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Delegations will find in Annex the above-mentioned report.



2025
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

***Simplification,
Implementation
& Enforcement***

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European Commissioner
for Fisheries and Oceans

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1. Introduction

As entrusted by President von der Leyen in her mission letter to me, and as part of our broader work on securing European food sovereignty, I am tasked to develop and implement a long-term vision for resilient, competitive, and sustainable European fisheries, aquaculture and other blue economy sectors. This vision aims to ensure the EU leads global efforts to protect and restore the health of the Ocean, to assure its security and support the development and resilience of coastal communities across Europe¹. This also includes work on international Ocean governance.

In my mission letter I am tasked to ensure that the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is implemented effectively across all Member States, as well as other policies objectives and targets under my portfolio. To achieve this, the Commission has a variety of instruments, including infringement proceedings or, in the fisheries field, control action plans or administrative inquiries.

I am also tasked in my mission letter to reduce administrative burden and simplify implementation of the EU acquis that is covered by my portfolio in close cooperation with stakeholders. This entails ensuring that existing rules are fit-for-purpose and focus on reducing administrative burden and simplifying legislation. It also entails listening to all companies and stakeholders who work on a daily basis to comply with the relevant EU legislation as well as organising at least two implementation dialogues per year with stakeholders to align implementation with realities on the ground. By doing so, this will enable us to contribute to reducing reporting obligations by at least 25% – and for SMEs at least 35% – and to leverage the power of digital tools to deliver better and faster solutions.

This first Annual Progress Report on Simplification, Implementation and Enforcement, covers the progress achieved during the period from 1 January to 31 July 2025.

2. Executive Summary

Working towards the above-mentioned objectives, during the first reporting period, together with Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), we focused on the following main elements:

During the reporting period a **roadmap** was developed on the streamlining and **simplification** of the acquis within my portfolio **for 2025-2029**. The roadmap outlines and describes the **stress testing** of all DG MARE legislation, the screening of all DG MARE delegated and implementing acts, systematic evaluations of DG MARE legislation, most importantly of the Regulation on the CFP, implementation dialogues and reality checks with stakeholders on the ground (i.e. practitioners, individual businesses). The roadmap also covers the progress on the DG MARE 2024 Rationalisation Plan on reporting requirements.

On **Implementation**, in addition to the routine business activities (adopting Commission acts necessary to manage fisheries) DG MARE focused on the evaluation of the CFP Regulation and the assessment of the functioning of the Common Market Organisation (CMO) Regulation, the organisation of implementation dialogues (maritime spatial planning (MSP); small scale coastal fisheries (in November))², the implementation of the MSP Directive, the organisation of an EU-wide communication campaign supporting EU aquaculture, the development of a tracking and reporting system for small scale fisheries (SSF) according to the revised fisheries control regulation and the recent Eurobarometer on EU consumers habits regarding fishery and aquaculture products.

As regards **Enforcement**, pre-infringement dialogues aiming to reduce the risk of a further decline in the stock of European eel were launched and have led to a swift and successful resolution of the problem. A new infringement

¹ See [here](#) the list of my responsibilities within the 2025-2029 European Commission

² https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/better-regulation/simplification-and-implementation/implementation-dialogues_en

procedure was launched to address failure to prevent imports of fishery products stemming from illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing activities. Further efforts were made on the already ongoing enforcement files (addressing, for instance, non-compliance with EU provisions on weighing and registration of catches, or on MSP).

3. Delivering Results: Key Measures

A. Simplification and stress tests

Similarly to all Commission services, DG MARE has begun identifying where and how its acquis could be streamlined and simplified, identifying concrete proposals for simplification and burden reduction and in turn contributing to deliver the Commission's overall target of reducing reporting obligations by at least 25% – and 35% for SMEs.

In addition to the ongoing regular evaluations, we have started to systematically screen (i.e. stress test) all DG MARE legislation to ensure that they remain relevant, proportionate, and fit to achieve their objectives in the most cost-efficient way.

Stress testing

During the period from 1 January to 31 July 2025, DG MARE not only developed a **roadmap** on simplification for the 2024-2029 mandate, it also executed a **first stress test screening of its acquis** including all its delegated and implementing acts.

DG MARE completed a **screening of all the provisions empowering the Commission to adopt all delegated and implementing acts** that are to be exercised. As a result, all the existing acts are considered to be priority. DG MARE also continued the systematic **evaluation** of its acquis following the respective life cycles with particular attention given to opportunities to simplify and reduce administrative burden³.

Our primary focus, at the moment, is the **evaluation of the [CFP Regulation](#)** (Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013). While this exercise mainly focuses on the implementation of the CFP Regulation in force, it might have simplification implications in the future. The evaluation assesses whether a set of interventions is fit for purpose by assessing its performance against its policy objectives. In particular, it determines the coherence of the various measures and seeks to quantify any synergies (e.g. improved performance, simplification, lower costs, reduced burdens) or inefficiencies (e.g. excessive burdens, overlaps, gaps, inconsistencies, implementation problems, and/or obsolete measures) over time. This helps in identifying the cumulative impact of the interventions, in terms of costs and benefits.

The **fisheries [Control Regulation](#)** (Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009) has been identified as a relevant source of regulatory costs within the fisheries policy, as relevant parts of the reporting obligations directly concerning business operators stem from this regulation. Therefore, we have launched a **study that aims to identify and analyse the costs and benefits of the implementation of the regulation** with special regard to the new measures that gradually enter into force as a consequence of the revision of the Regulation in 2023. A major improvement towards simplification and reduction of administrative burden in fisheries control is moving the reporting from paper to 'electronic transmission', with all that entails in terms of reduction of administrative work for both control authorities and operators. The study will analyse the benefits and costs of a digitalised fisheries control system.

³ These evaluations concern the overarching CFP Regulation, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014-2020 and its successor the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) 2021-2027, numerous sustainable fisheries partnership agreements, the autonomous tariff quotas (ATQs) regime, the single-use plastics Directive (in relation to fishing gear rules), the sustainable management of external fishing fleets (SMEFF) Regulation and the maritime spatial planning (MSP) Directive

In addition, we are also developing a specific **cost analysis** study of the fisheries sector from a **business operator's perspective** that should identify and map the costs of fisheries-related stakeholder groups (such as fishers, aquaculture producers, processors etc.) in relation to their daily business activities. This analysis also aims to investigate the sources of these costs – what legislation (EU or national) frames/ affects the stakeholders' daily work and to what extent. It is planned to publish a call for tender for the study in the second half of 2025.

In the upcoming 12-18 months we also intend to carry out a series (10-12 or more) of **reality checks** with real practitioners. These aim to directly reach out to stakeholders on the ground (i.e. fishers, aquaculture producers, processors), drawing upon the advice of the Advisory Councils, to collect detailed technical feedback on the implementation of EU rules and programmes, including on measures to simplify them and facilitate their implementation. These reality checks will be developed and implemented with the help of studies. The results are expected by the end of 2026.

Simplification measures

In line with Article 36 of the [CFP Regulation](#), an effective EU **fisheries control system** is a key pillar for ensuring compliance with the CFP rules. The [Control Regulation](#), as last [amended by Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2842](#), lays down the control, inspection, and enforcement framework essential to achieving the CFP's objectives, including the long-term sustainability of EU stocks, level playing field and fair competition, and a culture of compliance. These rules, however, have at times been criticised by parts of the fishing sector for the regulatory and financial burden they may impose on operators.

In that respect, it should be stressed that a central objective of the fisheries control revision was simplification. The [amending regulation](#) seeks to **simplify the fisheries control system through digitalisation, harmonisation, and improved effectiveness of control, inspection, and enforcement activities**. Since 2024, we have been working on developing rules for replacing paper catch registration documents by user-friendly electronic tools for businesses, mostly SMEs. The corresponding implementing regulation is planned for adoption in October 2025; and the delegated regulation for December 2025.

In May 2025, the Commission adopted two implementing regulations, which marked a significant step towards **simplifying fishing catch reporting for the unsorted pelagic fisheries sector**. Notably, we have published a [first list of designated ports](#) that meet [robust fisheries control conditions](#), where fishers landing unsorted pelagic species benefit from a margin of tolerance derogation. This was to address challenges that were highlighted during the negotiation of the [Control Regulation](#).

In February 2025, the Commission adopted an [implementing regulation on detailed rules on the submission of catch data and the marking of passive gear used in recreational fisheries](#). To support this effort, the Commission is developing **RecFishing**, a dedicated EU-level IT system for the reporting of recreational fisheries catches. By providing harmonised and scalable data-collection tools, RecFishing will enhance transparency and improve data quality. The system is designed to serve up to 11 million recreational fishers and assist national authorities by reducing costs and administrative burden, while reflecting key EU priorities such as digitalisation, simplification, cutting red tape, and evidence-based policymaking.

The small-scale coastal fishers (SSCF) IT tool could also offer to Member States opportunities to alleviate their burden (see more under Part B. Implementation).

In accordance with the [IUU Regulation](#) (Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008), EU importers will need to use IT tool **CATCH** from 10 January 2026 to submit the catch certificates for the importation of fishery products in the EU market. CATCH streamlines the catch certification process for fishery products entering the EU market and offers a fully digitalised and paperless workflow. It facilitates the exchange of data, information and documents between all involved trading parties and control authorities and therefore simplifies and speeds up the administrative procedures. CATCH makes it easier to identify and prohibit importation into the EU of fishery products obtained from illegal,

unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU), thus improving the effectiveness of the EU IUU Regulation's catch certification scheme.

A new template for a non-manipulation document, and important tool for traceability of fishery products in the supply chain, was published through [a delegated act in March 2025](#). In addition, the Commission adopted in July 2025 [a revised implementing regulation](#), with the main changes relating to the implementing rules of CATCH, including a new template for the simplified catch certificate for small vessels.

Under the Regulation on the **data collection framework** ([DCF Regulation](#) - Regulation (EU) 2017/1004) Member States submit their national work plans and annual reports to DG MARE as part of recurrent legal obligations. The development of the DCF IT platform aims to reduce significantly the reporting burden of Member States by digitalising the reporting and evaluation process of DCF work plans and annual reports. The latest milestone of the IT platform development during this reporting period included the [roll out of the platform to the final environment](#). A new contract was signed for maintenance in May and the annual reports were submitted and evaluated by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) through the platform in May/June.

Under the DCF Regulation, Member States, the Commission, scientific advisory bodies and end users cooperate to develop compatible data storage and exchange systems, which may take form of regional databases. In the North Sea, a regional database already exists and is hosted in the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). In the Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG MARE is developing a regional database for the Mediterranean and Black Sea ([RDBFIS](#))⁴ to streamline, harmonise and manage Member States reporting of DCF data.

The Commission adopted a proposal to **simplify the collection and compilation of statistics on European fisheries and aquaculture** ([COM\(2025\) 435 final](#)). It aims at replacing five existing sets of rules by a single, simplified and integrated system which will reduce the reporting burden on Member States. It will enable the reuse of administrative data already collected by the Commission for the compilation of European official statistics on fisheries and aquaculture. This will allow Eurostat to produce statistics on catches and the Union fishing fleet without requiring additional reporting from Member States, thus eliminating duplication and saving time and resources. The proposal also introduces for the first time the collection of data on discarded catches, recreational fisheries, sensitive species, landings from third-country fleets in EU ports, and organic aquaculture production. The new data structure will also allow for more aggregated figures to be produced and transmitted to international organisations, to promote global cooperation. This new system will help eliminate existing disparities in data collection and improve the reliability of EU-wide assessments. The use of this system aims to alleviate member states' reporting burdens.

B. Implementation

In the framework of the overall work of implementing the CFP and maritime policy our key actions of specific interest during the reporting period are as follows:

We adopted 62 delegated/implementing acts together with autonomous Commission acts during the reporting period. These acts mainly govern deductions of fishing opportunities, closing and reopening certain fisheries, rules on fishing authorisations or measures related to structural funds. In addition, the Commission also [published in June for feedback](#) its annual [fisheries policy orientations Communication](#) (COM(2025) 296 final) with particular attention to progress on achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and the state of the EU fishing fleet as two key elements of the CFP.

Ongoing evaluation of the [CFP Regulation](#): it assesses – among others – the effectiveness of the CFP regulation's implementation. Nevertheless, this will be a general assessment because the detailed provisions on specific issues are under ancillary legislation (for example the [Technical Measures Regulation](#), (Regulation (EU)

⁴ An Integrated Fisheries Information System for the Mediterranean and Black Sea

2019/1241) [Control Regulation](#), [IUU Regulation](#), [Deep-Sea Access Regulation](#) (Regulation (EU) 2016/2336) or several [multiannual plans](#)).

Study on CMO Regulation (Regulation 1371/2013): DG MARE contracted a study on the CMO Regulation with special regard to its provisions on producer organisations and consumer information. The final report of the study will be published in the second half of 2025 with the aim of, among others, informing the evaluation of the CFP Regulation and providing recommendations for improved implementation.

The first implementation dialogue, on the [Maritime Spatial Planning \(MSP\) Directive](#), took place in Brussels on 1 July 2025. The first dialogue gathered 26 participants representing a broad and diverse group, including Member States (authorities from the national and regional level), regional organisations, environmental NGOs, as well as industry, fishermen and ports associations.

The discussion focused on assessing what works well in the current [MSP Directive](#) and should be preserved, identifying areas where the legal framework or implementation process could be improved – particularly in relation to challenges like spatial squeeze, climate change, nature protection, and multi-use – and exploring the most effective tools or approaches to streamline implementation, reduce administrative burdens, and enhance overall effectiveness.

Stakeholders across the EU highlighted best practices in MSP, with the [Greater North Sea Basin Initiative](#) serving as a model for cross-border collaboration. Ireland successfully met its offshore renewable energy targets and aims to advance the marine agenda during its 2027 EU presidency, while Germany's risk assessment methodology demonstrates effective alignment of energy development with environmental priorities. Several countries, including France and the Netherlands, showcased successful integration of socio-economic and environmental objectives through coordinated MSP and Marine Strategy Framework Directive implementations, while tools like Sweden's [Symphony](#) and platforms such as the European MSP Platform enhance data sharing and stakeholder engagement across regions.

These contributions will feed into the forthcoming **revision of the MSP Directive**, which will also serve as a cornerstone of the upcoming **Ocean Act** – the centrepiece of the [European Ocean Pact \(COM\(2025\)281 final\)](#).

The second implementation dialogue is planned to take place in Brussels on 24 November to address **small-scale coastal fisheries (SSCF)**.

Implementation of the MSP Directive: this is supported by a dedicated assistance mechanism, called '[MSP Platform](#)', that provides help to Member States upon request. During the reporting period, it acted as an intermediary for Croatia, which is currently drafting its MSP for the exclusive economic zone to work with neighbouring countries and relevant MSP projects.

In March, the Commission launched a three-month EU-wide campaign, [“EU aquaculture. We work for you with passion.”](#) developed in collaboration with Member States and the Aquaculture Advisory Council as part of the implementation of the [EU strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture](#). By raising awareness of the sector's contribution to sustainability, food security and local development, the campaign fosters public recognition and consumer trust – essential conditions for advancing national strategies and investments. It features nine emblematic species – from mussels and oysters to trout, salmon and seaweed, showcasing the dedication of EU producers and the quality of their products. Through videos, educational tools, a toolbox for national replication, and a road trip across aquaculture sites, the campaign provides visibility to best practices, strengthens understanding of the benefits of EU aquaculture, and helps create an enabling environment for its sustainable growth.

The **revised fisheries control rules** require that fishing vessels of less than 12 metres in length overall must send data on vessel position and report on their fishing activity. Such rules also provided for the Commission to develop a **tracking and reporting system (IT tool) for small scale fisheries**, which the Commission is currently developing following requests by eight Member States, in line with the provisions of the above mentioned Regulation.

In addition to ad hoc implementation tasks, DG MARE has several bodies set up for systematic and regular assistance and support, such as:

- In exercising its implementing powers, the Commission is assisted by the **Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture as well as for the Committees of the EMFF and the EMFAF**. These committees consist of representatives of the Member States.
- **Advisory Councils (ACs)** are stakeholder-led organisations that provide the Commission and EU Member States with recommendations on the CFP. This may include advice on conservation and socio-economic aspects of fisheries management, as well as simplification of rules as and CFP implementation. As an example, all 11 Advisory Councils contributed to fisheries policy-making, in the reporting period, by providing the Commission and Member States with over 50 specific recommendations and advice, ranging from recommendations on a given stock, on on-going negotiations, on energy transition or the ongoing evaluation of the CFP Regulation.
- The **Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)** provides scientific advice and analysis to DG MARE on a range of topics such as stock assessments in the Mediterranean Sea, advice on fisheries management measures, annual reports on fleet balance, fisheries and aquaculture socio-economics, fisheries dependent information and more that are essential for proper implementation of the CFP. For instance, in the communication [Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2026](#), published on 6 June 2025, the Commission reports on state of play of fleet capacity, based on the STECF work on the technical, economic and biological indicators.
- **European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)**: The agency's mission is to promote the highest common standards for control, inspection and surveillance under the CFP. In cooperation with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), each within its mandate, supports the national authorities carrying out coast guard functions. Its primary role is to organise coordination and cooperation between national control and inspection activities so that the rules of the CFP are respected and applied effectively.
- **Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring, Evaluation and Local Support Network (FAMENET)** supports stakeholders, in relation to:
 - monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the EMFAF and the EMFF.
 - implementing community-led local development (CLLD) in fisheries and aquaculture areas to foster a sustainable blue economy.
 - communicating on the results of the EMFF and EMFAF through written stories and videos and supporting the INFORM EU network.

C. Enforcement

Delivering results

The **CFP** falls under exclusive EU competence. The CFP legislation mainly consists of regulations, which are directly applied at Member State level. Therefore, non-compliance generally concerns bad application of regulations by operators or Member State authorities. Whilst it is up to the Member State authorities to ensure and enforce compliance by the operators with their obligations, my services look into systemic non-compliance by Member State authorities with their obligations to control and enforce obligations at national level. The **Control Regulation** provides a number of dedicated tools and competences for the Commission both to gather evidence and to follow up identified instances of non-compliance, which come into play both before and in parallel [with legal enforcement](#)

As regards non-compliance by Member States with their obligations under the Control Regulation, the long-standing infringement case against [Belgium](#) regarding the weighing and registration of catches was closed in February 2025 following a number of exchanges and meetings with the Belgian authorities, since the systemic issues at stake had been remedied. A similar infringement procedure is still ongoing with [the Netherlands](#), with further exchanges with the national authorities taking place. Accurate weighing and registration of catches are essential to effective control and sustainable fisheries management, which is why the successful resolution of these cases is of central importance.

Furthermore, during the reporting period a [pre-infringement dialogue](#) was initiated with France to address the incorrect implementation of EU rules concerning closure periods for commercial fishing of glass eel in marine and adjacent brackish waters under the **Fishing Opportunities Regulation** ([Council Regulation \(EU\) 2024/257](#)). A similar dialogue was launched at the same time with Denmark on the closure periods for silver eel fishery. Both dialogues were successful, as Denmark and France have amended their respective legislation by aligning the closure periods with EU rules for the 2025-2026 fishing season. These important developments reduce the risk of a further decline of the critically endangered stock of this unique species, which is essential to ensure long-term benefits for businesses and coastal communities.

In my portfolio, experience has shown that where cases are straightforward and well evidenced, legal enforcement action can lead to swift and effective problem resolution. On the other hand, for example where cases are technically more complex, a cooperative approach to work together with Member States on the measures required to solve detected shortcomings, through other tools, such as control action plans, may be more suitable to achieve the desired results. In any case, high quality legislation, including implementing legislation, as well as sufficient and focused implementation support and guidance to Member States remain vital to allow for proper implementation and avoid or at least minimise the need for legal enforcement action to begin with.

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Further information on infringement cases and pre-infringement dialogues in the policy areas covered by the present report are available on this [Europa webpage](#), where the public can perform targeted searches and customise graphs.

4. Way forward

We will continue implementing the **Simplification Roadmap** that has been developed for the period **2024-2029** to streamline and simplify the EU acquis within my portfolio. This includes, in addition to the regular work we do on the evaluations, the **screening and stress testing of all DG MARE legislation**, the studies on the CMO and the Control Regulations and most importantly the CFP Regulation evaluation. Beyond that, this work will be complemented by cost-benefit analyses and reality checks with practitioners on the ground. Also, further implementation dialogues will be held.

Feedback and results received through this work will be included in upcoming proposals, such as the forthcoming Ocean Act – the central element of the **European Ocean Pact** – and revisions, paying particular attention to making DG MARE policies more efficient, where possible simpler and smarter. The Ocean Pact also proposes to launch an Ocean Observation Initiative that will facilitate the implementation of ocean related policies and laws through helping to simplify their regulatory reporting.

Pending the outcome of the planned implementation dialogues, other stakeholder consultations, reality checks, stress analysis as well as the ongoing studies and evaluations, further proposals may be tabled in the near future.

In relation to the Control Regulation, it is worth mentioning the following work strands: DG MARE is actively preparing several secondary legislations related to the **implementation of the Control Regulation** such as preparation and forthcoming adoption of rules on the weighing of fisheries products and the **digitalisation of traceability data**. These new rules will contribute to a smarter, harmonised, and more digitalised fisheries control system, while ensuring the effectiveness of the measures necessary to achieve the objectives of the CFP. DG MARE is also engaging with Member States and stakeholders on **expanding the current list of designated ports**, where the conditions for the use of margin of tolerance derogations are fulfilled. **RecFishing IT Tool** is planned to be fully operational by January 2026. The system is ready for Member States to begin testing in September 2025, enabling them to verify usability, prepare national guidance, and integrate it into their control systems. The transition from fragmented national approaches to a single EU-wide system that will simplify compliance, reduce costs, and deliver consistent, high-quality data across the Union is envisaged in 2026.

The allocation of fishing opportunities is regulated by Articles 16 and 17 of the CFP Regulation. While Member States do enjoy some discretion as to designing their methods for allocating the fishing opportunities available to them, Member States must use transparent and objective criteria including those of an environmental, social and economic nature. However, consultations and studies⁶ have shown that there is a need for further guidance on the implementation of these provisions, thus, the Commission has been preparing a **vade mecum on the allocation of fishing opportunities** to support Member States in their task, to be adopted in the second half of 2025.

⁶ [REPORT on the implementation of Article 17 of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation | A9-0152/2022 | European Parliament](#) (point 34), Report - A9-0152/2022 Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – [Social Data in Fisheries \(STECF 23-17\)](#), Van Hoof, L, Goti, L, Tardy Martorell, M. and Guillen, J. editor(s), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, doi:10.2760/982497, JRC136326, How the EU fishing fleet can become low environmental impact, low carbon and socially just, LIFE & OUR Fish report (October 2021) [EU Holds Key To Just Transition to Low-Carbon, Low-Impact Fishing Industry – Report - Life Platform](#)

Annex: examples

1. Digital Transformation

in DG MARE emphasises simplification by constructing a unified IT ecosystem that aligns with the key policy areas outlined in the [European Ocean Pact](#): maritime knowledge, ocean governance, blue economy, and fisheries. Through cloud technology, mobile apps, and data analytics, DG MARE is streamlining fisheries management to create a more holistic and simplified approach that benefits both the environment and the fishing industry. Central to these efforts is the *Ocean Store*, a landmark project that simplifies data management by creating a comprehensive data lake using cloud-native technologies for all fisheries-related systems.

In this digital context, we are in the process of developing several tools in different policy areas, as mentioned earlier: the IT system for small scale coastal fisheries (SSCF), which is a tracking and reporting system for small scale fisheries (SSF) according to the revised fisheries control regulation; the system for recreational fisheries (RecFishing), which will provide a harmonised data-collection tool to enhance transparency and improve data quality - the system is designed to serve up to 11 million recreational fishers and assist national authorities by reducing costs and administrative burden. Finally, the CATCH tool and the Data Collection Framework IT Platform and RDBFIS which already allows Member States to submit their national work plans and annual reports to MARE as part of recurrent legal obligations.

2. Implementation dialogue MSP Directive

The dialogue aimed to assess what is working well, identify areas of improvement, and how the MSP Directive can be made more fit for purpose in today's evolving maritime context.

Across sectors, there is broad support for the MSP Directive as a strategic tool offering structure, flexibility, and coherence to maritime development. However, many called for targeted improvements to enhance its implementation and simplify processes, particularly in light of evolving environmental, socio-economic, and technological challenges. Stakeholders highlighted the need to better operationalise ecosystem-based planning, ensure stronger environmental safeguards, and align MSP more clearly with climate, biodiversity, energy, food security, and other Green Deal policies. In particular, overlaps between the MSP Directive and the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#) (Directive 2008/56/EC) in reporting and planning requirements could be streamlined. Participants recalled the importance of meaningful and early stakeholder engagement – particularly for fisheries, small-scale fisheries actors, and local communities. The MSP process should help reduce administrative burdens, licensing delays, and increase coherence between policies, especially on marine conservation and for emerging sectors like marine renewables and aquaculture. Stakeholders also called for a harmonised definition of the ecosystem-based approach and greater clarity on terms such as multi-use. Cross-border and cross-sector coordination must be strengthened, including better data sharing and regionally harmonised approaches. Calls were made to improve cumulative impact assessments, enhance legal protection of sensitive areas, and support co-use of space where feasible. There was strong consensus on the importance of refining MSP governance and addressing administrative capacity constraints. The directive's sea-based approach was widely valued, but needs clearer links with land use, cultural heritage, and defence-related activities. Stakeholders called for a greater flexibility to accommodate regional and local specificities. **Digital tools** and data infrastructure were also highlighted as areas with significant potential. There was strong support for further investment in and expansion of data-sharing platforms such as [EMODnet](#). Enhanced digitalisation and harmonised data standards were seen as a way to promote more transparent, collaborative, and evidence-based planning, while also improving monitoring, reporting, and regional cooperation.

I acknowledged stakeholders' contributions and emphasised their importance for the forthcoming Ocean Act — the central element of the broader Ocean Pact.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring, Evaluation and Local Support Network (FAMENET): supports stakeholders in the implementation of the EMFF and EMFAF. FAMENET has emerged in this programming period

(2021–2027), aiming to assist DG MARE and the Member States with the challenges and opportunities of the EMFAF. It combines responsibilities and expertise used by two supporting service providers (FAME and FARNET) over the previous programming period (2014–2020). The overall aim of FAMENET is to assist and support with monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the EMFF/EMFAF, support Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) in fisheries and aquaculture areas and support the Commission on communication and visibility of the EMFAF including the activities carried out with Member States.

During the reporting period, FAMENET has implemented a broad range of activities. Among the key outputs was the publication of the EMFAF 2024 implementation report, along with the development of three working papers focusing respectively on EMFAF impact evaluation, a review of previous EMFF and EMFAF evaluations, and the application of Simplified Cost Options across the EU. FAMENET also conducted the 2025 needs assessment for all Member States, ensuring that national contexts and priorities are effectively addressed.

In support of knowledge exchange and capacity building, two online channels were launched—one dedicated to knowledge and innovation, and the other to EMFAF reporting. These were complemented by ten in-person capacity-building workshops delivered across the EU. FAMENET also organised the annual CLLD seminar, which this year took place in Rhodes, Greece, and facilitated eight informal “coffee” meetings to encourage cooperation among fisheries Local Action Groups. Approximately 20 good practices, success stories, and videos were also published to highlight successful initiatives and share lessons learned.

In addition to these core activities, 13 ancillary tasks were under implementation, covering a wide variety of topics ranging from marine litter and fishing fleet capacity analysis to CLLD factsheets, thereby contributing further to the overarching goals of the EMFAF.