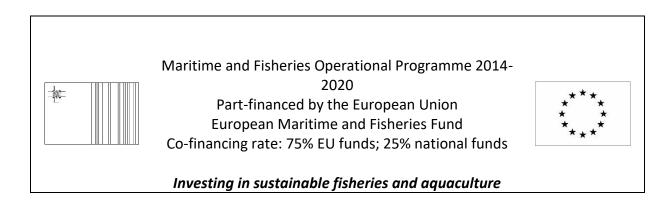




ANNEX – CITIZEN'S SUMMARY ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2022 EUROPEAN MARITIME AND FISHERIES FUND (EMFF) 2014-2020

31st May 2023 Funds and Programmes Division Ministry for Economy, European Funds and Lands Malta



1. Introduction

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme (EMFF OP) for the 2014-2020 programming period, formally adopted on 3rd March 2015 and as amended in October 2017 (version 3.2), December 2018 (version 4.1) and November 2019 (version 5.0), February 2022(version 7.2) 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 eligible¹ allocation: €200,000 EMFF share 75%);
- Specific Objective 4 Enhancement of the competitiveness and viability of fisheries and enterprises, including of small-scale coastal fleet, and the improvement of safety and working conditions (public eligible allocation: €12,633,674.67 of which €225,000.00 EMFF share 75%, €793,028.00 EMFF share 50% and €11,615,646.67 EMFF share 75%);
- Specific Objective 5 Provision of support to strengthen technological development and innovation, including increasing energy efficiency, and knowledge transfer (public eligible allocation: €146,667 of which €106,667 EMFF share 75% and €40,000 EMFF share 50%);
- Specific Objective 6 Development of professional training, new professional skills and lifelong learning (public eligible allocation: €500,000 EMFF share 75%).

UP2: 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 EMFF share 75%);
- Specific Objective 2 Enhancement of the competitiveness and viability of aquaculture enterprises, including improvement of safety or working conditions, in particular of SME's (public eligible allocation: €200,000 EMFF share 75%);
- 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: €711,509.33EMFF share 75%).

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 EMFF share 80%);
- Specific Objective 2 Provision of support to monitoring, control and enforcement, thereby enhancing institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration,

¹ The term public eligible refers to the total amount of Funds made up of the EU share added to the National share in the proportions established in the Regulation.

without increasing the administrative burden (public eligible allocation: €5,814,088 EMFF share 90%).

UP5: Fostering marketing and processing

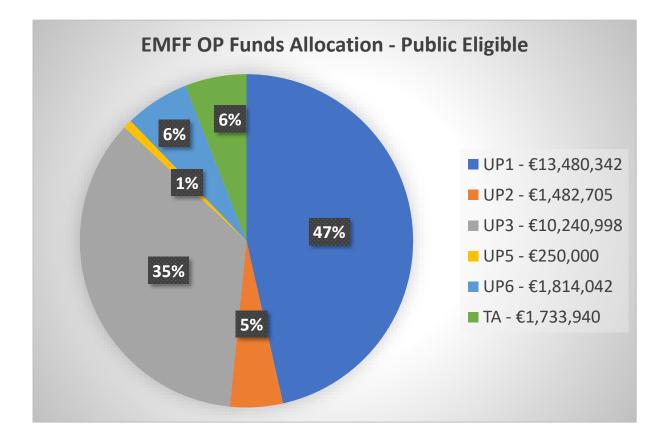
• Specific Objective 1 – Improvement of market organisation for fishery and aquaculture products (public eligible allocation: €250,000 EMFF share 75%).

UP6: Fostering the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy

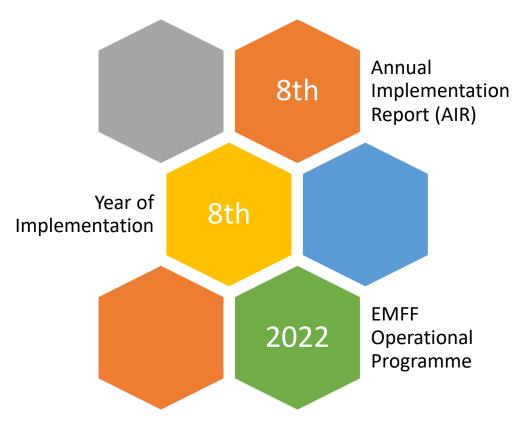
• Specific Objective 1 – Development and implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy (public eligible allocation: €1,814,042 EMFF share 75%).

Technical Assistance (TA)

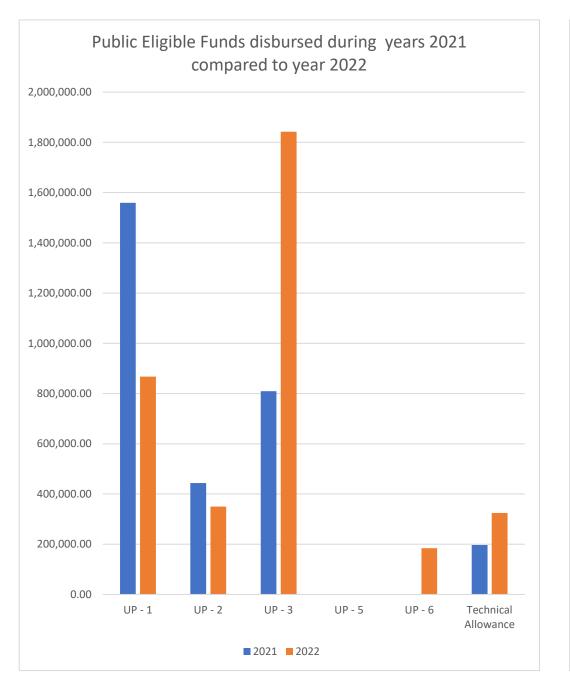
• Public eligible allocation: €1,733,940 EMFF share 75%.

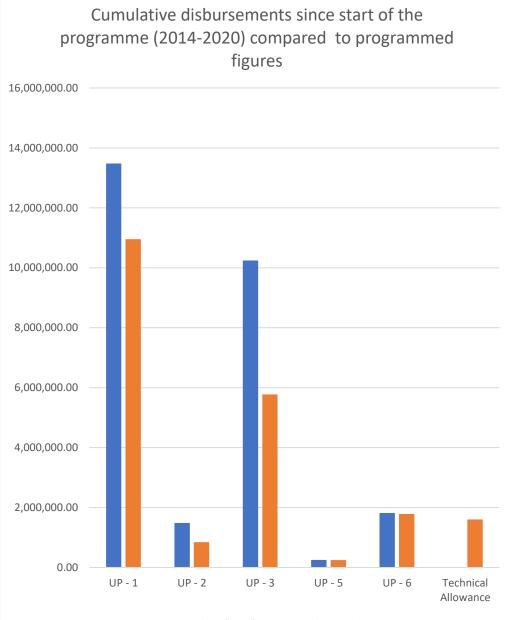


2. Overview of the Implementation of the EMFF Operational Programme 2014-2020



The Managing Authority (MA) is hereby presenting:





Target value (2023) Cumulative value

Snapshot on Progress and disbursement on operations from year 2014 to 2022

- Under UP1, out of twelve operations, 11 operations were completed, whilst one operation was under implementation by end 2022. The total public eligible amount paid by the end of the year stood at €13,511,983.38, marking a 30.15% increase from the previous year (2021).
- Under UP2, one operation, out of three was completed. The total public eligible amount paid by end 2022 stood at €844,353.83, marking a 67% increase from the previous year (2021).
- By the end of year 2022, the total public eligible amount paid under UP3 was €7,004,117.76, with various operations still under implementation marking an 27.79% increase from the previous year (2021).
- The only operation which falls under UP5 was completed in 2018 with a total public eligible amount of €249,957.71 in payments.
- By end 2022, the total public eligible amount paid under UP6 stood at €1,784,477, with one operation being completed, marking 6.8%% increase from the previous year (2021).
- With regards to Technical Assistance, the total of €1,622,095.31 worth of payments was processed by end 2022, marking 22.62% increase from the previous year (2021).

3. Progress made towards Milestone Indicators in 2022

(i) Union Priority 1:

Ongoing operations:

EMFF 1.23.6: Upgrading of Mgarr Gozo and Marsaxlokk Malta fishing ports

The second part of an original project component tackling the procurement and commissioning of pontoons at Marsaxlokk designated port was completed in 2022 leading to increased berthing space for the local fishing community. This investment is ensuring that larger fishing vessels can now make safe use of the sister island's main harbour and its facilities. Third-party project management constituted the third original component.

Meanwhile, infrastructural works on an additional component to the project covering the refurbishment and upgrading of the Marfa breakwater and quay continued even during the summer months of 2022 in liaison with the Malta Tourism Authority, whilst minimising works that generated noise in order not to hinder business in the area. The aim of this decision was

to catch up with a significant set-back experienced by the pertinent contractor during the preceding winter due to exceptionally inclement weather that not only halted operations on the ground but also ruined some of the finished works. Concreting and piling have been accomplished. Interventions on the deck and the breakwater had reached an advanced stage by end of reporting year.

Furthermore, two new components were added to the operation in quarter 3 of 2022. Firstly, co-financed works on groynes and quays at Tal-Magħluq area in Marsaxlokk aim at alleviating the negative effects of strong south-easterly currents within the Bay and reorganise berthing space to satisfy fishers' demand. Secondly, the reconstruction and upgrading of the Marsascala north quay and breakwater addresses severe deterioration caused by storms over the years. Areas of the upper structure were collapsing, there was extensive scouring beneath the quay's deck and the underwater structure was breached through with a crevasse. Construction intervention involves both pre-cast concreting and casted on site.





Photo no.1: Demolition works at the Marsascala north quay and breakwater Photo no.2: Works at Tal-Magħluq, Marsaxlokk

Completed Operations

EMFF 1.23.3: Construction of a breakwater at Qrejten point in the port of Marsaxlokk

During July 2022 an addendum to the Grant Agreement was compiled to include the final project costs. This investment is serving its intended purpose of facilitating navigation in Marsaxlokk Bay whilst also providing more sheltered berthing space where fishers can use amenities for vessel maintenance.



Photo no.1: Outer part of the new breakwater featuring upper coralline limestone quarried from the Rabat-Dingli uplands. Photo no.2: Inner part of the structure amounting to almost 6000 tonnes of concrete and equipped with amenities as well as navigational apparel.

EMFF 1.9.1: Temporary cessation of fishing activities

This operation was divided into three schemes and was completed in 2022. In the first year, a total of 26 applicants benefitted, in the second year, a total of 28 applicants benefitted, whilst in the third and final call a total of 25 applicants benefitted from the scheme. In total, the amount disbursed equalled to \notin 313,443.99. The financial assistance was aimed at owners of fishing vessels which operated in the Swordfish fishery. The operation's main scope was to improve the recovery of the Swordfish stock by extending the closed season by one month (i.e. from the 1st December – 31st December), whilst relieving pressure on the marine environment, including other fish populations. This was done as an additional conservation measure, over and above the obligatory closure period referred to in Article 10(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1154 on a multi-annual recovery plan for Mediterranean swordfish. Thanks to this cessation scheme, fish stock was given the amount of time required to recover and regenerate. The project goes in line with Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050 as it aims to reverse the trend in biodiversity loss.

(ii) Union Priority 2:

Ongoing operations:

EMFF 2.1.1: *Development of new, innovative aquaculture technologies and facilitate knowledge transfer in AquaBioTech Group.* Beneficiary: *AquaBioTech Group.*

This project had reached an advanced completion stage by end of year 2022, however the final implementation date is that of June 2023.

This project primarily involves the construction of an aquaculture research centre upon the existing premises of a private aquaculture firm based in Mosta. The intention is to provide a highly technical space where future aquaculture specialists can be trained in collaboration with other local and foreign institutions. Building activity inclusive of finishings and a roof-top car park had reached an advanced completion stage by end of reporting year. The facility now retains an independent electrical capacity for approximately three days via the installations of powerful generators.



Aquaculture Innovation Centre hallway at AquaBioTech Ltd.

EMFF 2.3.1: *Productive Investments in non-food aquaculture using RAS in AquaBioTech Group.* Beneficiary: *AquaBioTech Group.*

By end of year 2022, all of the equipment which forms part of this project was purchased and delivered on site and staff costs were reimbursed. Union co-financing here revolved around the purchasing of specialised laboratory equipment and installations linked to the development and usage of Recirculation Aquaculture Systems [RAS] mostly within a redesigned underground floor at AquaBioTech Ltd.'s facility in Mosta. Further necessary

items listed in the Grant Agreement such as cabling and plastic works as well as lighting and laboratory furniture were available on site by quarter 4 of 2022.





Photo no.1: Lighting equipment. Photo no.2: Main electrical panel.

(iii) Union Priority 3

Ongoing operations:

EMFF 6.1.1 (e) – *The modernization and purchasing of patrol vessels, aircrafts and helicopters.* This operation was extended until September 2023. In year 2022, a request to purchase two coastal RHIBs was accepted by the MA. This means that the total of 4 RHIBs will be procured, two coastal and two offshore ones.

Through this project, the DFA will be better equipped to carry out effective controls and patrols. The larger part of the fishing activity occurs outside the 12 nautical mile zone. In order to mitigate such shortfall, the DFA procured two offshore RHIBS in order to strengthen its infrastructural capacity to carry out offshore controls. In year 2022, the MA approved the Beneficiary's request to purchase two additional RHIBS, this time coastal RHIBs, which will enable the DFA to increase its monitoring and surveillance capabilities in coastal areas and designated ports, ensuring that fishing regulations are being adhered to. Overall, this project aims at carrying out fisheries control operations to deter and prevent illegal, unreported and

unregulated fishing, thus ensuring that EU and National goals for responsible and sustainable fishing are being met.

EMFF 6.1.2 (a): *The purchase, installation, and development of technology.* Although some items of this operation have been completed others are still under implementation. Completed components included stereo-scopic cameras as well as the replacement of electronic logbooks. The CCTVs in the AWLS site together with publicity banners are near completion.

Through this operation, new CCTV cameras were installed at the sites where the automated weighing scales have been installed. The main aim is to monitor the use of the weighing scales which are installed in bay side locations that might not be well frequented especially during the night.

As part of this operation, another investment was the procurement of new stereoscopic cameras that will enhance DFA's operations during the ever-increasing BFT transfers in underwater cages. Due to increased quotas, such activities are also increasing. DFA is bound by ICCAT Regulation 14-04 to record 100% of such activities. Such equipment will ensure that DFA will reach these targets when unforeseen damages occur to the equipment currently in its possession.

In addition to the above, through this operation the DFA will replace the e-logbooks installed on fishing vessels over 12 metres. The new equipment replaced another procured over 12 years ago.

EMFF 6.1.2 (b): The development, purchase and installation of the components to ensure data transmission. While some components have been fully implemented in 2022 such as the VMS hardware, this operation is still ongoing with further GPRS Publicity banners and GPRS and VMS transmissions remain to be completed.

Through this operation, DFA installed VMS hardware on vessels whose size is 10 meters and larger. This equipment replaced other in place on vessels larger than 12 meters which has been installed more than 5 years ago and was continually exposed to a wet salty environment, often resulting in technical faults and consequential interruption in satellite transmission to DFA's Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC). Malta is bound by EU Legislation that vessels over 12 metres leaving port must have on board a fully operational VMS System and satellite transmission, which transmission must not be interrupted at any time. Through this project, DFA could fulfil its obligations and give an overall better service to the fishing community. Additional to the VMS standard Units, 5 vessels were equipped with INMARSAT VMS devices since these vessels venture out for fishing trips to the Balearic Sea.

Another investment under this operation is the tracking system for all vessels between 6 and 10 meters in length, currently registered on the Fishing Vessel Register operating within the 25 Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Further to the above, through this operation the DFA also installed e-logbooks on vessels ranging between 10-11.99m. This investment enabled the DFA to have overall monitoring of the fleet.

EMFF 6.1.2 (f): *The purchase of other control means.* This operation is still under implementation, with some tenders being evaluated and awarded by end of year 2022. This operation is expected to be completed by end of June 2023.

This project includes various activities. One activity relates to the procurement of five unmanned aerial vehicles which will further assist the DFA in its monitoring and surveillance of fishing activities and which complement the DFA's operations to detect illegal fishing activities as well as oil slicks from fish farms, and thus be able to take immediate action. Another activity revolves around the procurement of four electric cars. Such investment shall lead to better monitoring and control of the local fishing fleet, as the availability of such vehicles will enable fisheries protection officers to get to landing sites around Malta and Gozo with greater ease. This operation is under implementation and is expected to be completed by end June 2023.

EMFF 6.1.2 (j): *Seminars and media tools.* This media campaign for this operation included radio and TV adverts broadcasted throughout the project lifecycle. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some seminars had to be rescheduled to years 2022 as well as 2023. This operation was completed by March 2023 following the last advert within quarter 1 of same year.

TV and radio adverts pertaining to this campaign were broadcasted between 2020 and 2023. Following the completion of the final adverts in quarter 1, this operation was completed in March 2023. The media campaign involved three activities. One included an awareness campaign aimed at raising awareness amongst the public towards the main policy areas of the CFP, as well as of the need to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Messages were conveyed through short video clips on local TV stations and audio clips on local Radio stations. Another activity was aimed at raising awareness on investments made by the DFA through EMFF co-financing and involved five adverts aired on the three most popular local TV stations. The third and final activity involved a series of seminars with the objective of bringing together all the designated responsible entities involved in ensuring compliance with the rules of the CFP.



Photo: Introduction to one of the seminars.

EMFF 6.1.2 (k): *Operational Costs.* This operation is still ongoing and is expected to be completed by June 2023.

The DFA has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) to conduct control and inspection activities on behalf of the DFA. Such component in the operation thus entails the financing of expenses incurred and to be incurred by the DFA. This activity is expected to be completed by June 2023. The other component involves duty at sea for Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs). JDPs are sea, land and air surveillance missions which are conducted between different Member States in order to be as unbiased as possible and also to offer a shared experience to the participating officers. In 2022, the DFA requested the MA's approval to extend the operation and allocate further funds. Such request was approved, and the activity was completed by March 2023.

EMFF 6.2.3: *Data Collection Multi-annual Programme 2021-2021.* This operation is currently under implementation and disbursement is well underway.

This operation includes the collection, use and management of fisheries data in line with Council Regulation (EC) No 2017/1004, Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/909 and Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/910 and as outlined in the Work Plan for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors 2020-2021.

Completed Operations:

Operations EMFF 6.1.1(c) – The development, purchase and installation of the components necessary to ensure the traceability of fishery and aquaculture products

This operation is fully completed with all payments processed by the Beneficiary and verifications concluded by the MA.

Such project involved a number of activities. One activity was related to the procurement of five hand pallet trucks which shall be assisting the DFA officials by facilitating the weighing process at the fish market. These mobile hand pallet trucks have an integrated weighing scale and are linked to a printer that generates the required labelling notes as per established European Union regulations. The hand palletizers will assist fishers in fulfilling the current legislation with regards to labelling of their catch before putting it on the market. Another activity was related to the procurement of a sales notes system. The development of a web based system enables the DFA to maintain electronically all sales notes by registered buyers and sellers of fish. This system shall enforce the control and accountability aspect of this project through a reliable, transparent and traceable system. The project also included additional expenditure for IT systems to ensure traceability of fishery and aquaculture products. The Fisheries Information Solution is an IT system with various modules that traces fishery products from when they reach the fish market and re-sold to hawkers or shops thereafter. Such FIS modules include vessel history and audit trails, cross-validation of data and the fish market sales notes module, amongst others. The FIS is hosted on the MITA server for an annual fee. All activities under this project were all aimed at ensuring that traceability requirements are met. Traceability ensures that the fishers will get a fair income from their catch whilst consumers have the peace of mind that the products being consumed are coming from sustainable and legal sources.

EMFF 6.1.2 (i): 2 Cost benefit analysis and 3 audits to assess the performance and expenditure incurred by the DFA to carry out monitoring, control, and surveillance. This operation has been completed in the first quarter of 2022.

The scope of these independent internal audits from external sources was to assist the DFA in examining the internal operations of its control systems and to ensure that these operations are being performed in strict compliance with the obligations emanating from COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1224/2009 and respective implementing rules Council Regulation (EU) 404/2011. In addition to these audits, an independent Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) was conducted to establish the expenditure being incurred by the DFA in carrying out the control obligations listed in the Regulation and to highlight any potential operational inefficiency in performing these obligations.

(v) Union Priority 6:

Completed operations:

EMFF 8.3.1: *Marine environmental monitoring: towards effective management of Malta's marine waters*. This project was completed in June 2022.

The data and information gathered through this project enabled the updating of the environmental status of the marine environment and addressed a number of knowledge gaps. This updated status assessment and knowledge improvement will better inform the management processes for the marine environment, which should be geared to ensure protection of marine biodiversity while enabling sustainable use of marine goods and services. The project enabled the development of long-term monitoring procedures to ensure sustained monitoring through time and the implementation of adaptive management processes. Effective management practises developed on the basis of data generated by the project are expected to lead to better quality of marine waters, ensure that use of marine resources is safe for human health and the quality of marine resources satisfies requirements of anthropogenic use.

The results of the data collection and analysis processes implemented were immediately used to update Malta's assessment of the environmental status of the marine environment pursuant to the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC (MSFD). This updated assessment was published in 2019 and reported to the EU Commission in March 2020.

The data collected was also used to elaborate Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) as part of the management of Marine Protected Areas and will enable the assessment of status for coastal water bodies as part of Malta's third River Basin Management Plan pursuant to the EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD).

Additionally, the updated monitoring programmes and the new monitoring strategies developed as part of the contracts funded through the operation are feeding into the updating of Malta's marine monitoring programme, which will be catering for the monitoring requirements of various policies including the EU MSFD, WFD and Habitats Directive.

In terms of publications, a scientific paper entitled 'Big Insights from a small country: the added value of integrated assessment in the Marine Environmental Status Evaluation of Malta' was published on the basis of the project results.

(vi) Technical Assistance:

During 2022, Technical Assistance (TA) funds were used mainly to support the implementation of the EMFF OP. In 2022 a total of €299,314.12 public eligible worth of payment claims were paid relating to various operations under this UP, namely in relation to the following:

EMFF 7.1.1: Implementation of the Operational Programme

EMFF 7.1.2: IT Systems

EMFF 7.1.3: Improving administrative capacity

EMFF 7.1.4: Communication Activities

EMFF 7.1.5: Evaluation

EMFF 7.1.6: Studies

EMFF 7.1.9: Other

TA expenditure was mainly related to salaries, promotional activities and material (for future distribution to fishers and stakeholders), logistical expenses of meeting organised by the MA throughout the year and other related payment claims.

Promotional items were disseminated during the MA's presence at Europe Day event in Valletta during May 2022 as well as during the first edition of the AgriFair held during the same month that was organised by the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights. Other TA expenditure included the financing of logistical expenses such as hiring of venues and equipment together with catering for the MC meeting and the ARM meeting in January 2023.

In accordance with its Communication Strategy for the 2014-2020 programming period, the Managing Authority embarks on an annual event to reach the general public and disseminate the opportunities provided by and achievements of the Fund. For year 2022, TA funds were utilised to advertise the EMFF through a detailed article showcasing success stories from the EMFF OP inside the *Bizzilla* onboard magazine published by AirMalta in September and October 2022.

4. Evaluation Activities

For year 2022 there were no activities. Unlike previous years, both the Annual Monitoring Committee as well as the Annual Review Meeting for the previous year where held in January 2023 covering progress carried out in year 2022.

5. Information and Publicity

In year 2022, the MA's online website was regularly updated throughout the year in order to meet the regulatory requirements, such as the list of selected operations as laid down in Article 119 of Regulation (EU) No. 508/2014. The MA ensured that the webpage included the

necessary information and documentation such as regulations, publications, reports, supporting documentation and other documents pertaining to upcoming calls as well as information on the EMFAF which was yet to be officially launched. In addition to this, the Managing Authority together with the respective communication unit ensured that all material relating to the EMFF as well as EMFAF on the newly launched page FONDI.eu was correct and updated.

Further to the above, the MA ensured that general publicity promoting the EMFF is kept constant as in previous years. For year 2022, TA funds were utilised to advertise in detail certain EMFF operations within the onboard magazine published by AirMalta and available on all its flights *II-Bizzilla*.



Photo above: The EMFF page on the new FONDI.eu website



Photos above: Article showcasing success stories from EMFF operations which was published in the II-Bizzilla magazine.



Photos on the left: The MA's presence at the first AgriFair edition held in May 2022



6. EMFF investment throughout it's timeline

As part of the visibility requirements, and in order to put into context the 2022 completed projects listed in the previous sections, the below photos are being included to portray a selection of the work done through the EMFF OP 2014-2020 throughout its implementation:

EMFF 1.16.1 – A scientific study to improve trawl gear selectivity



EMFF 1.23.1 - The Construction and Finishing of an Office on the Fish Landing Site in the Marsaxlokk Designated Port



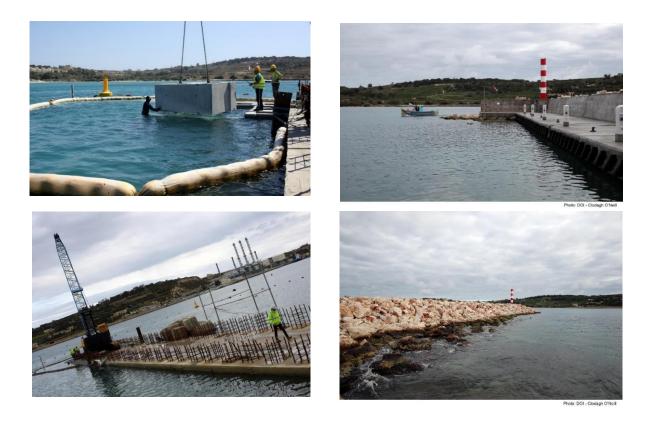
Photo on the left: One of the cranes procured for the landing site.

EMFF 1.23.2 - Refurbishment and upgrading of slipways in the port of Marsaxlokk



Photo above: one of the refurbished slipway in Marsaxlokk

EMFF 1.23.3 - Construction of a breakwater at Qrejten point in the port of Marsaxlokk



EMFF 1.23.5 - Upgrading of the fisheries infrastructure of Gozo



Photos above and below: Works done in Xlendi Gozo



Photo - MGOZ - Terry Camilleri



Photo on the left: One of the trailers as part of the equipment done in the Mġarr Harbour



Photo on the left: New light fittings in the Mgarr Harbour

EMFF 1.23.6 – Upgrading of Mgarr Gozo and Marsaxlokk Malta fishing ports



Photos above and below: The upgrading of quays in Mġarr Harbour





Photo above: Works on the Marfa quay

EMFF 2.2.1 – Productive Aquaculture Investments at Pisciculture Marine de Malte Limited





Photos above: Investments under this operation involving new aquaculture equipment EMFF 2.3.1 – Productive Investments in non-food aquaculture using RAS in AquaBioTech Group

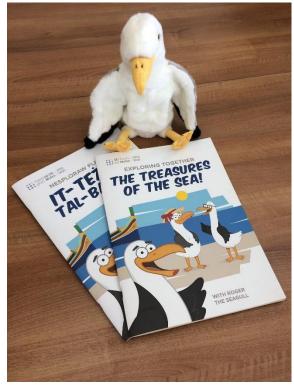


Photo above: New aquaculture tanks with RAS Technology

EMFF 4.3.1 - Nesploraw flimkien it-teżori tal-baħar – Marketing Campaign







Photos on the left: visits within fairs and schools.

Photo above: Big Books and Puppet to be used with kids during visits at schools



EMFF 6.1.1 (c) - *The development, purchase and installation of the components necessary to ensure the traceability of fishery and aquaculture products.*





Photos above: Hand Pallet truckers procured through this operation

EMFF 6.1.2 (j) - Seminars and media tools



Photo on the left: One of the seminars held under this operation

EMFF 6.1.1 (e) - The modernisation and purchasing of patrol vessels, aircrafts and helicopters.





Photo on the right: One of the new RHIBS procured under this operation.

Photo on the left: Maintenance on one of the RHIBS within the fleet of the DFA

EMFF 8.3.1 - Marine environmental monitoring: towards effective management of Malta's marine waters



Photos on the left: Inspections and monitoring procedures under this operation.