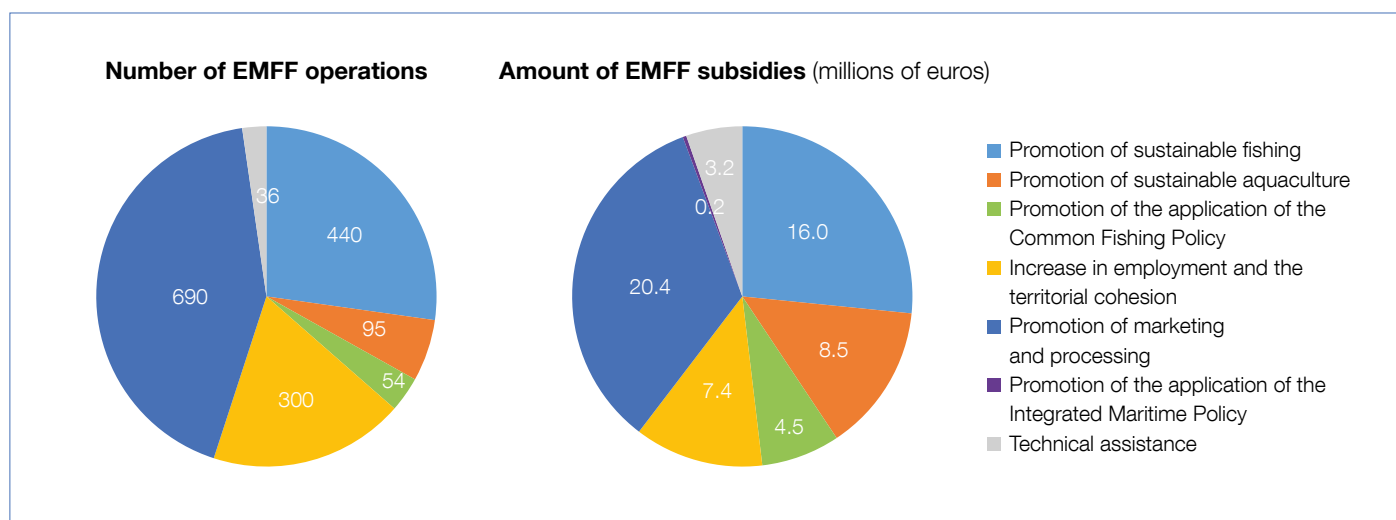


Figure 1. Operations financed with the EMFF by priorities. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

The delay in the approval of Regulation (EU) no. 508/2014, of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 15 May 2014, relating to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF Regulation) and the Operational Programme in the Spanish State caused unequal execution in the years of implementation of the programme, with an intensification of execution in the last years of programming. However, unlike other EMFF management bodies of the Spanish operational programme, Catalonia has fulfilled its financial commitments with the European Union throughout the period (n+3 rule).

38% of EMFF operations have been driven by natural persons, of which 6% are women and 94% are men, which coincides with the gender bias in the fishing sector. 37% of the operations have been promoted by companies, mostly SMEs; 11% by communities of property and shipowners in the fishing sector, and 10% and 4% by associations and public entities, respectively.

In relation to the distribution of EMFF investments in the territory, it should be noted that 15% of the funds have been allocated to operations with a cross-cutting impact throughout Catalonia.

Catalonia's financial plan has increased by 20% as a result of good execution.

Regarding the distribution of the fishing sector on the Catalan coast and the presence of FLAGs in these territories, 34% and 37% of the actions have taken place in the provinces of Tarragona and Girona respectively. The province of Barcelona accounted for 26% of the operations and the province of Lleida 0.4%.

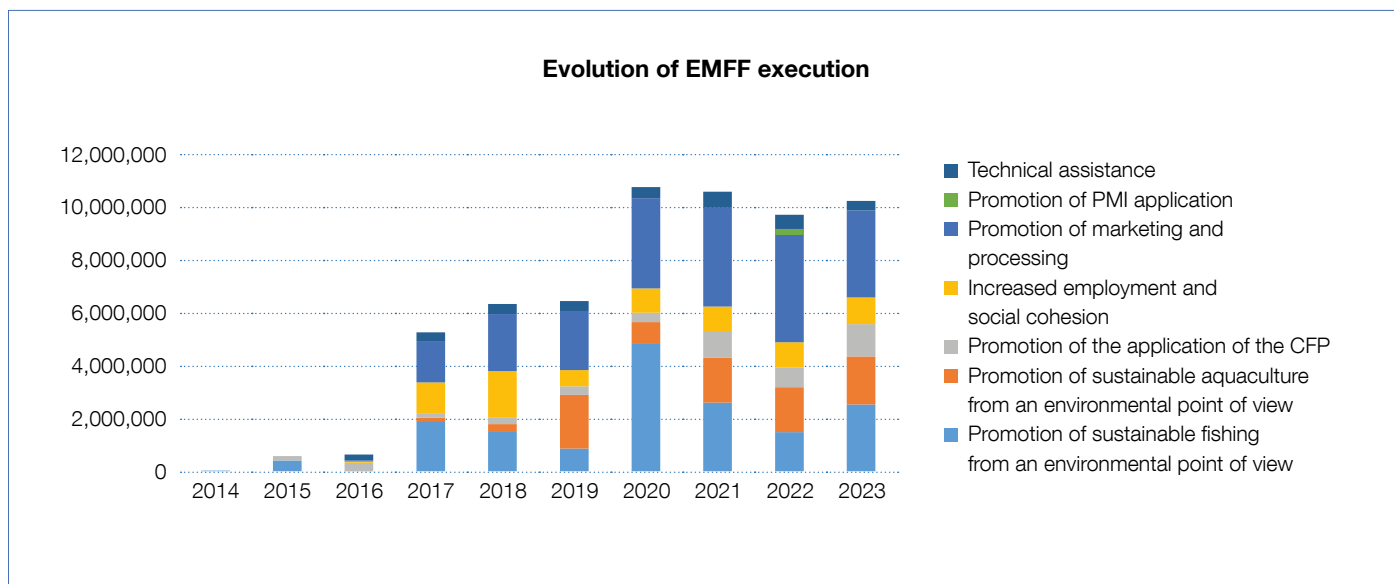


Figure 2. Execution rate of the EMFF (subsidy in euros). Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

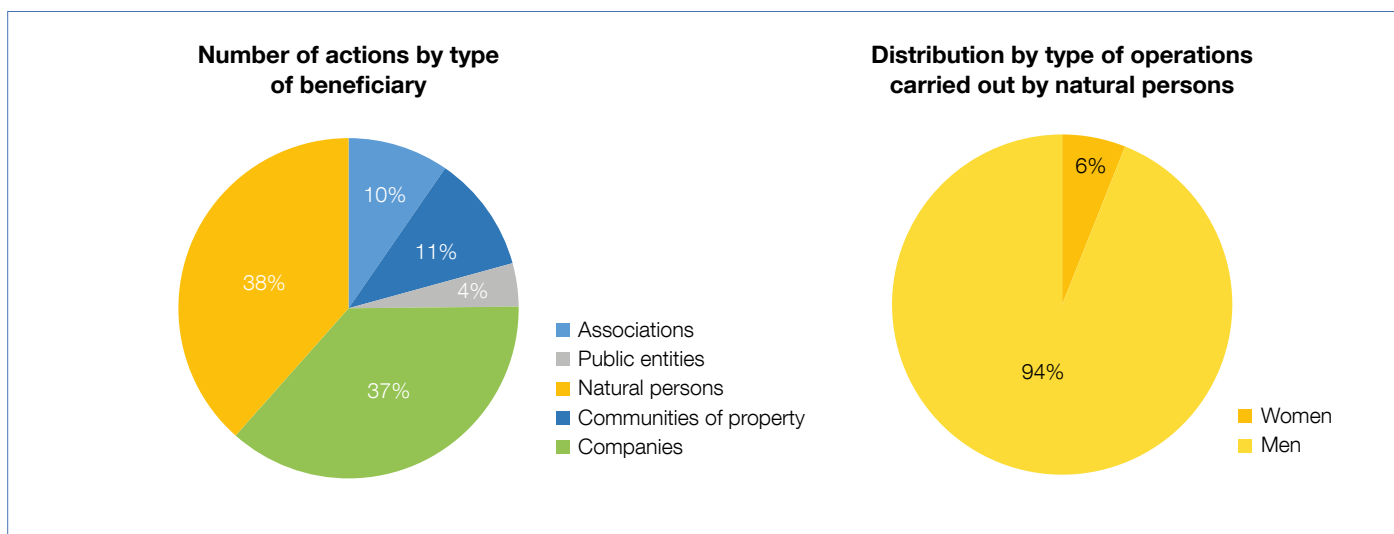
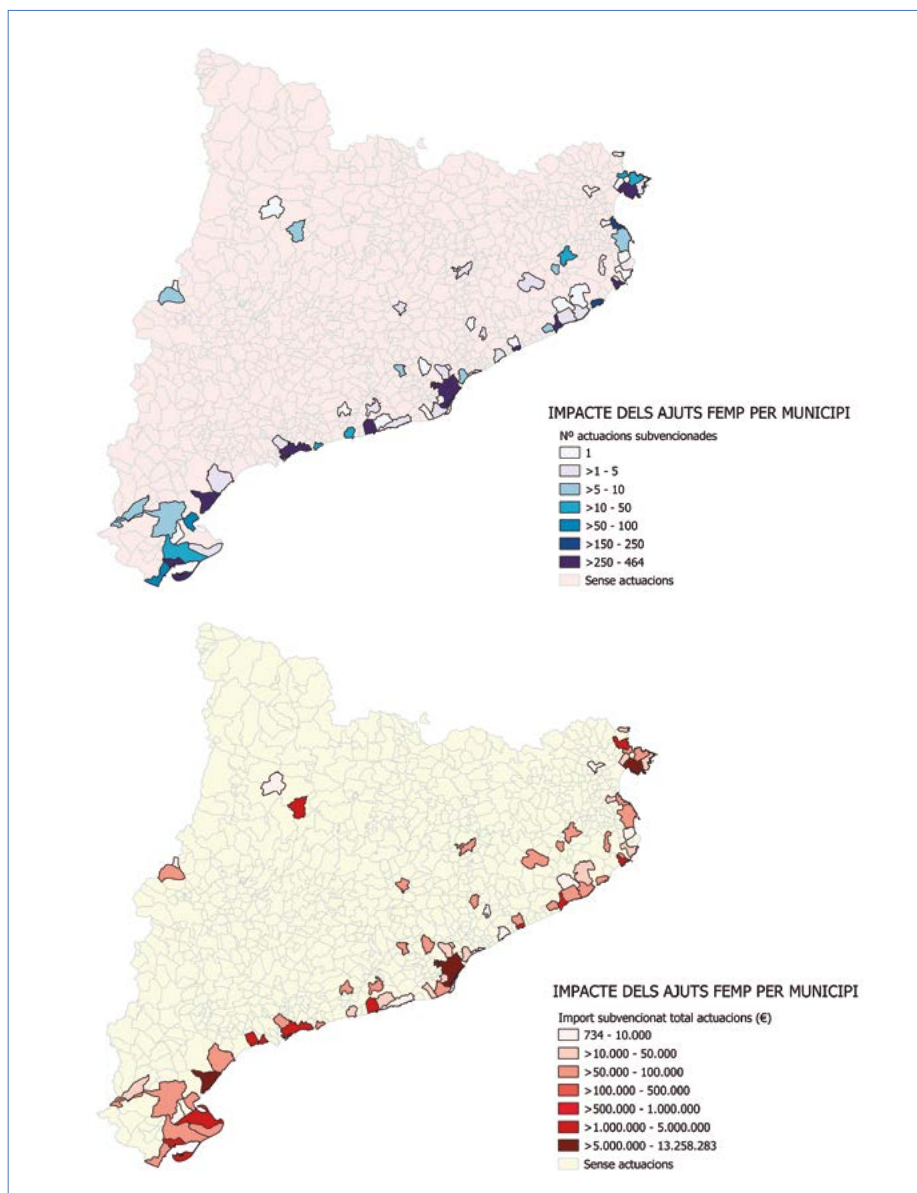


Figure 3. Type of EMFF beneficiary. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

Province	Number of operations	Investment (euros)	Subsidy (euros)
Barcelona	1,097	33,288,868	20,849,531
Girona	1,561	21,776,367	17,890,155
Lleida	16	3,482,895	1,757,172
Tarragona	1,438	35,838,338	21,184,593
<b>Cross-cutting</b> (impact throughout Catalonia)	62	11,206,492	11,206,492

**Table 2.** Provincial distribution of EMFF actions. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.



**Figure 4.** Local distribution map of EMFF actions, number of actions and subsidised amount. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

### 01. Priority 1. Promote sustainable fishing

The actions developed within the framework of Priority 1 of the EMFF have been aimed at:

- Reducing the impact of fishing on the marine environment,
- Protecting and recovering biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems,
- Balancing fishing capacity and available fishing opportunities through the temporary and definitive stoppage of the fishing fleet,
- Promoting the competitiveness and viability of companies in the fishing sector,
- Supporting the consolidation of technological development, innovation, etc., and
- Developing professional training, new professional skills and permanent training.

38% of the actions of Priority 1 of the EMFF have been driven by the fishermen's guilds and their federations,

The actions of the EMFF have been developed, mainly, in the fishing municipalities of Catalonia.

which have mobilised investments amounting to €5.7 million and a subsidy of €4.4 million.

01.01 Actions to reduce marine litter

The EMFF has contributed to promoting the Pescaneta Project: towards a blue sea, through which the entirety of Catalonia’s fishing sector participates in the removal of marine litter and in raising public awareness. €1 million per year has been allocated to promote this initiative, which has been coordinated by the three Territorial Federations of Fishermen’s Guilds and the Catalan National Federation of Fishermen’s Guilds.



PESCANETA awareness campaigns. Source: PESCANETA.

The General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries and the General Directorate for Environmental and Natural Environment Policies of the DACC have developed, in the framework of the EMFF, the map of marine habitats of Catalonia.

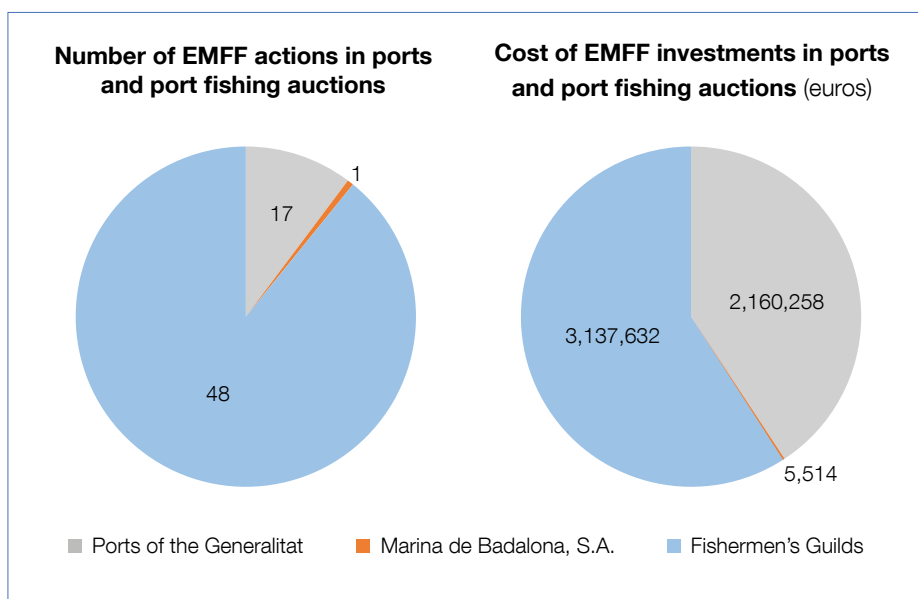


Figure 5. Number of actions and investment amounts (in euros) in ports and port fishing auctions. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

In 2023, 118,000 litres of marine litter have been collected with Pescaneta, a volume equivalent to 18 tanker trucks. 62% of the marine litter collected is plastic waste, mainly single-use wipes.

The Pescaneta Project is aimed at:

- Recognising the fishing sector as a caretaker of the sea.
- Collecting and quantifying marine litter created by the fishing sector as part of its fishing activity.
- Carrying out educational and outreach activities in schools and municipalities.
- Carrying out public awareness campaigns.

01.02 Actions in ports and port fishing auctions

The EMFF has contributed to improving the facilities in fishing ports and port fishing auctions, with €5.3 million in investments that have been promoted by the fishermen’s guilds holding concessions in the Generalitat’s harbours and port markets.

The investments have been aimed at:

- Improving safety and working conditions.
- Improving the quality, control and traceability of products unloaded at port.

- Improving the energy efficiency of port fishing auctions.

In this EMFF period, the decarbonisation of fishing structures and port fishing auctions stands out, through the installation of photovoltaic solar panels in 58% of the port fishing auctions with an installed power of 1,130.34 kW which contributes to saving 226.79 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.

01.03 Investments aimed at increasing the sustainability of the fishing activity

The EMFF has subsidised, with the amount of €1.9 million, investments on board fishing vessels and advice aimed

Types of actions	Number of operations	Investment (euros)	Subsidy (euros)
1.1.2 Limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment and adapting fishing to the protection of species	65	2,105,645	1,074,221
1.4.1 Advisory services	1	14,000	14,000
1.4.4 Health and safety	50	375,604	237,978
1.4.8 Added value, product quality and use of unwanted catches	11	91,149	51,161
1.5.3 Efficiency and mitigation of climate change	51	1,117,810	611,761
1.5.4 Replacement or modernisation of engines	1	33,521	10,056
<b>Total general</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>3,737,729</b>	<b>1,999,177</b>

**Table 3.** Investments on board. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.



The doors without contact with the sea bottom reduce the impact on the seabed and contribute to a 20-30% reduction in fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



Doors without contact with the sea bottom in trawling mode. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

at increasing the sustainability of fishing boats, decarbonising and modernising the Catalan fleet, and improving safety and working conditions of the seafaring community.

17% of the Catalan fleet has been modernised with EMFF funds, especially the trawling and purse Seine modalities, with 29% and 28%, respectively, of the modernised fleet.

It highlights the installation of otter boards without contact with the sea bottom in the trawling mode (pelagic doors) and the replacement of more selective nets, devices to monitor and reduce fuel consumption, equipment to reduce catches of immature individuals, etc.

01.04 Mapping of marine habitats

The General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries (DG-PMPS) and the General Directorate for Environmental and Natural Environment Policies (DGPAMN) of the Department of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda have developed, within the framework of the EMFF, the

marine habitat map of Catalonia. The Project, worth €3 million, has been co-financed by the EMFF with 75%. This initiative:

- Provides a response to the historical information gap in the marine area in Catalonia.
- Complies with the European Biodiversity Strategy 2020, the Natural Herit-

age and Biodiversity Strategy and the Maritime Strategy of Catalonia, and the report on the implementation of the Habitats Directive in Catalonia for the period 2013-2018.

The map covers from the coast line (0 m) to the outer limit of the polygon formed by the intersection of the limit of coastal waters, the protected natural



Map of marine habitats. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

Types of actions	Number of operations	Investment (euros)	Subsidy (euros)
Productive investments in aquaculture	33	10,939,366	4,361,836
Modernisation of aquaculture facilities: improvement of animal welfare, product quality, working conditions, protection against predators, and safety	36	8,818,696	3,383,242
Advice and acquisition of scientific, business and organisational knowledge	9	629,626	503,807
Diversification of aquaculture activity	5	94,016	39,433
Compensation for losses due to COVID-19	3	88,763	88,763
Reduction of the impact of aquaculture activity on the environment: decarbonisation and reduction of water consumption	9	152,768	73,165
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>20,723,236</b>	<b>8,450,246</b>

Table 4. Investments in aquaculture. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.



areas under the jurisdiction of the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia), and the isobath -50 m.

As a result of this Project, administrations and citizens in general will have the bathymetry, morphology, geology and distribution of underwater habitats; information that did not exist until now and is very necessary to manage, pre-

serve and conserve the fishing, natural and landscape resources of the underwater coast of Catalonia.

## 02. Priority 2. Promote sustainable aquaculture

The actions developed within the framework of Priority 2 of the EMFF have been aimed at:

- Conserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency.
- Encouraging the transition to a low-carbon energy in the aquaculture sector.
- Improving the competitiveness of aquaculture companies.

92% of the EMFF funds from Priority 2 of the EMFF – i.e. €7.7 million – has made it possible to increase and modernise the aquaculture capacity of Catalonia, stimulating investments amounting to €19.7 million.

In 2023, aquaculture activity in Catalonia generates 10,028 tonnes in 186 aquaculture facilities, 11 in continental waters and 175 in marine waters. 170 facilities are involved in bivalve farming (mussels and oysters) in the Alfacs and Fangar bays of the Ebro delta; 2 facilities mussels in longlines in Roses and les Cases d'Alcanar, respectively, and 3 facilities fatten fish in floating cages located in the coastal waters of Roses (a facility with sea bass production) and Ametlla de Mar (one facility with sea bream and sea bass farming and another where tunas are fattened). In continental waters, the most cultivated species is the rainbow trout; the sturgeon, which is less representative, is also cultivated both for its meat and to make caviar. On the other hand, the growing of microalgae, which is gaining strength in our country, is represented by the production of spirulina and *Chlorella*. Currently, the production of macroalgae is being tested (*Ulva* spp.) in existing aquaculture facilities, which will diversify the country's aquaculture production.

## 03. Priority 3. Promote the application of the Common Fisheries Policy

7.5% of the EMFF – i.e. €4.4 million – has been allocated to actions developed within the framework of Priority 3 of the EMFF for:

- Improving and providing scientific knowledge through the collection of fisheries data.



Mussel farms in the Ebro delta. Photo: Fepromodel.



Marine aquaculture cages in Ametlla de Mar. Photo: Aquaculture in the Delta

- Increasing capacity in supervision, control and compliance.

The Catalan Research Institute for the Governance of the Sea (ICATMAR), which is the cooperation body with management autonomy between the General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries of the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia) and the Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC), through the Barcelona Institute of Marine Sciences, has collected fishing data. ICATMAR – which was created in 2017 through Decree 42/2017, of 2 May – is part of the development of the Catalan Maritime Strategy programme, which bases the governance of maritime policies of our country in the co-management model.

In terms of control, the IT applications of the General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries (DGPMPs) have been developed to control first sale notes for fishery products and to control the traceability of aquaculture products, and

to control the hygiene in fishery products.

With a budget of €1.2 million, Geoblau has allowed the development and implementation of a warehousing system, through geolocation beacons installed in the fishing fleet and the processing and visualisation of geospatial data from the fishing activity in Catalonia.

The objectives of the Project have been threefold: the first, to provide control tools for the professional fishing fleet of Catalonia for compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy; the second, to provide control tools for the certification of stoppages in the activity, such as prohibitions; and, the third, to integrate

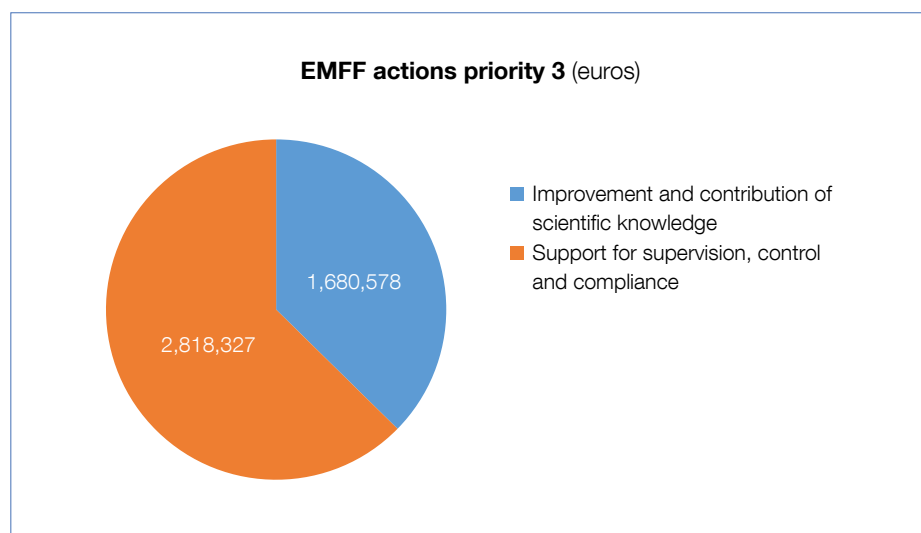
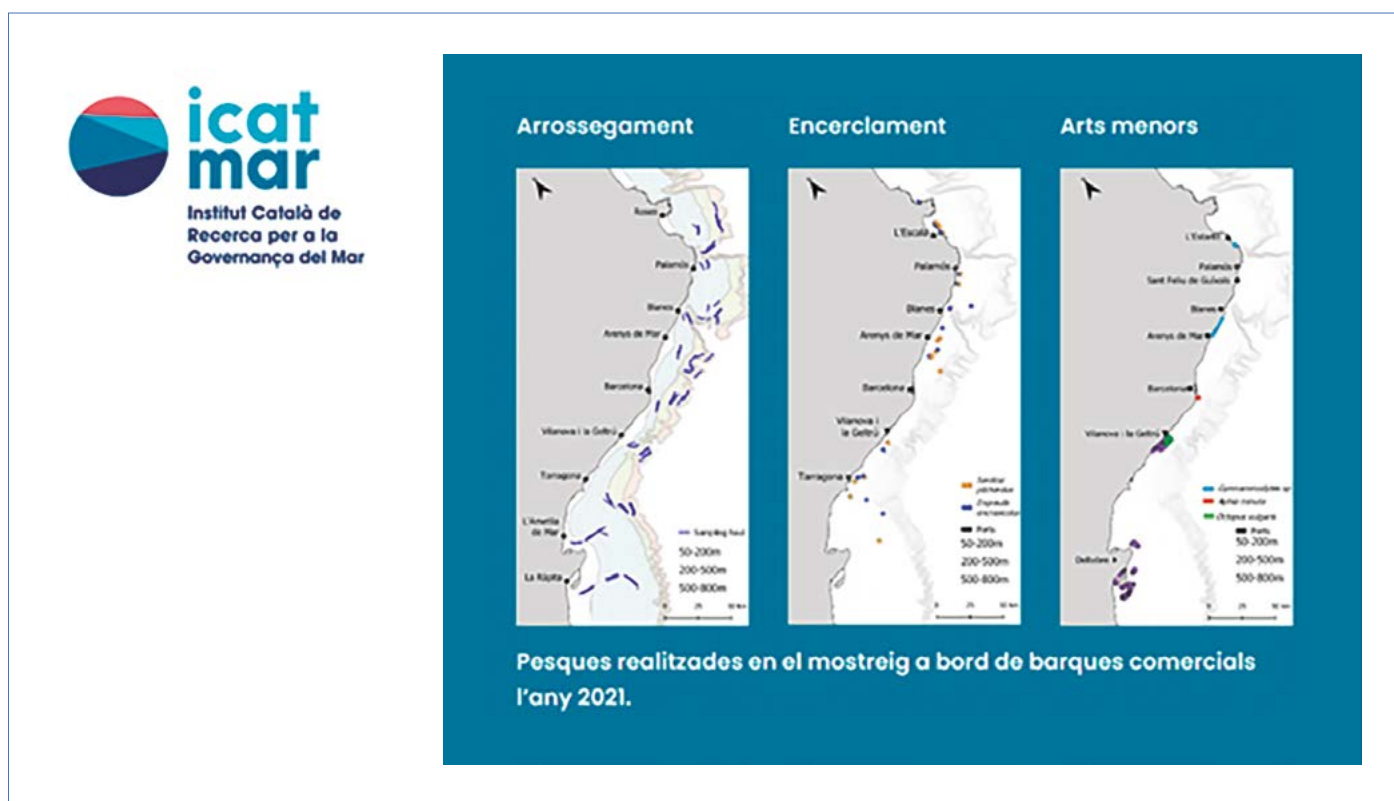


Figure 6. EMFF investments, Priority 3, by type of action. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.



Fishing carried out by ICATMAR in the sampling on board in 2021. Source: ICATMAR.



The Geoblau computer application has allowed the development and implementation of a system for storing, processing and displaying geospatial data for fishing activity in Catalonia.

There has also been renewal of the vessel fleet for surveillance, control and fishing inspection with the vessel “La Mar de Ponent”.



GEOBLAU. Application (top) and device (bottom). General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

and centralise updated information on professional fishing activity from different areas and systems to improve the management of extractive activity with an ecosystemic vision.

In addition to the development and implementation of the software, the Project has required the publication of the legal framework necessary

for the deployment of a system for locating and tracking fishing vessels in Catalonia and the installation and maintenance of geolocation devices.

The fleet of fishing surveillance, control and inspection vessels has also been renewed with the addition of the vessel “La Mar de Ponent”, which is a cabin vessel of nearly 13 metres in length and cost-

ing €520,000, equipped with the latest surveillance technologies and specific equipment for fisheries inspection.

#### 04. Priority 4. Participatory local development

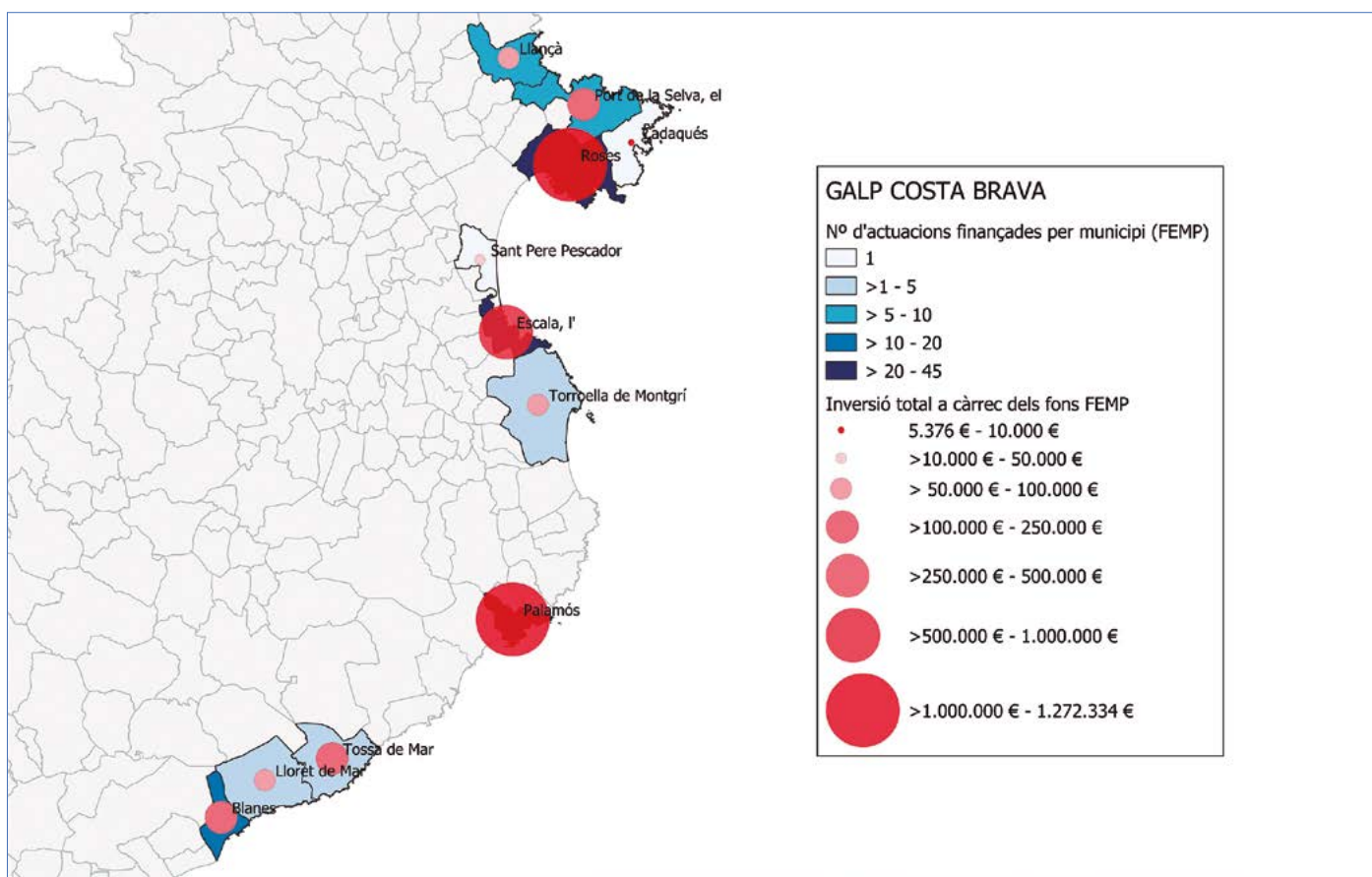
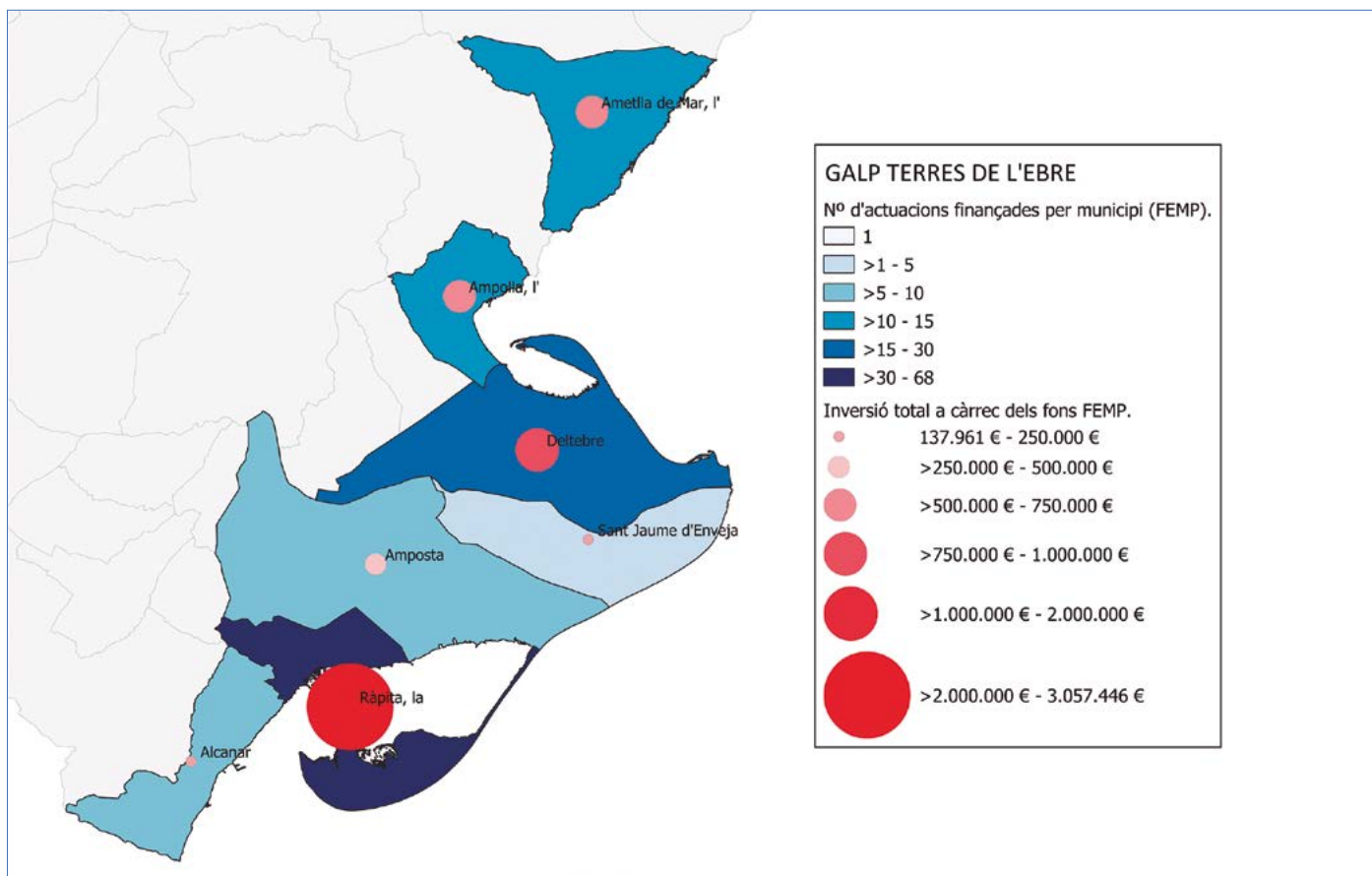
Within the framework of the EMFF, two Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) have been recognised:

- FLAG Mar de l'Ebre
- FLAG Costa Brava

The Participatory Local Development Strategies (PLDS), which the FLAGs have designed, are the declination in the territory of the Maritime Strategy of Catalonia (EMC). 300 actions have been taken to implement the PLDS, which have mobilised €10.4 million of investment and a subsidy of €7.3 million. By type, marketing measures (16%), processing (16%) and cultural heritage (16%) have accounted for the most investment within the framework of the PLDS of the FLAG Costa Brava. In the case of the PLDS of the FLAG Mar de l'Ebre, the measures of diversification (23%), marketing (22%) and processing (12%) are the ones that have channelled the most investment.

Types of operations	FLAG Costa Brava			FLAG Terres de l'Ebre		
	Number of operations	Investment (euros)	Subsidy (euros)	Number of operations	Investment (euros)	Subsidy (euros)
Aquaculture - Promotion of innovation	1	10,264	10,264	1	5,035	2,417
Aquaculture - Increase in value	1	8,600	6,880	16	254,830	116,533
Marketing - Attracting young people	2	63,835	63,835	2	47,403	22,753
Sales and marketing - Promotion of innovation	9	203,427	165,677	3	34,528	17,590
Sales and marketing - Increase in value	18	343,689	273,936	20	1,038,188	541,034
Sales and marketing - Job creation				2	38,577	18,756
Extractive fishing - Attracting young people	2	11,719	11,719			
Extractive fishing - Increase in value	9	242,731	204,132	7	139,625	99,562
Extractive fishing - Promotion of innovation	3	227,935	227,935	7	85,478	45,521
Processing - Attracting young people	2	77,806	42,778			
Processing - Increase in value	7	517,008	266,004	8	530,044	282,606
Processing - Job creation				1	97,934	48,967
Processing - Promotion of innovation	1	10,690	10,690			
Diversification within the sector - Aquaculture - Lifelong learning				1	11,631	5,816
Diversification within the sector - Aquaculture - Job creation				1	126,996	63,498
Diversification within the sector - Fishing - Lifelong learning	8	166,003	153,101	1	26,312	12,630
Diversification within the sector - Fishing - Job creation				1	14,000	12,600
Diversification within the sector - Processing - Job creation				2	24,809	15,100
Diversification within the sector - Marketing - Lifelong learning	4	32,722	32,129	1	4,400	2,640
Diversification outside the sector - Lifelong learning	8	193,548	193,548	1	19,052	9,145
Diversification outside the sector - Job creation	1	1,150	575	17	1,007,729	437,311
Climate change mitigation	1	5,381	5,381	1	37,453	22,472
Environmental heritage	7	192,554	180,919	5	285,532	187,672
Social welfare	3	110,909	101,585	9	550,591	256,643
Cultural heritage	27	586,053	457,689	12	415,214	341,752
Governance of fishing resources and maritime activities	8	161,349	135,012	10	381,088	188,552
Strengthening the role of fishing communities	24	547,263	545,639	3	145,081	120,285

**Table 5.** Types of FLAG operations. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.



Territorial distribution maps of the FLAG Mar de l'Ebre and FLAG Costa Brava operations (number of operations and investments made). Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

In the FLAG Costa Brava, subsidies have mainly been allocated to associations, which account for 50% of the aid, and to public entities, which concentrate 36% of the aid as a whole. In the FLAG Mar de l'Ebre, 38% of the subsidies have been allocated to companies and 30% to associations.

80% and 27% of the FLAG Costa Brava and FLAG Mar de l'Ebre operations, respectively, which have been promoted by natural persons, have been promoted by women. The participation of women in this line of funds is much higher than the average of operations that the EMFF co-finances, which is only 6%.

### 05. Priority 5. Promotion of the marketing and processing of fishery products

Priority 5 is aimed at:

- Emphasising the quality of fishing and aquaculture products
- Carrying out campaigns to promote the consumption of fishery products while promoting local products "Peix de llotja" ("Fish from the port market").
- Promoting the competitiveness of professional organisations, all the while enhancing their role through the creation of fish producer organisations (POs) and the application of Production and Marketing Plans (PMPs).
- Encouraging investments by SMEs in the fishery products processing industry.
- Compensating the economic losses of the fishing sector resulting from COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine.

The entire value chain develops the measures: the extractive and productive sector, the commercial sector (wholesaler and retailer) and the processing sector, as well as public entities.

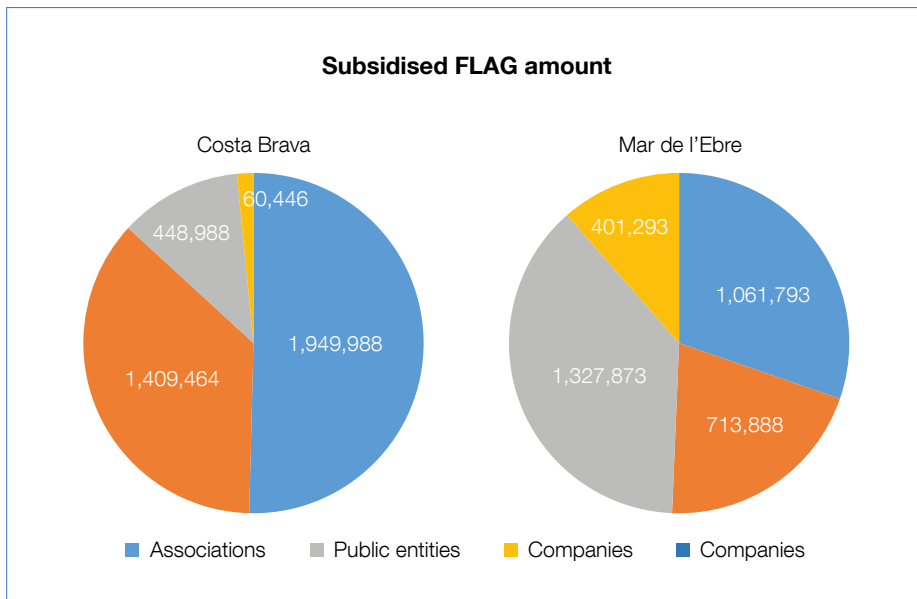


Figure 7. Subsidised FLAG amounts by type of beneficiary. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

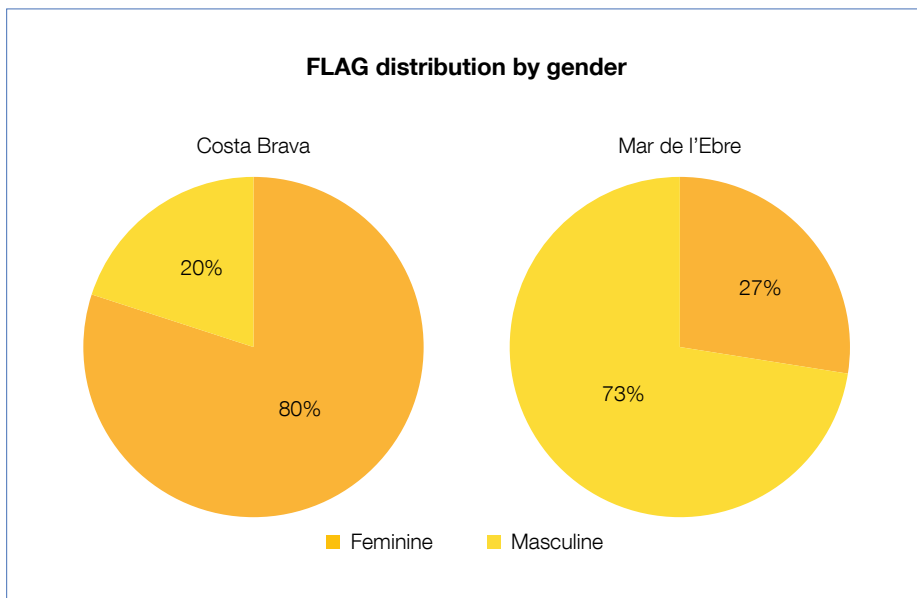


Figure 8. Number of FLAG operations by gender. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

#### 05.01 Campaigns to promote and improve the marketing of fishery products




Within the framework of the EMFF, €1.7 million have been allocated to campaigns to promote fishery products, to participation in sectoral and local fairs, and to other actions to improve marketing.

Among the actions financed, the following stand out:

- The promotion and improvement of mussel quality developed by the Federation of Bivalve Mollusc Producers of the Ebro Delta (FEPROMODEL).
- The drafting of the White Paper on fish and fishing in Catalonia, which was developed by the Catalan Fishermen's Guild, which, among others, led to the establishment of the Intersectoral Fish Bureau.
- The design and execution of the "Creix amb el Peix" ("Flourish with Fish") workshops, which have been

Operator	Number of operations	Investment (euros)	Subsidy (euros)
DGPMPS - DACC - Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia)	7	406,158	406,158
Fishermen's Guilds	17	128,909	77,482
Federation of mollusc producers of the Delta de l'Ebre (FEPROMODEL)	6	950,458	463,906
Guild of consignees of the central market of fresh and frozen seafood and fish of Barcelona and province	9	466,926	273,002
Fishmongers' Guild of Catalonia	7	177,849	135,064
Costa Brava Fisheries Local Action Group Association	1	116,172	116,172
Other operators in the value chain	15	493,344	237,496
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>2,739,816</b>	<b>1,709,279</b>

**Table 6.** Actions to promote fishing and aquaculture products and improve marketing. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

Fish Producer Organisations recognised by the Catalan Administration	
	<b>Association of Blue Fish Producer Organisations of Catalonia (PO 87):</b> incorporated on 19 December 2019; it obtained its recognition on 27 January 2021 with a total of 19 Seine fishing vessels as members and an average production of €5,971,043.
	<b>Association of Blue Fish CATSUD-Tarragona (PO 92):</b> incorporated on 16 January 2020; it obtained its recognition on 16 June 2022 with a total of 10 Seine fishing vessels as members and an average production of €3,079,248.
	<b>Association of Fish Producer Organisation of Palamós (PO 91)</b> incorporated on 12 November 2019; it obtained its recognition on 4 March 2022 with a total of 41 vessels as members and an average production of €6,016,490.

**Table 7.** Producer organisations in Catalonia. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

Fish Producer Organisation (PO)	Grant (euros)
Association of Blue Fish Producer Organisations of Catalonia (PO 87):	413,777
Association of Blue Fish CATSUD-Tarragona (PO 92):	52,117
Association of Fish Producer Organisation of Palamós (PO 91)	308,727
<b>Total</b>	<b>774,622</b>

**Table 8.** Subsidies to fish producer organisations (euros). Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

Types of actions	Number of operations	Investment (euros)	Subsidy (euros)
New or substantially improved process	75	22,768,042	9,641,874
New or substantially improved product	10	4,121,132	1,857,142
New or substantially improved management system	15	1,693,455	690,941
New or substantially improved organisation system	3	245,800	111,876
Working conditions	15	806,439	395,599
Safety	2	133,235	66,618
Hygiene	4	2,272,174	1,079,486
Energy saving	9	2,393,056	1,149,778
Reduced environmental impact	2	267,069	119,429
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>34,700,402</b>	<b>15,112,743</b>

**Table 9.** Investments in processing. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

developed by the Consignors Guild of the Central Fresh and Frozen Seafood Market of Barcelona and province, aimed at schools, and which has seen an increase in the consumption of fishing products among the families of the participants.

- The participation of the Department of Climate Action and the actors of the value chain at *Seafood Expo Global Barcelona*, which is the largest fish and seafood trade fair in the world.

#### 05.02 Fish Producer Organisations (POs)

Within the framework of the EMFF, three Fish Producer Organisations have been set up in Catalonia. The EMFF has contributed with funds to the creation of 1% of the average turnover of the POs and to the implementation of the Production and Marketing Plans (PMP) of the Fish Producer Organisations.

#### 05.03 Investments in the processing industry of fishing and aquaculture products

The EMFF has contributed €15.1 million to modernise Catalan SMEs processing fishing and aquaculture products. The investments, co-financed at 50%, have made it possible to improve the process, the product and the management and organisation systems of the processing industry. They have also contributed to improving the safety, working and hygiene conditions of the processing plants, and to reducing the environmental impact through, among others, the reduction of water consumption and the generation of photovoltaic solar energy.

#### 05.04 Compensation for the excess cost of diesel caused by the war in Ukraine

The economic impact of the war in Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022 with the Russian invasion, has

The modification of the EMFF Regulation has allowed financing of the extractive fishing sector for the excess cost of diesel consumed during the second half of 2022.

been felt around the world. Tensions in the value chains have worsened and inflationary pressures have risen, in part also due to the sanctions that have been imposed on Russia and their countermeasures. In this context, the increase in diesel prices should be highlighted. The modification of the EMFF Regulation has allowed the extractive fishing sector to finance the excess cost of diesel consumed during the second half of 2022. €2.6 million has been allocated to the Catalan fleet to alleviate the impact of this crisis.



# PERIOD 2021–2027

## of the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)

The European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) is the new fund for maritime, fisheries and aquaculture policies of the European Union that is proposed for the period 2021-2027 (actions until 31 December 2029, in application of the n+3 rule), replacing the previous European Fisheries Fund (EMFF). On 7 July 2021, the EMFAF Regulation was approved, which is Regulation

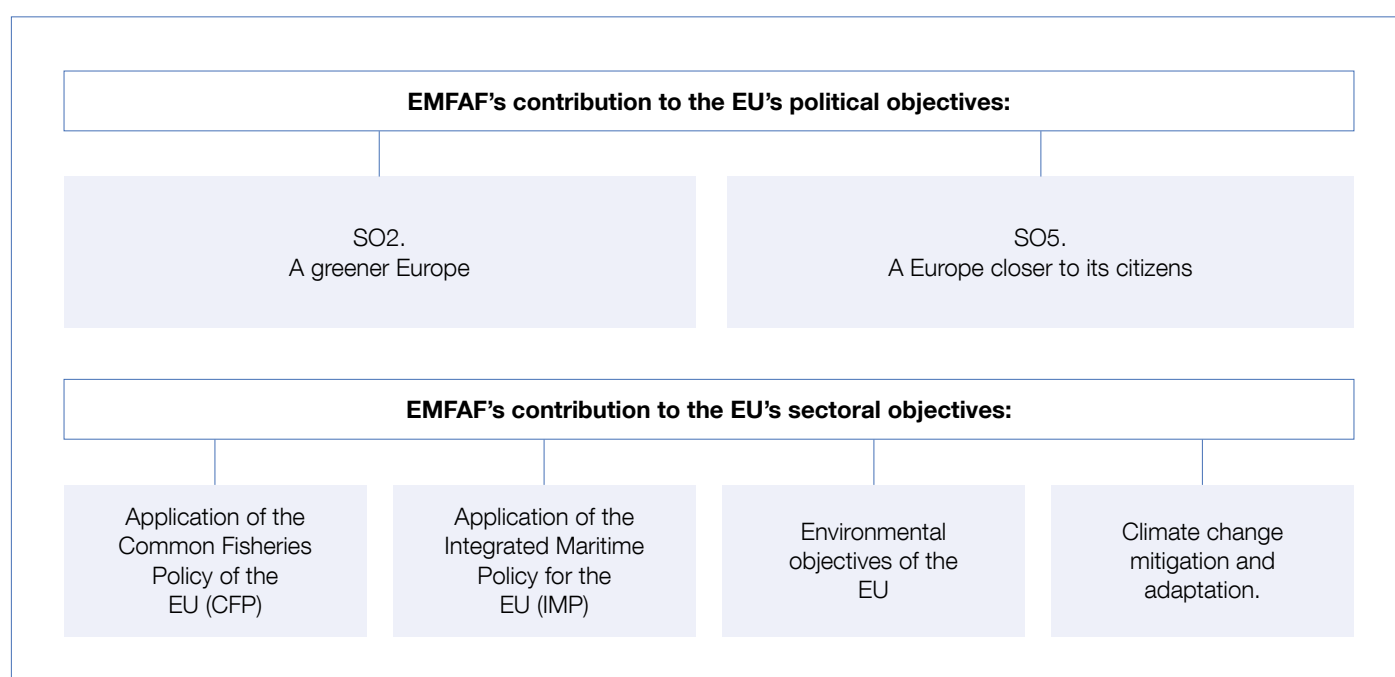
(EU) no. 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021. On 29 November 2022, the EMFAF Programme for Spain was approved through the European Commission's Executive Decision CCI 2021ES14MFPR001.

The financial plan of the EMFAF in Catalonia represents an increase of 37% compared to the previous peri-

The EMFAF financial plan in Catalonia involves an increase of 37% compared to the previous period of the EMFAF, and represents 5% of the overall Spanish financial plan.

Financial plan	EMFAF millions of euros	National millions of euros	Total public millions of euros	EMFAF co-financing %	Private millions of euros	Total millions of euros
EMFAF Catalonia	52.52	22.51	75.03	70%	30.97	106
EMFAF Spain	1,057.02	426.67	1,483.69	70%	572.63	2,056.32

**Table 1.** EMFAF financial plan. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.



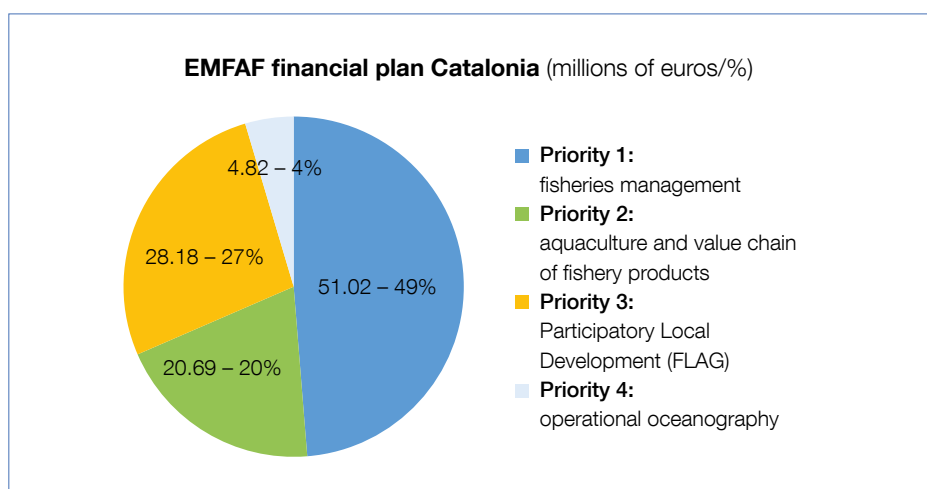
Priority	Specific objective
<b>Priority 1</b> Promote sustainable fishing, and the recovery and conservation of aquatic biological resources (fisheries management).	Strengthen fishing activities that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.
	Promote the adjustment of fishing capacity to fishing possibilities in the event of a definitive stoppage of fishing activities, and contribute to an adequate standard of living in the event of a temporary stoppage of fishing activities.
	Promote, in the fishing sector, effective control and enforcement of regulations, including the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the provision of reliable data for knowledge-based decision-making
	Contribute to the protection and recovery of biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems.
<b>Priority 2</b> Promote sustainable aquaculture activities, the processing and marketing of fishing and aquaculture products, thus contributing to food security in the EU (aquaculture and value chain).	Promote sustainable aquaculture activities, while strengthening, in particular, the competitiveness of aquaculture production, and guaranteeing, at the same time, that the activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term.
	Promote the processing, marketing, quality and added value of fishing and aquaculture products.
<b>Priority 3</b> Enable a sustainable blue economy in coastal areas and encourage the development of fishing and aquaculture communities (FLAGs).	Promote a blue economy in coastal areas and pursue the development of fishing and aquaculture communities; implement the EMC.
<b>Priority 4</b> Strengthen international ocean governance and enable seas and oceans to be safe, protected, clean and sustainably managed (operational oceanography).	Strengthen the sustainable management of seas and oceans by promoting knowledge of the marine environment.

**Table 2.** Priorities and specific objectives of EMFAF. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

od of the EMFF, and represents 5% of the overall Spanish financial plan. This funding may be increased depending on the execution of the fund, through the flexibility mechanism agreed in the sectorial conference.

The EMFAF will contribute to achieving the following political and sectoral objectives of the European Union and becomes one of the financial instruments of the Maritime Agenda of Catalonia.

The EMFAF in Catalonia has the priorities and specific objectives listed in Table 2.



**Figure 1.** Financial plan (public and private contribution) of EMFAF in Catalonia (millions of euros and percentage). Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

## 01. Priority 1. Promote sustainable fishing and the recovery and conservation of aquatic biological resources (fisheries management)

Priority 1 of the EMFAF accounts for 49% of the EMFAF financial plan, with €42.61 million of public support that will make it possible to boost €51.02 million of investment. This priority is aimed at:

- Reducing the negative impacts of fishing or contributing to the positive impacts on the environment and contributing to good environmental status.
- Contributing to the climate neutrality of the fishing sector.
- Promoting the conditions for a viable, competitive and economically attractive fishing sector.
- Compensating the fishing sector for the temporary stoppage of fishing activities.
- Strengthening the control of fishing activity within the framework of the Common Fisheries Policy.

- Reinforcing knowledge of the marine environment through data collection and analysis.
- Contributing to the good environmental status of marine protected areas, including the Natura 2000 network.

### 01.01 Strengthen fishing activities that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable

9% of the EMFAF – that is, €6.26 million of public contribution with an investment of €9.62 million – will be used to improve the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the fishing sector. This specific objective accounts for 19% of the financial plan of Priority 1. Notable among the planned actions are the subsidies intended to:

- Encourage the participation of the fishing sector in the control of protected areas.
- Encourage investments on board to achieve the sustainability of the Catalan fishing fleet: improve the selectivity of gear, reduce unwanted catches,

Improving the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the fishing sector accounts for 19% of the financial plan for priority 1.

17% of the financial plan for priority 1 goes to implementing the Common Fisheries Policy through the fight against IUU fishing and consolidation of ICATMAR.

- install otter boards without contact with the sea bottom, and install equipment to reduce the interaction of fishing with protected species.
- Encourage energy audits and investments to achieve the climate neutrality of the fishing fleet.
- Encourage investments on board to improve working conditions and safety on board the marine industry.
- Improve fishing training provided by the Nautical Fishing Training School in Catalonia (Escola de Capacitació Nàuticopesquera a Catalunya, ECNP). The EMFAF will contribute to increasing, throughout the coast, the range of courses on offer for sailors/fishers, multi-purpose coastal skippers, and local fishing skippers. In addition, the publication of online training in the fishing sector will be encouraged to promote the balancing of work and personal life.
- Promote generational change in the fishing sector through subsidies to young fishers for the acquisition of their first fishing vessel and grants for the recruitment of seafarers in training on fishing vessels.
- Promote climate neutrality, control and safety, and improve working conditions and product quality through investments in fishing ports and port fish

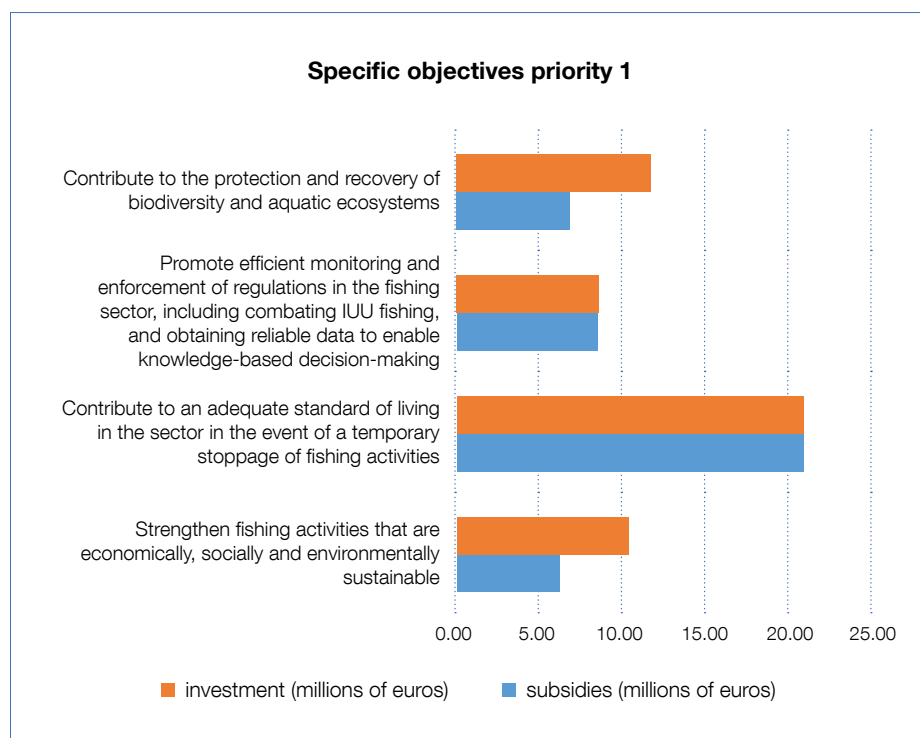


Figure 2. EMFAF's contribution to achieving the specific objectives of Priority 1 (millions of euros). Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.



Practice for determining the sex of octopuses. Photo: Co-management committee of the common octopus of central Catalonia caught with traps and pots.

markets. On the one hand, EMFAF subsidies will be called for actions to be carried out by fishermen's guilds. On the other hand, through a collaboration agreement between the General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries and the ports of the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia), priority will be given to actions in fishing ports to improve the competitiveness of the fishing sector.

#### 01.02 Contribute to an adequate standard of living in the event of temporary stoppage of fishing activities

20% of the EMFAF - i.e. €20.94 million of public contribution - will be used to compensate shipowners and sailors for the temporary stoppage of fishing activity. With these subsidies, an attempt is being made to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the fleet's biological downtime aimed at improving the state of the fishing populations. This specific objective accounts for

41% of the financial plan of Priority 1.

01.03 Promote, in the fisheries sector, efficient control and enforcement of regulations, including the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the obtaining of reliable data to enable informed knowledge-based decision-making

8% of the EMFAF - i.e. €8.66 million of public contribution - will be allocated to actions aimed at implementing the Common Fisheries Policy through the control, collection and analysis of fisheries data through ICATMAR. This specific objective accounts for 17% of the financial plan of Priority 1.

01.04 Contribute to the protection and recovery of biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems

11% of the EMFAF - i.e. €11.79 million of public contribution - will be allocated to actions aimed at the protection and recovery of biodiversity and aquatic eco-

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11% of the EMFAF - that is, €11.79 million of public contribution – will be allocated to actions aimed at the protection and recovery of biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems.

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The EMFAF aims to consolidate co-management as a fisheries governance model in Catalonia.

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systems. This specific objective accounts for 23% of the financial plan of Priority 1.

Notable among the planned actions are the subsidies intended to:

- Consolidate the role of the fishing sector in the collection of marine lit-

ter and the awareness and dissemination actions of the PESCANETA project.

- Carry out actions for the protection of the marine environment.
- Consolidate co-management as a fisheries governance model in Catalonia. The fisheries co-management model and, in general, participative management with which the different management plans for Catalonia's

fisheries are deployed and followed, requires, for the correct application of sufficient economic funds to develop the socio-economic programmes that have associates and which pursue, fundamentally, an improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the fishers involved. With this objective, they will call for EMFAF subsidies aimed at fishermen's guilds, the scientific community and environmental

non-profit entities that participate in the round table meetings and in the co-management committees, to develop the socio-economic plans and the actions agreed by the Co-management Committee.

In Catalonia, a total of eight co-management committees have been deployed and are detailed in the map in Figure 3. The same Governance Decree contemplates those cases in which, due to the characteristics of the fishery, it is not necessary to establish a co-management system. In these cases, it foresees plans managed through the establishment of monitoring committees which, although they do not have the decision-making capacity of the co-management committees, are endowed with the capacity to make proposals with an identical objective. On the basis of this participative management model, the following management Plans have been developed: the European Eel Management Plan, the Plan for Mechanised Dredges, the Plan for dredging with vessels, the Truncate Donax hand rake management Plan and the Sea Urchin gathering management Plan.

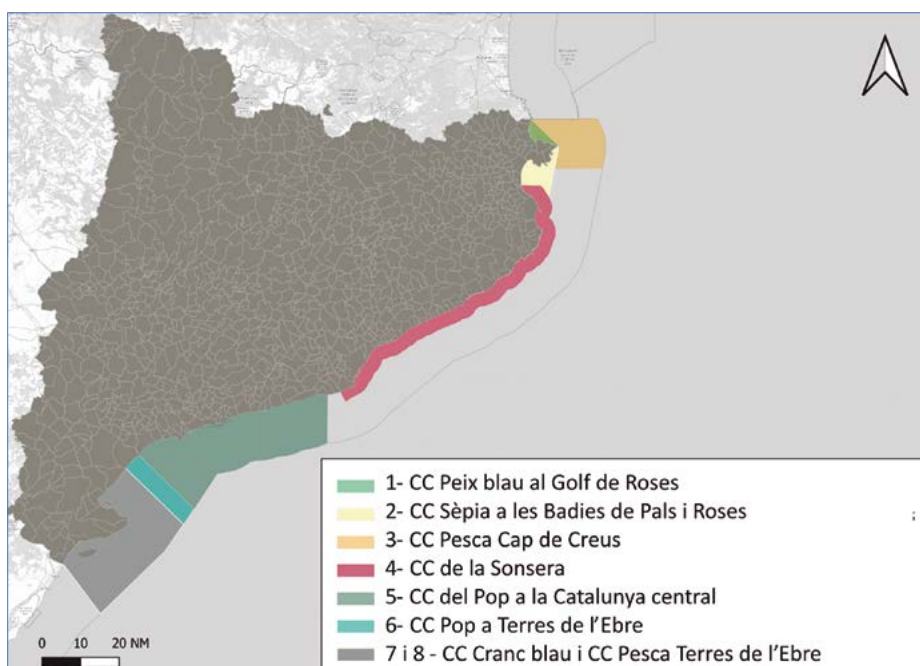


Figure 3. Co-management committees deployed based on the Decree on the governance model of professional fishing in Catalonia. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

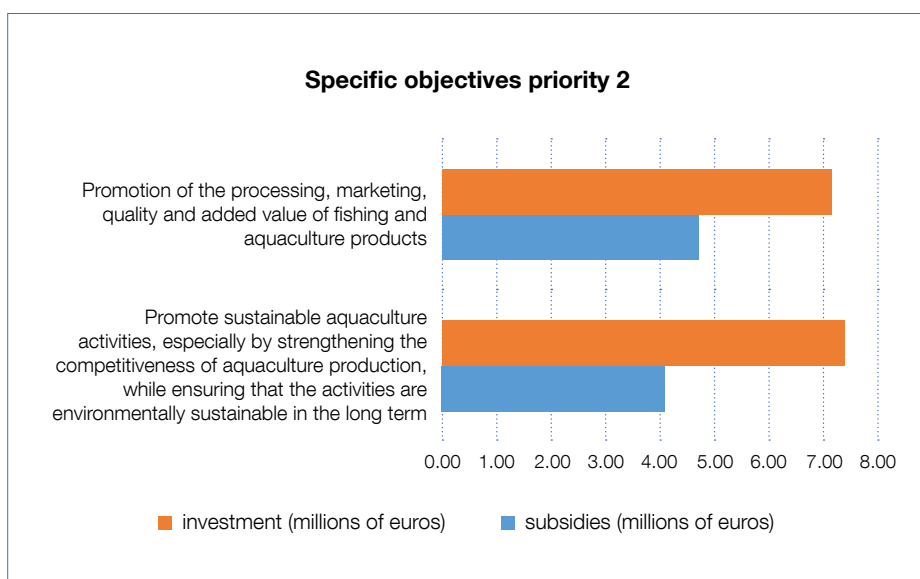


Figure 4. Contribution by the EMFAF to achieving the specific objectives of Priority 2 (millions of euros). Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

Another case of participatory management is that of the Baix Empordà Co-management Board, which is aimed at different aspects of professional fishing (recreational fishing, nautical, diving, etc.), but which is framed by the same joint or participatory management principle.

## 02. Priority 2. Promote sustainable aquaculture activities, the processing and marketing of fishing and aquaculture products, thus contributing to food security in the Union (aquaculture and value chain)

Priority 2 of the EMFAF accounts for 20% of the financial plan of the EMFAF, with €11.92 million of public sup-

port that will make it possible to boost €20.69 million of investment. This priority is aimed at:

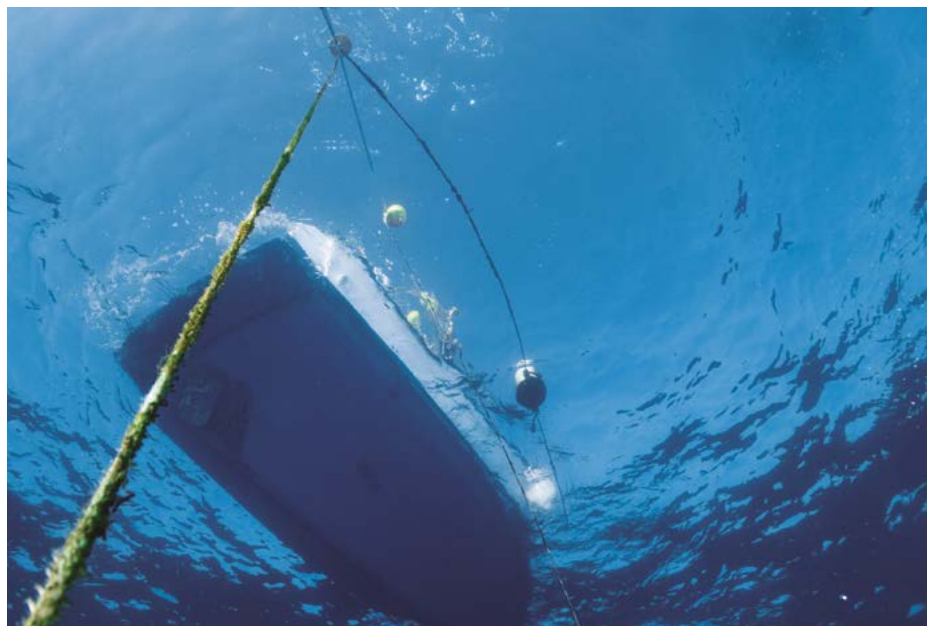
- Reducing negative impacts or contribute to positive impacts on the environment, and contributing to good environmental status.
- Promoting the conditions for viable, competitive and economically attractive fishing, aquaculture and processing sectors.
- Contributing to climate neutrality.

02.01 Promote sustainable aquaculture activities, while strengthening, in particular, the competitiveness of aquaculture production, while ensuring, at the same time, that the activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term

7% of the EMFAF – i.e. €4.12 million of public contribution with an investment of €7.42 million – will be used to consolidate the aquaculture activity in Catalonia. This specific objective ac-

counts for 36% of the financial plan of Priority 2. Notable among the planned actions are the subsidies intended to:

- Encourage the creation of new aquaculture companies through support for the processing of public domain concessions and business advice.
- Diversify aquaculture production in Catalonia.
- Consolidate low impact and restorative aquaculture; especially the production of algae.



Aquaculture production of algae in the Ebro Delta and Roses. Photos: Alabrava SL and Pescadors de Roses, S.L.U.



Intersectoral Bureau. Photo: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.



Seafood. Photo: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

- Contribute to the decarbonisation of the aquaculture sector through the electrification of the auxiliary aquaculture fleet and the implementation of photovoltaic solar energy.

02.02 Promote the processing, marketing, quality and added value of fishing and aquaculture products

13% of the EMFAF – i.e. €7.80 million of public contribution with an investment of €13.27 million – will be

used to promote the marketing and processing of fishery and aquaculture products. This specific objective accounts for 64% of the financial plan of Priority 2. Notable among the planned actions are the subsidies intended to:

- Promote the creation of new Fish Producer Organisations (POs) in Catalonia and consolidate the existing ones by means of creation subsidies for an amount of 1% of the declared production.

64% of the financial plan of Priority 2 will be used to promote the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products.

- Implement the Production and Marketing Plans of the Fish Producer Organisations recognised in Catalonia.
- Carry out campaigns to encourage the consumption of fish among citizens, especially the locally-sourced fish “fish from the port market”.
- Participate in sector fairs to promote Catalan products and companies.
- Favor the climate neutrality of the marketing and processing sector.
- Favor the introduction of new packaging, processes and products.
- Advice and training in the fish value chain.
- Strengthen the Intersectoral Fish Bureau with representatives of the fisheries administration, the extractive sector and the retail and wholesale trade channel.

Fisheries Local Action Groups in Catalonia. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.

03. Priority 3. Promote the blue economy in coastal areas and pursue the development of fishing and aquaculture communities; implement the EMC

With the aim of guaranteeing the territorial deployment of Catalonia’s Maritime Strategy in the territory, the Department of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda has recognised, within the framework of the EMFAF, five Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) that they cover the entirety of the Catalan fishing coast.

The Participatory Local Development Strategies (PLDS) of the FLAGs are aimed at boosting fishing communities, and will focus on implementing the

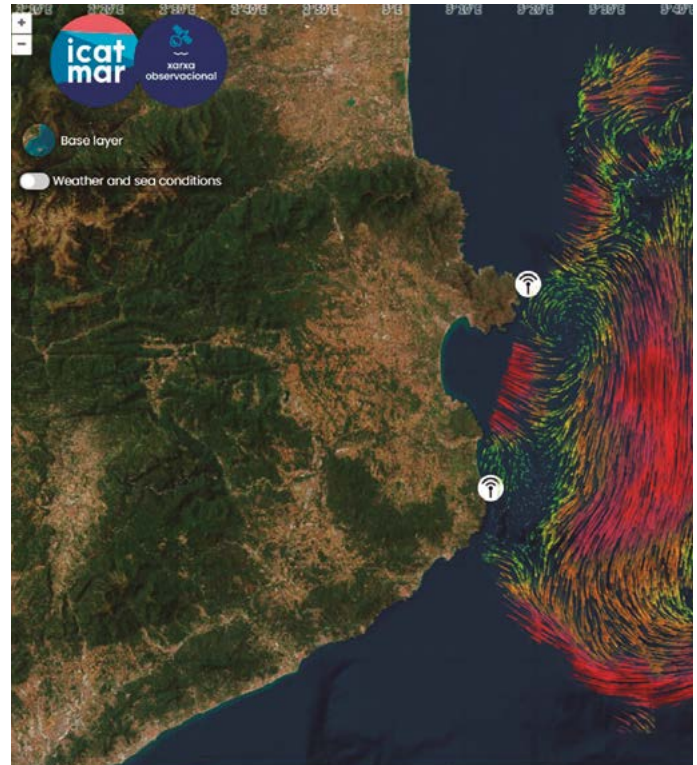
FLAG	Municipalities	Surface area in km <sup>2</sup>  County population density	Jobs in the blue economy sectors in the area	Data from the fishing and aquaculture sector
FLAG Costa Brava	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cadaqués</li> <li>• L'Escala</li> <li>• Llançà</li> <li>• El Port de la Selva</li> <li>• Roses</li> <li>• Palamós</li> <li>• Sant Feliu de Guíxols</li> <li>• L'Estartit</li> </ul>	<p>254 km<sup>2</sup></p> <p>136 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup></p>	4,441	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fishing fleet: 167 vessels</li> <li>• catches: 4,922 tonnes annually</li> <li>• collection from the first fishing sale: €26 million per year</li> <li>• aquaculture facilities: 2</li> <li>• aquaculture production: 107 tonnes/year</li> <li>• collection from the first sale: €1 million per year</li> </ul>
FLAG Costa Brava South-Maresme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arenys de Mar</li> <li>• Calella de Mar</li> <li>• Malgrat de Mar</li> <li>• El Masnou</li> <li>• Mataró</li> <li>• Montgat</li> <li>• Pineda de Mar</li> <li>• Sant Pol de Mar</li> <li>• Blanes</li> <li>• Lloret de Mar</li> <li>• Tossa de Mar</li> </ul>	<p>176 km<sup>2</sup></p> <p>456 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup></p>	6,617	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fishing fleet: 122 vessels</li> <li>• catches: 3,357 tonnes annually</li> <li>• collection from the first fishing sale: €15 million per year</li> </ul>
FLAG Costa Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vilanova i la Geltrú</li> <li>• Sitges</li> <li>• Badalona</li> <li>• Barcelona</li> </ul>	<p>200 km<sup>2</sup></p> <p>7,357 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup></p>	29,548	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fishing fleet: 100 vessels</li> <li>• catches: 4,457 tonnes per year</li> <li>• collection from the first fishing sale: €17 million per year</li> </ul>
FLAG Costa Daurada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambrils</li> <li>• Tarragona</li> <li>• Torredembarra</li> <li>• Calafell</li> </ul>	<p>122 km<sup>2</sup></p> <p>433 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup></p>	3,862	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fishing fleet: 67 vessels</li> <li>• catches: 3,165 tonnes annually</li> <li>• collection from the first fishing sale: €14 million per year</li> </ul>
FLAG Mar de l'Ebre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L'Ametlla de Mar</li> <li>• L'Ampolla</li> <li>• Deltebre</li> <li>• Les Cases d'Alcanar</li> <li>• Amposta</li> <li>• La Ràpita</li> <li>• Sant Jaume d'Enveja</li> </ul>	<p>510 km<sup>2</sup></p> <p>85 habitants/km<sup>2</sup></p>	964	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fishing fleet: 187 vessels</li> <li>• catches: 4,179 tonnes per year</li> <li>• collection from the first fishing sale: €24 million per year</li> <li>• aquaculture facilities: 177</li> <li>• aquaculture production: 7,547 tonnes/year</li> <li>• collection from the first sale: €49.27 million per year</li> </ul>

**Table 2.** Impact of Fisheries Local Action Groups in Catalonia. Source: General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries.





Sampling of ICATMAR fishing data. Photo: ICATMAR.



ICATMAR operational oceanography viewer. Photo: ICATMAR

“farm (sea) to table” strategy, developing the potential of the sustainable blue economy in the territory, mitigating climate change, promoting cultural, social and environmental heritage, and contributing to cooperation between territories.

The EMFAF reserves €15.68 million and doubles the economic contribution with respect to the EMFF which will allow the mobilisation of an investment in the FLAG territories of €28.18 million - which is 27% of the financial plan - to promote this priority.

#### 04. Contribution of the Catalan Research Institute for the Governance of the Sea (ICATMAR) to achieving the objectives of the EMFAF

The Catalan Research Institute for the Governance of the Sea (ICATMAR) will contribute to achieving the objectives of the EMFAF foreseen in Priority 1 and Priority 4 to promote oceanographic research and improve knowledge, collection and processing of data.

In the period 2023-2029, €18.87 million will be allocated to ICATMAR in operating, personnel and infrastructure costs, of which €8.89 million will be financed by the European Union at the expense of EMFAF, €8.23 million will be provided by the Department of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda, and €1.75 million will be provided by the Institute of Marine Sciences of the CSIC.

Within the framework of Priority 1 of the EMFAF, ICATMAR will carry out a programme to monitor recreational and commercial fishing along the Catalan coast. The first step in being able to carry out the monitoring of fishing resources will be the collection of data. Based on the data obtained, we will be able to understand the biology of the species and the characteristics of the communities where they live, as well as draw up distribution maps and expand the information available on the selectivity of fishing gear. Likewise, the data obtained will generate knowledge in the field of fisheries, such as harvest frequencies, reproduction periods and sizes at first maturity of the

studied species, and will help public managers in their decision making.

Within the framework of Priority 4 of the EMFAF, ICATMAR will coordinate a programme of activities within the framework of operational oceanography that will be based on the observation of the oceans, the modelling of oceanic processes and the interpretation and dissemination of the information generated. Specifically, the swell, sea level, sea currents, salinity and sea temperature will be measured in the coastal strip between the Catalan coast and 40 nautical miles (about 74 km). This data will be used to improve predictions of swell and ocean currents.

#### Authors



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## We talk to: TONI ABAD

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Toni Abad, president of the Catalan National Federation of Fishers' Guilds

Toni Abad Majol, 61 years old, born in Roses, is part of a lineage of fishers from the port, president of the Catalan National Federation of Fishers' Guilds, president of the Territorial Federation of Fishers' Guilds of Girona and president of the Fishers' Guild of Roses

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“The EMFAF must guarantee the cohesion of fishing communities and the consolidation of the blue economy within the framework of the Maritime Strategy of Catalonia.”

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### What is the Catalan fishing sector like?

The Catalan fishing sector is characterised by a coastal fleet spread along the coast, from Llançà to Les Cases d'Alcanar, which every day returns to port bringing to the markets and kitchens a quality product of high freshness linked to our Mediterranean culture. We are mostly small family businesses with strong roots in ports and fishing communities.

The Catalan sector is represented by fishers' guilds and federations of fishermen's guilds, which are joint bodies, with equal representation of companies and the marine industry, an example of the social economy in the territory. The self-organisation of the sector, which has been carried out for more than 100 years, highlights the desire that the sector has always had to organise itself and take care of the sea. That is why the implementation of fisheries co-management by the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia), through which the Government is committed to the decentralisation of decisions to co-management committees, with equal participation of the Administration, the sector, science and NGOs, it has received very wide acceptance from the industry. We want to be involved in the care and management of our fishing grounds.

The sector is made up of 587 vessels and 1,612 workers, from the modalities of trawling, purse-seine fishing, longline and small scale fishing.

We are one of the main sectors of the blue economy in fishing municipalities and the only one that guarantees economic activity throughout the year.

### What is the situation in the sector?

In the last 20 years, the fishing fleet has decreased by 60.19%, motivated by a need to adjust the fleet to the possibilities of the fishing resource.

The Catalan sector has been attentive to the new needs to move towards sustainability. Thus, for many years we have adopted voluntary measures to protect the fishing resource (definitive bans and closures of fishing grounds or reduction of hours and catches), improvements in the selectivity of fishing gear and equipment (implementation of mesh size more selective gear and equipment to detect the shoal size to avoid catching immature specimens), reduction of fuel consumption and decarbonisation of fishing activity (installation of flying gates or implementation of solar energy photovoltaic panels in the port fishing auctions), implementation of fisheries co-management committees and plans, etc.

However, we feel that the European Commission is not valuing some of these efforts. There is a desire to criminalise the fishing activity, with policies and actions supposedly aimed at sustainability that do not take into account the need to guarantee, along with environmental sustainability, economic and social sustainability. The implementation of these policies is suffocating the sector and generating a bleak mood on the docks. What the sector is asking for is time, time to adapt, since we share the objectives of sustainability, but we also need to guarantee that when these are achieved there will still be fishermen and fishing communities.

This whole situation is leading to a problem of generational relief and a need to take advantage of all possible initiatives to consolidate the sector and the fishing communities. The European fisheries funds are an essential instrument to guarantee the competitiveness of the sector and encourage the transition towards sustainability and modernity.

#### [What has been the evaluation of the sector of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund \(EMFF 2014-2020\)?](#)

The evaluation of the EMFF in Catalonia by the fishing sector has been positive.

The EMFF has boosted these resources in fishing and marine companies and fishers' guilds and federations. Investments in fishing vessels, investments in ports and port fishing auctions, funds to guarantee the competitiveness of the sector (bans, subsidies to alleviate the effects of the war in Ukraine, etc.) have been guaranteed.

We also positively value the opportunity given by the EMFF for the creation and operation of ICATMAR, the oceanographic institute of Catalonia, which, with the collaboration of the fishing sector, allows the collection and analysis of the state of fishing resources.

PESCANETA, an EMFF initiative promoted by the four federations of fishers' guilds in Catalonia, has been a very important project for the sector in this EMFF period. The initiative, through which the marine litter collected by the fishing fleet in its ordinary activity is quantified, makes the fishing profession visible and dignified and contributes to the awareness and dissemination to the public, by the fishing sector, of the problem of plastics in the sea to try to reduce this waste.

The Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia) has ensured the sector's access to funds in an agile way

and with a very significant reduction in the term of payment of these subsidies; the guarantee of rapid recovery of investments allows the sector to continue investing in new actions. We are aware that this reality has not been homogeneous in the rest of the autonomous communities and for this reason we must recognise the effort of the General Directorate for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries that manages the EMFAF.

However, the interpretation of the inadmissibility requirements of the EMFF in relation to administrative infringements of the fisheries policy, with an interpretation on a Spanish scale far from the principles of proportionality, has been a very negative element in the period. For this reason, we have asked the Ministry to review these criteria, as they endanger the competitiveness of the sector.

#### [What is your assessment of the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund \(EMFAF 2021-2027\)?](#)

The EMFAF must guarantee the cohesion of the fishing communities and the consolidation of the blue economy within the framework of the Maritime Strategy of Catalonia. The opportunity that the Department has given us to implement fisheries local action groups (FLAGs) throughout the fishing territory, also led by the sector itself, must allow the development of our communities, while guaranteeing the competitiveness of the sectors of the blue economy, generating employment and strengthening the cohesion and synergies of our communities.

The EMFAF must also make it possible to promote investments on board that contribute to reducing the impact of fishing, improving working conditions and safety and the energy efficiency and decarbonisation of our fleet.

The implementation of Fish Producer Organisations (PO) are an instrument, co-financed by EMFAF, which can contribute in a complementary way to the fishers' guilds, to improve the competitiveness of the sector through catch planning initiatives, marketing and promotion of our products.

In addition, it is essential to ensure that the mechanisms of the EMFAF to compensate for fleet downtime, while protecting the competitiveness of companies and shipping, are enabled quickly and guarantee access to the entire sector.

Another aspect, to which EMFAF should contribute, is to guarantee the relief of fish consumers and the recognition of our local products, which are neither better nor worse, but are different and need be valued as such.



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