



PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT  
FOR EUROPEAN FUNDS AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

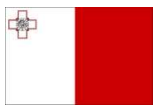
# Annex

## Annual Implementation Report

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014-2020

**15<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

Funds and Programmes Division, MEAE, Malta



Maritime and Fisheries Operational Programme 2014-2020  
Part-financed by the European Union  
European Maritime Fisheries Fund [EMFF]  
Co-financing rate: 75% EU Funds; 25% National Funds



***Investing in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture***

# Citizen's Summary

## 1 Introduction

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund OP [EMFF OP] for the 2014-2020 programming period, formally adopted on 3rd March 2015 and as amended in October 2017 (version 3.2) and December 2018 (version 4.1) is based on the following Union Priorities [UPs] and Specific Objectives:

### **UP1: Promoting environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fisheries**

- **Specific Objective 1** - Reduction of the impact of fisheries on the marine environment, including the avoidance and reduction, as far as possible, of unwanted catches [public eligible allocation €200,000];
- **Specific Objective 4** - Enhancement of the competitiveness and viability of fisheries enterprises, including of small-scale coastal fleet, and the improvement of safety and working conditions [public eligible allocation €10,730,572];
- **Specific Objective 5** - Provision of support to strengthen technological development and innovation, including increasing energy efficiency, and knowledge transfer [public eligible allocation €146,666];
- **Specific Objective 6** - Development of professional training, new professional skills and lifelong learning [public eligible allocation €500,000].

### **UP 2: Fostering environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, and competitive and knowledge-based aquaculture**

- **Specific Objective 1** – Provision of support to strengthen technological development, innovation and knowledge transfer [public eligible allocation €571,196.45]
- **Specific Objective 2** – Enhancement of the competitiveness and viability of aquaculture enterprises, including improvement of safety or working conditions, in particular of SMEs [public eligible allocation €200,000]
- **Specific Objective 3** - Protection and restoration of aquatic biodiversity and the enhancement of ecosystems related to aquaculture and the promotion of resource-efficient aquaculture [public eligible allocation €2,535,625.54]

### **UP3: Fostering the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy**

- **Specific Objective 1** - Improvement and supply of scientific knowledge as well as the improvement of the collection and management of data [public eligible allocation €4,426,910];
- **Specific Objective 2** - Provision of support to monitoring, control and enforcement, thereby enhancing institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration, without increasing the administrative burden [public eligible allocation €5,789,025.56].

**UP5: Fostering marketing and processing**

- **Specific Objective 1** - Improvement of market organisation for fishery and aquaculture products [public eligible allocation €469,771].

**UP6: Fostering the implementation of the IMP.**

- **Specific Objective 1** – Development and implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy [public eligible allocation €1,600,000].

**UP7: Technical Assistance** [public eligible allocation €1,733,940].**2 Overview of the Implementation of the EMFF Operational Programme in 2018**

In 2018, the implementation of the EMFF OP mainly centered on the achievement of N+3 targets and Performance Framework (PF) output and financial indicators to be met by end 2018. Efforts were concentrated on the constant monitoring of operations awarded in 2016 and 2017 (9 operations were already under implementation out of the 13 planned operations to be met by end 2018). In this regard, direct and regular contact with these beneficiaries was maintained. Issues in need of address were highlighted and discussed amongst the necessary stakeholders in order to speed up implementation. By end 2017, all calls targeting the achievement of the PF were already issued and were almost all awarded. Thus, calls issued in 2018, were mostly in response to operations withdrawn by beneficiaries following award, lack of demand encountered for certain measures, and the maximisation of allocation of funds. Focus was thus mainly on the monitoring and facilitation of processes, issuance of calls under Union Priority (UP) 1 and UP 2 and the completion of evaluation of submitted project proposals (UP1, UP2 and UP3). In early 2018, six of the above mentioned operations were already in advanced stages of implementation and it was thus foreseen that PF indicators should be achieved and that no issues should be met for UP 5 and 6 as these operations were well underway.

In view of the Performance Framework, by end 2018 financial and output indicators milestones for 2018 were also deemed to be met for all adopted measures and Union Priorities taking into consideration payments made. Under UP1, ten operations were underway with €4,234,319.23 (public eligible) payments made in comparison to the set milestones [6 operations; €2Mill]. Three operations were under implementation for UP2 with €1,146,369 payments made [milestones: one operation; €500,000]. 11 operations were underway for UP3 with €3,461,156.94 payments. Under UP5, one operation was almost completed with €249,158.35 payments made. Under UP6, one operation was also in advanced stages with €1,020,600.00 payments made.

As in previous years, Technical Assistance (TA) during 2018 was used mainly to support the implementation of the EMFF OP. In 2018, a total of €299,503.16 worth of payment claims (total

public eligible excluding VAT) were processed by the MA relating to various operations. TA expenditure was mainly related to salaries, promotional activities and material, Monitoring Committee meeting logistical expenses and other IT related payment claims.

### 3. Calls launched during 2018 & Progress made towards Milestone Indicators

Ten EMFF calls were issued in 2018 to address the commitment of funds and the achievement of PF output and financial indicators considering also targets to be met by 2023. A total of six calls were launched under UP1; three calls under UP2 and one call under UP3. Calls were mainly issued between January till September, with the last call deadline closing in October 2018.

[i] Union Priority 1:

#### Calls Launched in 2018 & Evaluation of Project Applications:

A total of six calls were issued in 2018, four of which were directly targeted at local fishers.

The first two calls issued related to **Article 41.1: On board investments; energy efficiency audits and schemes and studies**, a call aimed at fishing vessel owners for investments in equipment or on board (total public eligible budget of €475,000) and **Article 30 of Reg. [EU] No. 508/2014: Diversification and new forms of income** (total public eligible budget of €525,000).

Adverts for the promotion of calls were published on the Government Gazette and on local Sunday printed newspapers. Information sessions were also held whereby guidance to fishers was provided. As per 2017 calls issued, with the aim of further assisting potential applicants, the application forms, annexes (where applicable) and Admissibility & Selection Criteria were also issued in Maltese. Relevant documentation for all calls including Fact Files bearing Frequently Asked Questions were also uploaded on the MA's website.

Potential applicants were individually notified of the calls via SMS notification. Throughout the open call period, MA officials were also readily available on a daily basis through the use of phone calls, email messaging and meetings held to assist prospective applicants with their queries.

These calls were further accompanied by assistance to applicants from the DFA and the Ministry of Gozo. With the aim of ensuring impartially, officials external to the MA were appointed to assist fishers in filling in applications and/or assisting fishers in their queries. Prior to the provision of this assistance, training was also provided by the MA to these officials with the aim of providing the necessary information and guidance. Unfortunately notwithstanding these efforts, only one application was submitted under each call which unfortunately resulted in both applications being considered as

inadmissible in line with the Admissibility Criteria adopted by the Monitoring Committee due to the several criteria not being met namely: a) untimely submission (Article 41.1) and b) incomplete application (Article 30).

In view of the low response rate and with the aim of addressing performance framework targets, these calls were re-issued on 28 June. One proposal was submitted under Article 41.1 which as at end 2018 was in advanced stages of evaluation.

Following the submission of required documentation by applicants between January and February 2018 for the fishermen calls issued in October 2017, Quarter 2 saw the completion of the evaluation process of the submitted applications. To this end, an admissibility check on all submitted (eight) applications under Article 41.1 was conducted out of which five resulted in being inadmissible in line with the Admissibility Criteria adopted by the MC and on the basis of eligibility requirements of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/531. The remaining three proposals were evaluated by the Project Selection Committee in light of the applicable selection criteria, following which clarifications were sought, proposals were ranked and awarded accordingly by mid-June. After acceptance of award, the implementation of these operations was in full force with the aim to reach the 2018 Performance Framework milestone indicators.

In February, two restricted calls were issued targeting the remaining funds to be allocated under **Article 43.1 (Fishing ports)**, with an allocated budget of €4,300,000. Following the withdrawal of the operation **EMFF 1.23.4** (Delimara Breakwater project) by Transport Malta in respect of reconsiderations at conceptual and design level. Thus, a restricted call was issued to the Ministry for Gozo as the competent authority through which a proposal for the *Upgrading of the Fisheries' Infrastructure of Gozo* was submitted. This proposal was complemented by a proposal submitted by Transport Malta for the *Upgrading of Mgarr Gozo and Marsaxlokk Malta Fishing Ports* in response to a second restricted call issued. These proposals were subsequently evaluated by the PSC and awarded in early October (**EMFF 1.23.5 & EMFF 1.23.6**). Throughout this process, preparatory activities relating to the readiness of these operations were undertaken by the beneficiaries in order to ensure effective implementation. In this regard, public procurement processes were already underway which thus led also to the processing of payments by end 2018.

#### Ongoing Operations & Progress made toward milestones

Progress towards achieving the output indicators under Union Priority 1 was positively registered in end 2018 with 10 operations achieved in comparison to the 6 operations set in Section 7 of Malta's EMFF Operational Programme version 4.1. In relation to financial indicators, by end 2018 circa €4,234,319.23 were paid to beneficiaries under this Union Priority which supersedes the financial indicator set in Malta's EMFF OP (€2,000,000). The above amounts to 211.71% achievement of financial indicator and 166.6% achievement for output indicators by end 2018. With reference to certified payments amounting to €3,649,391.43, this would amount to 182.5% achievement. The

table below lists the operations which contributed to the achievement of output and financial milestone indicators by end 2018:

<b>Adopted EMFF OP Measure</b>	<b>Operation Code &amp; Title</b>
Article 29 - Promotion of human capital	<b>EMFF 1.4.1 - Training for Fishers</b>
Article 39: Innovation linked to conservation	<b>EMFF 1.16.1 - A scientific study to improve trawl gear selectivity</b>
Article 41.1: Energy efficiency and mitigation of climate change	<b>EMFF 1.20.1 - Article 41.1 - On board Investments [Grande Madre - MLT000000620]</b>
	<b>EMFF 1.20.2 - Article 41.1 - On board Investments [Petmar - MLT00MFA0276]</b>
	<b>EMFF 1.20.3 - Article 41.1 - On board Investments [Madre Teresa - MLT00MFA0154]</b>
Article 43.1 – Fishing ports, landing sites.	<b>EMFF 1.23.1 - The Construction and Finishing of an Office on the Fish Landing Site in the Marsaxlokk Designated Port</b>
	<b>EMFF 1.23.2- The Refurbishment and Upgrading of Slipways in the port of Marsaxlokk</b>
	<b>EMFF 1.23.3 - The Construction of a Breakwater at Qrejten point in the port of Marsaxlokk</b>
	<b>EMFF 1.23.5 - Upgrading of the Fisheries' Infrastructure of Gozo</b>
	<b>EMFF 1.23.6 - Upgrading of Mgarr Gozo and Marsaxlokk Malta Fishing Ports</b>

[ii] Union Priority 2:

Launched Calls, Ongoing Operations & Progress made toward milestones

Taking into account 2016 and 2017 developments in relation to the redirection of the implementation of this union priority in Malta whereby due to unforeseen issues the originally targeted operation, i.e. the construction of a commercial scale Marine Hatchery could not be implemented at the time, the last quarter of 2017 and year 2018 saw a more concentrated effort on the achievement of the decommitment and performance framework targets. Although the investment in a commercial scale Marine Hatchery is still considered to be a priority for Malta in line with the Aquaculture Strategy for the Maltese Islands, in order to reach the said targets, alternative proposals also addressing the objectives of this union priority were sought and thus as outlined in the Annual Implementation Report for year 2017, following the adoption of version 3.2 of the EMFF OP whereby Article 48.1.(a-d, f-h) was introduced in early October 2017, two open calls on *Productive investment in aquaculture* were

issued to the public under Article 48.1 (a-d, f-h) and (e, i,j) of the EMFF Regulation on 24th November 2017.

By call closure deadline (12th January 2018), two project proposals were submitted by two enterprises, one for each measure respectively. Following receipt of these applications and similarly to all applications received, a completeness check was undertaken in the first quarter of 2018 whereby applicants were requested to submit any pending required documentation. This was then followed by the evaluation of both applications by the Project Selection Committee wherein a clarification period also ensued leading to the conclusion of the evaluation and the award of these operations by the second quarter of 2018. Meetings and regular monitoring were held with beneficiaries and contact persons of the selected operations (**EMFF 2.2.1** and **EMFF 2.3.1**) in order to ensure the effective implementation of the operations bearing in mind commitments and indicators to be met by end 2018. Throughout quarter 3 and quarter 4, these discussions also led to the signature of grant agreements for both operations mentioned above.

Due to the fact that further funds than those awarded were still to be committed under this Union Priority another open call targeting the same measures mentioned above was issued on 13th July 2018 with a call deadline till the 31st August 2018. An information session was also held for prospective applicants on 26th July 2018. As with other calls open to the public, the call was promoted in the Government Gazette and on all Sunday newspapers with the aim of ensuring wide coverage. Information on the call and the relevant documentation including the application in e-form was uploaded on the MA's webpage for ease of access by beneficiaries. The information session held aimed to provide applicants with information and guidance on the call for proposals, procedures to be followed and requirements to be met. One application was received by the call deadline which was subsequently evaluated by the Project Selection Committee and awarded by October 2018 (**EMFF 2.2.2**). Similarly to all operations, in order to facilitate and ensure effective implementation, meetings and contact were held with the beneficiary organisation in this regard.

In view of EMFF OP amendments whereby **Article 47** of the EMFF Regulation - *Innovation*, was adopted by the MC in May 2018, a restricted call was subsequently issued in mid-May 2018 for DFA as the competent authority. Unfortunately the submitted proposal was not found admissible by the Project Selection Committee taking into consideration the Admissibility Criteria adopted by the Monitoring Committee in April 2018 which basis is also reflected in Article 46 of the EMFF Regulation. For this reason, the proposal entitled the *Extensive refurbishment of the aquaculture directorate, at Fort San Lucjan, Marsaxlokk* was rejected. In September 2018, another restricted call was issued through which another proposal was submitted by the DFA in October whose evaluation was ongoing by end 2018.

By end 2018, circa €1,146,369 were paid under UP2 in total through operation **EMFF 2.2.2 – Increasing Productivity, Efficiency and Sustainability of Blue-fin Tuna Fish Farming Operations**, operation **EMFF 2.3.1 -Productive investment in non-food aquaculture using**

*Recirculation Aquaculture Systems [RAS] in AquaBioTech Group to improve resource efficiency, reducing usage of water and chemicals as well as to ensure the safe operation of existing and new RAS units and operation* **EMFF 2.2.1: Productive aquaculture investments at Pisciculture Marine de Malte Ltd.**

Taking into consideration the performance framework, by end 2018 output and financial indicators were met with payments effected under all three awarded and under implementation operations as mentioned above.

Unfortunately, between February and March 2019, news articles were published mainly in Spanish and Maltese media alleging the sale of illegal tuna to Spain whereby originally the illegal operations of a Spanish-owned company in Malta were brought to light.

In this regard, further to the checks already undertaken in 2018 with the competent authority prior to award, in relation to the admissibility of the applications for EMFF funding whereby it resulted that serious infringements as outlined in Article 10 of the EMFF Regulations were not recorded, discussions were held between February and April 2019 between the Managing Authority and relevant authorities including the appointed Acting Director General to determine the extent of the problem and whether serious infringements were officially determined under EMFF. As at time of reporting, controls are still ongoing and thus no further action can be undertaken by the Managing Authority in the absence of determined serious infringements by the competent body.

Notwithstanding the above, the Managing Authority is in close contact with the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture in this regard and in order to safeguard the Union's financial interests shall be withholding the certification and the claim for payment of some of the above mentioned expenditure under Union Priority 2 prior to an official decision being taken, determining serious infringement, if any.

*[iii]* Union Priority 3:

*Calls Launched in 2018 & Evaluation of Project Applications:*

Following the closure of the first and second restricted call for proposals under Article 76, Control and Enforcement and the submission of proposals from the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture as the competent authority towards end 2017, a request to amend the said proposals was made in January 2018. In this regard, these proposals were subsequently revised and resubmitted by mid-March 2018 after which these were evaluated between quarter 2 and quarter 3 of 2018 by the Project Selection Committee. Clarifications were also sought and addressed throughout this period. As mentioned in the Annual Implementation Report for year 2017, the calls issued targeted all the eleven (11) operations adopted in the EMFF OP as per Section 12.4. To this effect by mid-September 2018,



through the award of these proposals, nine operations were foreseen to be implemented out of which four operations were under implementation by end 2018.

With the aim of allocating all Control and Enforcement related funds and addressing all the planned operations listed in Section 12.4 of the OP, a restricted call was issued under this measure in end September 2018 with an allocated budget of €2,630,000, whereby a proposal was submitted by the DFA as the competent authority towards end 2018. In this respect, the evaluation of this proposal is expected to be undertaken in 2019.

Ongoing Operations & Progress made toward milestones:

Throughout 2018, contact was maintained and discussions held with the beneficiary organisation and related stakeholders where applicable, in order to ensure the effective implementation of these operations and the achievement of the set milestone indicators and decommitment targets. Regular monitoring and meetings held including bilateral meetings aimed to discuss any pending and/or important issues for follow-up including the state-of-play of implementation and payment processes. During 2018, the implementation of operations awarded in 2016 and 2017 under *Article 77 Data Collection* of Regulation [EU] No 508/2014 was in full force with operation **EMFF 6.2.1- Data Collection Framework Multiannual Programme 2014-2016** being in a very advanced stage of implementation and with **EMFF 6.2.2 - Data Collection Multi-annual Programme 2017 – 2019** being under implementation by end 2018. In this respect, circa €2,193,544.80 (public eligible) worth of payments were processed by 31st December 2018.

With reference to the awarded operations under *Article 76 Control and Enforcement* circa €1,267,612.14 were paid and processed by end 2018 through the following operations:

- **EMFF 6.1.2 a** - *The purchase, installation and development of technology;*
- **EMFF 6.1.2 b** - *The development, purchase and installation of the components to ensure data transmission;*
- **EMFF 6.1.1 c** - *The development, purchase and installation of the components necessary to ensure the traceability of fishery and aquaculture products; and*
- **EMFF 6.1.1 e** - *The modernisation and purchasing of patrol vessels, aircrafts and helicopters.*

The operations being implemented under Control and Enforcement through EMFF funding aim to address the specific objective linked to these measures, namely “the provision of support to monitoring, control and enforcement, thereby enhancing institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration, without increasing the administrative burden”. Consequently, in line with the planned types of operations listed in Section 12.4 of the OP, amongst others, some of the activities being implemented through the awarded operations relate to the:

- Purchase of hand pallet trucks to assist with fish weighing at the Fish Market
- Development of a Sales Notes System

- Purchase of two Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats [RHIBs] to assist DFA employees during control missions
- Purchase and installation of CCTV cameras, automated weighing and labelling stations, Replacement of VMS units on circa 149 vessels and installation of GPRS trackers on vessels smaller than 10 metres
- Training for DFA officials responsible for the monitoring, control and surveillance of fisheries activities
- Production of TV and radio adverts in order to raise public awareness of the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy [CFP] and the importance to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Purchase of a Stereoscopic Camera, Ancillary Equipment and IT Hardware to enable DFA to fulfil its EU Obligations with regards to ICCAT regulation 14-04, improving DFA's service to the Bluefin Tuna farming industry and increasing efficiency in the data recording and processing of BFT caging operations
- Purchase of five Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

With regards to the increased rate of implementation of Union Priority 3 and the increase in payment claims in 2018, particularly in relation to the implementation of Article 77- Data Collection, management verifications also increased drastically in 2018 in comparison to the previous years. Financial corrections and recommendations were made accordingly where applicable, which recoveries were also deducted from the certified payment claims made to the European Commission.

Milestone output and financial indicators under this Union Priority were achieved by end 2018. By December 2018, eleven operations in total were registered out of the four operations planned in view of Section 7.1 of the EMFF OP. Thus progress in the attainment of output indicators can be stated as being achieved by 275%. Progress towards achieving the financial indicators can also be considered as substantial under this priority with circa €3,461,156.94 worth of public eligible payments made by end 2018. This amounts to circa 115.37% taking into account the €3,000,000 milestone financial indicator value set in the EMFF Operational Programme. Taking into account certified payments (€3,081,901), this amounts to 102.7%.

[iv] Union Priority 5:

*Ongoing Operations & Progress made toward milestones:*

Further to the open call issued under Article 68 of the EMFF Regulation: *Fostering marketing and processing* in end July 2017, the proposal submitted in mid-September was evaluated in 2017 and subsequently awarded in January 2018. Since this operation absorbed all the allocated funding under this Union Priority, no further calls were launched in 2018.

In this regard, €250,000 (public eligible) were awarded to operation **EMFF 4.3.1 'Nesploraw Flimkien it-Teżori tal-Baħar!' (Exploring Together the Treasures of the Sea!)**. Through this operation a promotional campaign was launched with the main objectives of [i] increasing awareness of the state of local fish stocks [ii] promoting sustainable fish consumption and [iii] increasing the importance of each citizen's role in assisting in conservation efforts. This campaign was launched by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture in partnership with the Department of Curriculum, Research, Innovation and Lifelong Learning and the National Literacy Agency, both falling within the remit of the Ministry for Education and Employment.

As at end 2018, this operation was fully implemented with **€249,158.35** (public eligible) worth of payments processed by end 2018. Taking into consideration certified payments (€ 203,006.64), 133% financial indicator achievement was registered. Both output (1 operation) and financial indicators (€150,000) set for this Union Priority were thus met by end 2018 in light of the Performance Framework.

[v] Union Priority 6:

*Ongoing Operations & Progress made toward milestones:*

Due to the fact that all funds allocated under Union Priority 6 of the MT EMFF OP were already committed in 2016 (€1,600,000 public eligible) under Article 80.1.c of the EMFF Regulation – *Improving the knowledge on the state of the marine environment*, no further calls were issued in 2017 and 2018.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, operation **EMFF 8.3.1 - Marine environmental monitoring: towards effective management of Malta's marine waters** contributed to the effective management and sustainable use of marine resources, through sustained environmental monitoring in marine waters with the aim to assess the state of Malta's marine waters on a continuous basis and address current knowledge gaps. Concrete data was used to develop better management practices to address these pressures.

A total of €700,600 (total public eligible excluding VAT) were processed and certified in 2018, which payment claims were also declared as expenditure to the European Commission by 14th December. In this respect, the total amount of public eligible funds certified by end 2018 amounted to €1,020,600 under this Union Priority which also mirrors the implementation status of the operation. Performance Framework output (1 operation) and financial milestone (€500,000) indicators were thus met by end 2018.

#### **4. Evaluation Activities**

In accordance with the Evaluation Plan adopted in March 2016, evaluation activities in terms of the Interim Evaluation for the EMFF OP in Malta were not implemented in 2018 since in order to effectively address the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the EMFF Operational Programme, the interim evaluation was planned to be conducted in the first quarter of 2019.

In 2018 however, the MA compiled its third EMFF annual implementation report, in accordance with Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 2 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1362/2014 of 18 December 2014.

The fourth meeting of the Monitoring Committee (MC) was also held on 4th May 2018 whereby an update on the implementation of the EMFF OP was provided to MC members and whereby proposed amendments to the OP were discussed in detail in light of the local context and also adopted by the MC. The changes implemented in the Operational Programme also led to changes in the Admissibility and Selection Criteria due to a new measure being programmed which amendments were adopted by the MC in April.

Evaluation and monitoring activities were carried out by the MA during 2018 to assess the progress of the EMFF OP in terms of taking stock of i) calls issued, ii) operations awarded, iii) project implementation status, iv) indicators to be achieved, and evaluating and implementing means of address in relation to challenges being faced. The EMFF Annual Review Meeting was held on 20th November 2018, whereby the state-of-implementation of the EMFF Programme, its progress and results achieved as at time of reporting were discussed between MA and EC representatives. Challenges faced by the MA in relation to the implementation of certain measures such as Article 30 were discussed and mitigating measures taken/to be taken were also highlighted.

During 2018, project progress reports for ongoing operations were also submitted and meetings and bilateral meetings were also held with the aim of providing the MA, stakeholders and beneficiaries with an assessment of the state-of-play of operations thus providing the basis for informed decision making.

Between May and mid-September 2018, MA efforts were focused on preparatory activities for the Interim Evaluation including the drafting and the issuance of the tender document and the terms of reference for the services for the Interim Evaluation of the EMFF Operational Programme 2014-2020 Implementation, which call was issued in mid-October and as at time of reporting has been awarded.

In this regard, early and mid-2019 shall see the implementation of Malta's EMFF OP Interim Evaluation. The EMFF MA shall lead the evaluation process and assume the responsibility for the coordination of the monitoring and evaluation process of the EMFF OP 2014-2020.

## 5. Information and Publicity

The MA online EMFF webpage<sup>1</sup> includes information ranging from regulations, publications, reports, EMFF supporting documentation, list of selected operations<sup>2</sup> as laid down in Article 119 of Regulation [EU] No.508/2014 and other, miscellaneous documents pertaining to EMFF upcoming calls. The MA website was constantly updated in 2017 to ensure that the latest information is given to all stakeholders involved including potential applicants. Documentation and information on all open calls for proposals was uploaded on the MA website to ensure ease of access for all.

Information sessions and/or meetings were held accordingly as described in previous sections of this report. Open calls were promoted in the Government Gazette and on all Sunday newspapers, where applicable with the aim of ensuring wide coverage. Advertising costs incurred for the publishing of various adverts in order to promote the calls being launched during 2018 were covered by Technical Assistance.

Promotional material was disseminated during the Monitoring Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May and also during the annual publicity event whereby the MA participated in Europe Day activities held both in Malta (9<sup>th</sup> May) and Gozo (6<sup>th</sup> May). During the Europe Day celebrations held at Freedom Square in Valletta and Villa Rundle in Victoria, Gozo, a number of stands were put up, including one hosted by the Funds and Programmes Division. Apart from the distribution of EMFF promotional material, information and promotion of the EMFF 2014-2020 was also provided to the general public and queries raised in relation to funding addressed. The event was organised by Europe Direct Information Centre – Valletta, which is hosted by MEUSAC and supported by the European Commission.

EMFF open calls and success stories were also promoted on the Funds and Programmes Division's responsive website on <http://www.eufundsmalta.gov.mt/> which can be accessed also through Maltapps, a mobile application enabling the public to access information on government services, including EMFF funding, on mobile devices anywhere 24 hours a day.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/Agricultural%20Fisheries%20Fund/Pages/EMFF-2014-2020.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/Agricultural%20Fisheries%20Fund/Documents/EMFF%20links%20and%20downloads/Information%20and%20Publicity/List%20of%20Operations%2010.01.2018.pdf>