

POSITION PAPER

On the European Commission's Evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation

1 June 2024

BACKGROUND

In April 2024, the European Commission published its evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) Regulation (393/2013), covering the decade from 2014 to 2024¹. This document assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU added value of the CFP. The evaluation is intended to inform potential reforms and serve as the foundation for the Commission's forthcoming 2040 Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP), representing the EU's fish farming sector, has conducted a thorough analysis of the evaluation. While this Federation acknowledges the considerable effort invested in assessing capture fisheries, it is compelled to express profound concern regarding the marginal and fragmented treatment of aquaculture, despite the sector being explicitly included within the CFP's scope.

The 2011 impact assessment of the previous 2013 CFP Regulation concluded that aquaculture production had not increased in the previous 15 years and that aquaculture employment had decreased by 34%. The current CFP introduced the mechanism of policy coordination, including non-binding strategic guidelines, Multi-annual National Strategic Plans for Aquaculture (MNSPAs), and the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), precisely to rectify these problems. As the present evaluation confirms, these objectives have not been achieved.

ANALYSIS OF THE EVALUATION

FEAP's analysis of the CFP's evaluation reveals a structural imbalance, a reliance on ineffective governance tools, and a failure to connect the stagnation of EU aquaculture with critical challenges such as food security, climate adaptation, and strategic autonomy. The following issues have been identified as problematic in the evaluation:

1. **Structural imbalance between fisheries and aquaculture:** The evaluation's intervention logic (Chapter 2.1) is built around three dimensions – environmental, economic/social, and governance – but the logic schemes (Figure 1, 2, and 3) overwhelmingly focus on capture fisheries. Aquaculture is mentioned only in passing. The evaluation lacks a dedicated intervention logic

¹ Evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) Regulation: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip24_1284