



# How to fund the Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N)

European Maritime, Fisheries and  
Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)



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# The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture fund

The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) channels funding to support the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), its maritime policy, and the EU agenda for international ocean governance agenda. Its objectives (Article 3 of EMFAF regulation) are:

- Fostering sustainable fisheries and the **restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources**
- Fostering sustainable aquaculture activities, and processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, thus contributing to food security in the Union
- Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities
- Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed

The EMFAF provides opportunities to fund conservation and restoration measures of marine and coastal biodiversity, including inland water, that can fund protected areas and contribute to ecological connectivity (Article 25 of EMFAF regulation) through:

- Measures that contribute to the **protection and conservation of marine resources and biodiversity in Natura 2000 sites**
- Measures that contribute to the **protection and conservation of coastal biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as transitional and inland waters**
- Measures to protect and restore **marine habitats beyond Natura 2000 sites, through regional seas conventions** (OSPAR, HELCOM, Barcelona Convention)

It has a budget of €6.1 billion for the period 2021-2027. Most of the budget is under shared management (€5.3 billion) through national programmes co-funded by the EU budget and EU countries. The rest is under direct management by the Commission (€0.8 billion).

## Assessment of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture fund

### Who can apply for EMFAF funding?

- ✓ Legal entities established in a Member State or outermost region (France, Portugal, Spain)
- ✓ Legal entities created under EU law or international organisations
- ✓ Operators from the fishery and aquaculture sectors
- ✓ Research institutions
- ✓ Public authorities
- ✓ NGOs
- ✓ International organisations
- ✓ Civil society organisations

For funding under shared management, eligibility rules are defined by the Member States. To see if your project is available for support, you must first check with the national authority in charge of managing the operational programme in your country (see section 'Useful resources').



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## Opportunities for funding measures for the Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N) through the EMFAF

This section assesses the opportunities for using EMFAF to fund the types of measures needed to build the Trans-European Nature Network. The table matches the different types of costs with the available sources of funding according to the EMFAF Regulation (see useful resources section for the full regulation). The full list of types of costs is in the Annex to this factsheet.

Types of measures eligible for EMFAF funding		EMFAF Reg. Art. 25 (biodiversity)	EMFAF Reg. Art. 27 (aquaculture)	EMFAF Reg. Other articles*
Network planning costs	Administrative	✓	✗	✗
	Spatial planning			✓
	Biogeographical network planning			✗
	Monitoring and reporting of the protected area network			✗
Protected area establishment costs	Site/corridor designation and management planning	✓	✗	✓
	Administrative	✓	✗	✗
	Remaining knowledge gaps and research needs	✓	✗	✓
	One-off establishment actions	✓	✓	✗
	Compensation	✓	✓	
	Land purchase	✗	✗	
Management costs	Site (cluster) administration	✓	✓	✗
	Compliance checking and enforcement			✓
	Monitoring and reporting			
	Maintenance and restoration measures for species and habitats			
	Additional green infrastructure measures (outside protected areas)			✗
	Protected area infrastructure maintenance			
Communication and awareness raising costs	Natura 2000-related communication and awareness raising measures, education and visitor access	✗	✓	✓
	Best practice exchange			

Other articles: Article 21 Temporary cessation of fishing activities; Article 23 Collection, management and use of biological, environmental, technical and socioeconomic data in the fisheries sector; Article 30 Community-led local development; Article 32 marine knowledge; Article 49 promotion of clean and healthy seas; Article 51 maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy; Article 54 international ocean governance.



## What activities can the EMFAF fund?

The EMFAF can provide opportunities to cover most of the types of costs associated with ecological networks (see full list in the annex to this factsheet). It cannot provide long-term support for site management and governance or the costs of land purchase.

EMFAF can support TEN-N activities in marine and freshwater areas:

### 1. Designation of the relevant area as protected



- **Research and planning in order to designate relevant areas as protected:**
  - Collection and processing of data for fisheries management and scientific purposes
  - Studies and research, knowledge sharing and events to promote and increase awareness of the network and its associated conservation measures
  - Mapping of biodiversity hotspots
  - Maritime spatial planning (of new protected areas, of blue corridors, of priority habitats)
  - Communication with fishers and other stakeholders
  - Compensatory measures for restrictions on aquaculture due to Natura 2000 site conservation objectives and measures and for economic damage to aquaculture systems caused by EU-protected species
- **Site designation**
  - Creation of marine protected areas (MPAs) or fisheries conservation areas
  - Qualitative strengthening of the network

### 2. Restoration of the protected area



- **Maintenance or restoration of the conservation status of habitats and species:**
  - Restoration and maintenance of natural habitats and habitats of species
  - Maintaining and improving the conservation status of species and habitats in Natura 2000
  - Restoration of inland waters
  - Habitat restoration measures that increase the environmental sustainability of aquaculture
  - Eradication of invasive species
  - Reintroduction of species
  - Support for the achievement of good environmental status under the MSFD, such as reducing marine litter, marine pollution, invasive alien species, and marine noise
  - Awareness raising, communication with the public, studies and research (such as mitigation actions for fisheries and reduction, recovery and disposal or marine litter) and knowledge sharing



### 3. Creation of new connecting landscape elements



- Implementing spatial protection measures established by the MSFD
- Measures to map and protect blue corridors to ensure species migration

### 4. Maintenance and management of the area in a sustainable way by defining and implementing targeted conservation measures



- Natura 2000 areas/MPA management
- Surveillance and monitoring of habitats, species, Natura 2000 areas and MPAs
- Studies and research, knowledge sharing and events to promote and increase awareness of the network and its associated conservation measures
- Studies for the identification, mitigation and adaptation of the effects of climate change on the marine environment and coastal communities

### 5. Financial and technical support to the development of the network



- Technical, scientific and fishing advice to support the management of protected natural areas



## Important considerations for TEN-N

- EMFAF has objectives to directly invest in biodiversity protection and restoration as well as indirect protection through the promotion of sustainable, low-impact and low-carbon fishing activities such as eliminating unwanted catches, protecting sensitive species, etc.
- Lots of flexibility granted to Member States, so funding opportunities depend on how the Member State has set objectives and priorities for its EMFAF fund programme.
- Climate change dimension: funds the collection of scientific data to better understand the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change (for example, the impact of fish stock migration and invasive species) as well as helping these sectors to be more resilient to extreme events.
- The regulation sets out a list of operations not eligible for support, to prevent any harm to the sustainability of fisheries. Certain investments and compensation schemes for the fishing fleet are subject to specific conditions to ensure they are consistent with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy.
- Maximum co-financing rate (i.e. the share paid by the EMFAF in the total public expenditure of a project) is 70% of public expenditure; the remaining share must be paid by other contributors. Small-scale fishers can access funding at a 100% rate, i.e. they do not have to source any co-funding.

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Sources: EC 2021 FAQ, EC2022a, EC 2022b – for full references see the Useful resources section of this factsheet





## Strengths for TEN-N

- EMFAF funding is available for any marine or coastal Natura 2000 site and for protecting species and habitats under the Nature Directives
- Some measures are available for transitional and inland waters
- Strong link with the good environmental status of marine waters: an objective is to create and manage marine protected areas (MPAs) and implement spatial protection measures established by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)
- Focus on supporting maritime spatial planning, which should include a consideration of protected area network and connectivity needs
- Although there is no specific measure for connectivity, many measures can be used as a basis for funding investments that contribute to the connectivity and resilience of networks of MPAs or terrestrial protected areas with a freshwater or inland water component
- Available to a wide range of entities with a wide scope/purpose of support: can fund research, pilot projects and innovation, investments, collective actions
- Recreational fishers are eligible for support, for example by participating in actions that protect the marine environment and sustainable maritime tourism in local communities
- Under community-led local development actions, stakeholders can set up local action groups to develop and implement a local strategy à promotes small-scale initiatives (including in inland areas)
- Specific focus on outermost regions (with a higher rate of public aid: 85% of costs are funded by EMFAF)

## Limitations for TEN-N

- The fund does not have an explicit objective for ecological connectivity and there is no ring-fencing of funding for nature protection and restoration, so funding opportunities depend entirely on the programming decisions taken by Member States.
- Opportunities for funding terrestrial/freshwater connectivity projects may be very limited in Member States with large marine areas (depending on how the national programme sets objectives and eligibility).
- A relatively small fund and at least 15% must go to the control of fishing activities and collection of data for fisheries management, so there are limited opportunities (which can however be used strategically)
- Has a strong economic objective, meaning that projects should contribute to the sustainable use and management of aquatic and maritime resources probably not appropriate to fund strict protection measures, such as areas where fishing activities are banned
- Often difficult for small organisations to access funds because of a lack of access to co-funding, complex application procedures, and lack of information about opportunities available for coastal communities and small-scale fishermen, the most feasible access to funding is through their Local Action Group under the Community-led Local Development (CLLD) scheme.

## Annex I: Examples of EMFAF support benefiting ecological connectivity

### Ireland - EMFAF Marine Biodiversity Scheme

The Irish EMFAF Seafood Development Programme includes a continuation of the Marine Biodiversity Scheme funded under the previous EMFF fund. The scheme funds appropriate assessment of fisheries and aquaculture activities, reporting on the Marine Strategy framework Directive, actions to increase awareness of the Natura 2000 and marine protected area network, and species and habitat restoration. The Programme also supports the enhancement of Ireland's knowledge of its marine environment, particularly in terms of enhancing knowledge of climate change impacts on fish stocks, habitats and species.

Ireland recently designated three marine Natura sites - two Special Areas of Conservation in the northeast Atlantic and one Special Protection Area in the northwest Irish Sea - collectively comprising almost 3.25 million ha, i.e. more than 9% of Ireland's marine waters. In December 2022, the Irish Government published a general scheme for drafting a Marine Protected Areas law. The legislation will define the processes, roles and responsibilities involved in marine protected area management and identify additional MPA sites and features to be protected.

#### What is being funded for TEN-N?

- Support for Natura 2000 and marine protected areas management and monitoring
- Actions to increase co-ordination and pace at which new measures for biodiversity protection are implemented within and across sectors and in response to scientific advice through knowledge sharing
- Investments in the restoration of marine protected habitats and habitats of protected species in Natura 2000 areas
- Actions to increase awareness of the marine Natura 2000 and marine protected area network and associated conservation measures
- Actions to support appropriate control and enforcement of fisheries management measures related to Natura and MPA site management
- Actions to address marine litter: retrieval and proper disposal including physical infrastructure, awareness raising and communication and events, studies and research
- Actions to manage and control the introduction and spread of invasive marine species by the fishing and aquaculture sectors

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Sources: EMFAF in Ireland <https://eufunds.ie/european-maritime-fisheries-and-aquaculture-fund/>

Irish EMFAF programme document <https://eufunds.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/sfc2021-PRG-2021IE14MFPR001-1.2.pdf>

Houses of the Oireachtas: Dáil Éireann Debate, Tuesday 12 December 2023. At <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-12-12/387/>



## Belgium – EMFAF funding for removal of barriers to ecological continuity of rivers

The Walloon part of the EMFAF programme for 2021 to 2027 focuses to an important extent on restoring the ecological continuity of its rivers, notably by reducing or by-passing obstacles, thus improving the migration of eel and other migratory species. In Flanders, funding is available through the regional Blue Deal fund.

The previous Wallonian EMFF programme for 2014 to 2020 funded a series of projects to restore river connectivity.

An important component is the International Meuse Commission's strategic planning of river restoration on the Meuse and its tributaries: the IMC Master Plan for Migratory Fish in the Meuse River basin.

### What was funded for TEN-N by EMFF in Wallonia?

- Removal of migration obstacles on the Awirs Stream (SOM AWIRS)
- Construction of a new fish pass at the right of the Houx Dam on the Meuse
- Development of a fish pass on the Lesse at the Pont-à-Lesse Dam
- Feasibility study for removing obstacles on the Warche to restore free movement of fish in the Hautes Fagnes-Eifel Natural Park
- Hydromorphological improvement of the watercourse of Andenelle 2nd category within the framework of the renovation of the Rue des Pipiers
- Restoration of the free movement of fish on the Samson River - Phase 1
- Restoration of the free movement of fish on Whitewater River

### Results for TEN-N

Many obstacles on the main course of the Meuse River have been made passable for fish upstream migration in Wallonia: a new fish pass was built at the Dinant dam and studies were initiated to do the same at the Houx, Anseremme and Ampsin-Neuville dams.

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Sources: Belgian EMFAF programme and programme summary. [https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/emfaf-programmes-2021-2027\\_en](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/emfaf-programmes-2021-2027_en)

Gouvernement de Wallonie Portail de l'agriculture wallonne: OPÉRATIONS COFINANCÉES PAR LE FEAMP (8 June 2022) <https://agriculture.wallonie.be/home/politique-economie/politique-commune-de-la-peche/programme-2014-2020-21-cofinance-par-le-feamp.html>

International Meuse Commission (2022) Progress report on the implementation of the "Master plan for migratory fish in the Meuse River basin" for the period 2011-2020. <https://www.meuse-maas.be/Publications.aspx>



## Annex II: What are the financial costs associated with the TEN-N?

The creation and management of a coherent TEN-N in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 requires the following actions from the national and regional authorities:

- **Designate the relevant areas as protected**, to contribute to the 30% protected areas and the 10% strict protection targets.
- **Restore the relevant areas to contribute to the 20% restoration target of EU's land and sea by 2030**, to improve the habitat condition and delivery of ecosystem services.
- **Create new connecting landscape elements** to physically or functionally connect existing elements.
- **Maintain and manage the protected areas sustainably by defining and implementing targeted conservation measures**, which may allow various types of low-impact land uses.
- **Financial and technical support** to the development of the network.

Meeting these objectives involves the following costs:

### Network Planning Costs

One-time or recurring costs associated with planning for or updating a comprehensive and well-connected network of protected areas.

- **Spatial mapping and planning**: mapping and modelling to identify priority areas (GIS mapping of habitat and species occurrences, land use, mapping of barriers and corridors), site identification information, IT infrastructure, training and capacity building.
- **Habitat and species surveys**: surveys to map habitat condition and species distribution, and identify restoration priority areas and potential habitat recreation areas.
- **Biogeographical network planning**: exchange and joint planning (e.g. meetings, travel to neighbouring countries, information sharing).
- **Administrative**: staff, overheads, training, as part of the network planning exercise.
- **Stakeholder engagement**: costs associated with organising meetings with landowners and other potentially affected stakeholders.
- **Monitoring and reporting of the protected area network**

### Protected Area Establishment Costs

One-time or recurring costs associated with planning for placement, levels of protection and designation of additional protected areas and corridors.

- **Site/corridor designation and management planning**: definition of sites (habitat surveys, precise boundary definition, land parcel data, species and habitat data), designation, legal protection, management planning, impact assessment and permit issuing.
- **Administrative**: staff and salaries, trainings, overheads or office acquisitions, planning and coordination with other management teams in cross-border protected areas.
- **Remaining knowledge gaps and research needs**: additional surveys and research, engaging external expertise, modelling of ecological changes under climate scenarios, social impacts, and capacity building.



- **One-off establishment actions: time and tools (incl. machinery) for:**
  - **Defragmentation measures:** removing roads, and river barriers, building green bridges.
  - **Infrastructure:** Water management infrastructure, fire management infrastructure, and construction of infrastructure necessary for management and visitors.
  - **Landscape restoration:** e.g., fencing, removing or moving dykes, engineering works, earth moving, removing non-native trees, replanting, recreating floodplains.
  - **Creation of corridors and connectivity/defragmentation features:** infrastructure or restoration actions e.g., green bridges, creation of green infrastructure features along water courses or transport networks for biodiversity.
  - **Compensation:** establishment of alternative income-generating activities, short-term compensation, and stewardship contracts with landowners.
  - **Land purchase:** e.g. buyouts, land swaps.

## Management Costs

Fixed and variable, recurring annual or one-off costs of site management and day-to-day activities.

- **Site (-cluster) administration:** staff and salaries, trainings, overheads, coordination with other management teams in cross-border protected areas, renewal of stewardship contracts with landowners.
- **Compliance checking and enforcement:** equipment, data, staff.
- **Impact assessment and permits:** assessments of development projects, control and issue of permits or licenses for activities or developments.
- **Surveillance, monitoring and reporting:** at scale of site and surroundings e.g. corridors. Species and habitat monitoring. Surveillance of invasive species, animal and plant diseases or pests, etc. Wildfire surveillance.
- **Maintenance and ongoing restoration measures for species and habitats,** incl. tools and machinery.
- **Additional green infrastructure measures outside the protected area:** maintenance and ongoing restoration measures for species and habitats in corridors, buffer zones, stepping-stone habitat patches etc.
- **Protected area infrastructure maintenance:** access (roads, paths), visitor facilities – observation hides, visitor centres, parking and other facilities, wildfire prevention and management.

## Communication and Awareness Raising Costs

- **Protected area-related communication and awareness-raising measures, education and visitor access:** general communication and awareness-raising measures, education, access to visitors, etc.
- **Best practice exchange** between protected area managers and between land managers of ecological corridors.

## Annex III: Useful resources

### Resources

- European Commission: European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) webpages [https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/emfaf\\_en?prefLang=lv](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/emfaf_en?prefLang=lv)
- Links to national EMFAF programmes: [https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/emfaf-programmes-2021-2027\\_en](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/emfaf-programmes-2021-2027_en)

### References

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[https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/docs/body/2018-10-01-emff-natura-2000\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/docs/body/2018-10-01-emff-natura-2000_en.pdf)
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  - ANNEX to the COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION [https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-01/c-2022-371-annex\\_en.pdf](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-01/c-2022-371-annex_en.pdf)
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[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/747110/EPRS\\_STU\(2023\)747110\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/747110/EPRS_STU(2023)747110_EN.pdf)

### Regulations

Regulation (Union) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (Union) 2017/1004. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L\\_.2021.247.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2021.247.01.0001.01.ENG)

Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1060>





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## Author

Evelyn Underwood and Gabrielle Aubert  
Institute for European Environmental Policy  
eunderwood@ieep.eu

## Design

Honey Kohan, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia  
Cover image: Green Turtle / Canva

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[www.naturaconnect.eu](http://www.naturaconnect.eu)



[@naturaconnect](https://www.linkedin.com/company/naturaconnect)



[naturaconnect@iiasa.ac.at](mailto:naturaconnect@iiasa.ac.at)



[@naturaconnect](https://twitter.com/naturaconnect)



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