

**A Synthesis of the  
Mid-Term  
Evaluations of the  
FIFG 2000-2006**

**Report**

**To**

**European  
Commission -  
Directorate General  
For Fisheries**

**By**

**London Economics**

**March 2004**

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of the FIFG 2000-2006**

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## Executive Summary

London Economics was commissioned by the European Commission Directorate General to assess the weaknesses and strengths of the mid-term evaluations of FIFG 2000-2006 and produce a short synthesis of these evaluations.

The present report synthesises the key findings of these mid-term evaluations and a companion report “Quality Assessment of the Mid-Term Evaluations of FIFG 2000-2006” presents our quality assessments.

The FIFG programmes are generally running behind targets in terms of commitments and even more in terms of actual spending. Only eight programmes are close to target or above target. We judge seven programmes to be highly problematic as, at the time of the mid-term evaluation, the programmes showed no or very little take-up. It is doubtful that these latter programmes ever will be able to achieve their planned level of activity.

The remainder of the FIFG programmes show various rates of progress. But, most should be able achieve a reasonable level of activity by the end of FIFG 2000-2006.

The reasons for the relatively slow take-up of FIFG-funded programmes are multiple. A late start of the programmes in many instances and other administrative issues (cumbersome application processes, slow payments, lack of administrative resources, occasional problems with the availability of the State co-financing funds, etc) explain part of the lower-than-expected progress.

More critically, a number of deeper systemic factors also appear to be at play. A lack of financially robust project sponsors, the uncertain economic prospects for the fisheries sector and the fragmentation of the industry tended to dampen the take-up of the programmes and it is not clear whether the promotion activities recommended by many mid-term evaluations will be sufficient to overcome the hesitations of potential project sponsors.

The programme take-up rate varies greatly across the various FIFG priorities with the “adjustment of fishing capacity” showing generally good take-up rates while the take-up rate of the “fleet renewal and modernisation measure” varies significantly across Member States. The “technical assistance” measure

posts generally a high take-up rate. In contrast, the “aquaculture” measure and the sub-measures requiring collective actions across the sectors other FIFG measures, with a few exceptions, show generally modest take-up rates while the utilisation of the other FIFG measures is highly variable.

As a result of the relatively slow progress, few evaluations are able to focus on programme results and impacts. Even outputs cannot always be fully assessed as a result of the slow start and the unavoidable gestation period of projects.

FIFG-funded programmes are found to have a broadly neutral impact with regards to the EU horizontal objective of equal opportunity. The impact of the FIFG-funded programmes on the horizontal objective of sustainable development is impossible to ascertain at the present time as some measures such as “fleet renewal and modernisation” have a negative impact while others such as “adjustment of fishing effort” and “Protection and development of aquatic resources” have a positive impact. The overall impact will depend on the ultimate mix of projects benefiting from FIFG funding.

Many recommendations are made to improve the functioning of FIFG-funded programmes and to re-allocate funds across priorities within existing programmes. But only 6 out of the 48 mid-term evaluations reviewed by London Economics explicitly recommend releasing the Performance Reserve.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The European Commission commissioned London Economics to undertake a synthesis of the mid-term evaluations of the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) 2000–2006. FIFG is one of the four structural funds put in place by the European Commission to provide financial assistance to resolve structural economic and social problems.<sup>1</sup>

According to the terms of reference of the project, London Economics was to:

1. Produce a 30-page (or less) synthesis of the findings of all the mid-term evaluations;
2. Produce a 2-page analysis of each evaluation's strengths and weaknesses.

The present report provides the synthesis of the findings while a companion document “Quality Assessment of the Mid-Term Evaluations of FIFG 2000–2006” presents the quality assessments.

Altogether, DG-Fisheries provided forty-nine mid-term evaluations to London Economics. These evaluations form the basis of the present synthesis.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 The FIFG structural fund and the mid-term evaluation

FIFG 2000-2006 is “*....intended to help the industry respond to the challenge of present-day world economic conditions, guarantee environmentally sustainable and economically viable exploitation of fisheries resources, preserve fishing in regions*

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<sup>1</sup> The other three structural funds are the European Regional Developments Funds (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF).

<sup>2</sup> In practice, London Economics reviewed only 48 evaluations because the mid-term evaluation of the Irish Operational Plan had been undertaken by Indecon, a consultancy related to London Economics. PwC was tasked to undertake the quality assessment of the latter mid-term evaluation and send their findings directly to the European Commission DG for Fisheries. For the sake of completeness, the results of the PwC quality assessment are also included in the present report.

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*where there are few economic alternatives; and provide European consumers with a wide range of quality fishery products".<sup>3</sup>*

The EU Commission and Member States determine the allocation of FIFG funds. They do so by drawing up multi-year plans contained in either a SPD (single programming document) or an OP (operational programme). FIFG is based on the principle of co-financing by beneficiary Member States and, in the case of revenue-generating projects, by the beneficiaries of the project. The table below sets out the level of EU funds provided under FIFG to different Member States and regions.

**Table 1: Level of FIFG funding**

| Country | Programme   | Millions of € |
|---------|---|---------------|
| Austria | National (outside Objective 1)                    | 4.2           |
|         | Burgenland  | 0.4           |
| Belgium | National (outside Objective 1)                    | 35.3          |
|         | Hainault (Objective 1 transitional support)       | 1.6           |
| Denmark | National  | 204.5         |
| Finland | National (outside Objective 1)                    | 32.1          |
|         | East (Objective 1)                                | 2.6           |
|         | North (Objective 1)                               | 4.2           |
| France  | National (outside Objective 1)                    | 233.7         |
|         | Corsica (Objective 1 transitional support)        | 2.3           |
|         | Guadeloupe (Objective 1)                          | 6.2           |
|         | Guyana (Objective 1)                              | 7.6           |
|         | La Réunion (Objective 1)                          | 15.6          |
|         | Martinique (Objective 1)                          | 9.1           |
| Germany | National (Objective 1)                            | 105.3         |
|         | National (outside Objective 1)                    | 111.2         |
| Greece  | National (Objective 1)                            | 211.1         |
| Ireland | National (Objective 1)                            | 42.1          |
|         | Border, Midland, and Western Region (Objective 1) | 16.1          |
|         | South & East (Objective 1 transitional support)   | 9.6           |
| Italy   | Peace II  | 3.5           |
|         | National (Objective 1)                            | 122.0         |

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, 2002, Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance, Instructions for Use Luxembourg.

**Table 1: Level of FIFG funding**

| Country        | Programme  | Millions of € |
|----------------|--|---------------|
|                | National (Outside Objective 1)                           | 99.6          |
|                | Calabria (Objective 1)                                   | 18.6          |
|                | Campania (Objective 1)                                   | 38.2          |
|                | Molise (Objective 1)                                     | 0.5           |
|                | Puglia (Objective 1)                                     | 30.0          |
|                | Sardegna (Objective 1)                                   | 27.0          |
|                | Sicilia (Objective 1)                                    | 50.0          |
| Netherlands    | National (outside Objective 1)                           | 32.1          |
|                | Flevoland (Objective 1 transitional support)             | 6.0           |
| Portugal       | National (Objective 1)                                   | 163.3         |
|                | Alentjo (Objective 1)                                    | 0.6           |
|                | Algarve (Objective 1)                                    | 1.8           |
|                | Azores (Objective 1)                                     | 28.9          |
|                | Centro (Objective 1)                                     | 1.5           |
|                | Madeira (Objective 1)                                    | 20.0          |
|                | Norte (Objective 1)                                      | 1.6           |
| Spain          | National (Objective 1)                                   | 1,504.6       |
|                | National (outside Objective 1)                           | 207.5         |
| Sweden         | National (outside Objective 1)                           | 62.3          |
|                | Norra (Objective 1) <sup>1</sup>                         | 6.0           |
|                | Södra (Objective 1) <sup>1</sup>                         | 5.8           |
| United Kingdom | National (outside Objective 1)                           | 125.5         |
|                | Cornwall (Objective 1)                                   | 17.0          |
|                | Highlands and Islands (Objective 1 transitional support) | 27.8          |
|                | Merseyside (Objective 1)                                 | 0.4           |
|                | Northern Ireland (Objective 1 transitional support)      | 29.0          |
|                | West Wales & the Valleys (Objective 1)                   | 15.2          |

Source: European Commission

Unfortunately, many of the mid-term evaluations provide little information about FIFG-related activities. This is because, in many Objective 1 regions, the multi-year plans for 2000-2006 prescribe the use of all the structural funds available to the region. FIFG funds often represent a small fraction of total structural fund spending. Where the mid-term evaluations cover the whole range of structural fund interventions in a region, they often provide little specific information about FIFG-related activities. As Table 2 shows, the mid-term evaluations covered all structural funds in 30 of the 48 mid-term evaluations London Economics reviewed.

Seven evaluations contain so little information on FIFG that we are unable to assess them fully. These evaluations either describe regions in which there had been no FIFG-related activity (Belgium-Hainault) or for other reasons provide insufficient information on the FIFG-financed programmes (Austria-Burgenland, Netherlands-Flevoland, UK-Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, UK-Merseyside, UK-West Wales and Valleys and UK-Northern Ireland).

To review each mid-term evaluation, we use a detailed quality assessment grid based on the MEANS criteria. In addition, we provide an, admittedly somewhat subjective, rating of the overall quality of the mid-term evaluation. This rating grid ranges from very poor to excellent with a rating of "adequate" being the mid-point between the rating limits. The companion report provides the detailed assessments and additional details on the assessment grid.

Overall, the quality of the mid-term evaluations ranges from adequate to excellent (see Table 2) and many of evaluations contain some useful information that, as intended, will help "*improve the quality and relevance of programming*".<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: List of mid-term FIFG evaluations**

| Country        | Programme                             | FIFG-only evaluation | Assessment of the quality of the evaluation |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| <i>Austria</i> | <i>National (outside Objective 1)</i> | Yes                  | Adequate                                    |
|                | <i>Burgenland</i>                     |                      | <i>Not rated due to insufficient</i>        |

<sup>4</sup> The guidelines for the mid-term evaluation of structural funds are provided in European Commission, The 2000-2006 Programming Period: Methodological working papers, Working Paper No. 8, The Mid Term Evaluations of Structural Fund Interventions downloadable from: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/working/sf2000\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/sf2000_en.htm).

**Table 2: List of mid-term FIFG evaluations**

| Country     | Programme  | FIFG-only evaluation | Assessment of the quality of the evaluation           |
|-------------|--|----------------------|---|
|             |  |                      | <i>information</i>                                    |
| Belgium     | National (outside Objective 1)                             | Yes                  | Adequate  |
|             | <i>Hainault (Objective 1 transitional support)</i>         | Yes                  | <i>Not rated due to absence of programme activity</i> |
| Denmark     | National   | Yes                  | Very good   |
| Finland     | National (outside Objective 1)                             | Yes                  | Adequate  |
|             | <i>East (Objective 1)</i>                                  |                      | <i>Adequate</i>                                       |
|             | <i>North (Objective 1)</i>                                 |                      | <i>Adequate</i>                                       |
| France      | National (outside Objective 1)                             | Yes                  | Adequate  |
|             | <i>Corsica (Objective 1 transitional support)</i>          |                      | <i>Excellent</i>                                      |
|             | <i>Guadeloupe (Objective 1)</i>                            |                      | <i>Excellent</i>                                      |
|             | <i>Guyana (Objective 1)</i>                                |                      | <i>Very good</i>                                      |
|             | <i>La Réunion (Objective 1)</i>                            |                      | <i>Adequate</i>                                       |
|             | <i>Martinique (Objective 1)</i>                            |                      | <i>Very good</i>                                      |
| Germany     | National (Objective 1)                                     | Yes                  | Excellent   |
|             | National (outside Objective 1)                             | Yes                  | Excellent   |
| Greece      | National (Objective 1)                                     | Yes                  | Adequate  |
| Ireland     | National (Objective 1)                                     |                      | Very good <sup>1</sup>                                |
|             | Border, Midland, and Western Region (Objective 1)          |                      | Adequate  |
|             | <i>South &amp; East (Objective 1 transitional support)</i> |                      | <i>Not rated due to insufficient information</i>      |
|             | <i>Peace II</i>  |                      | <i>Not rated due to insufficient information</i>      |
| Italy       | National (Objective 1)                                     | Yes                  | Excellent   |
|             | National (Outside Objective 1)                             |                      | Excellent   |
|             | Calabria (Objective 1)                                     |                      | Adequate  |
|             | Campania (Objective 1)                                     |                      | Adequate  |
|             | <i>Molise (Objective 1)</i>                                |                      | <i>Adequate</i>                                       |
|             | Puglia (Objective 1)                                       |                      | Adequate  |
|             | Sardegna (Objective 1)                                     |                      | Adequate  |
|             | Sicilia (Objective 1)                                      |                      | Adequate  |
| Netherlands | National (outside Objective 1)                             | Yes                  | Very good   |
|             | <i>Flevoland (Objective 1 transitional support)</i>        |                      | <i>Not rated because insufficient information</i>     |
| Portugal    | National (Objective 1)                                     | Yes                  | Adequate  |
|             | <i>Alentejo (Objective 1)</i>                              |                      | <i>Adequate</i>                                       |
|             | <i>Algarve (Objective 1)</i>                               |                      | <i>Adequate</i>                                       |

**Table 2: List of mid-term FIFG evaluations**

| Country        | Programme  | FIFG-only evaluation | Assessment of the quality of the evaluation                    |
|----------------|--|----------------------|--|
|                | Azores ( <i>Objective 1</i> )                                    |                      | Adequate   |
|                | <i>Centro</i> ( <i>Objective 1</i> )                             |                      | <i>Adequate</i>  |
|                | Madeira ( <i>Objective 1</i> )                                   |                      | Adequate   |
|                | <i>Norte</i> ( <i>Objective 1</i> )                              |                      | <i>Adequate</i>  |
| Spain          | National ( <i>Objective 1</i> )                                  | Yes                  | Adequate   |
|                | National (outside <i>Objective 1</i> )                           | Yes                  | Adequate   |
| Sweden         | National (outside <i>Objective 1</i> )                           | Yes                  | Adequate   |
|                | <i>Norra</i> ( <i>Objective 1</i> ) <sup>2</sup>                 |                      |  |
|                | <i>Södra</i> ( <i>Objective 1</i> ) <sup>2</sup>                 |                      | <i>Adequate</i>  |
| United Kingdom | National (outside <i>Objective 1</i> )                           | Yes                  | Adequate   |
|                | Cornwall ( <i>Objective 1</i> )                                  |                      | Not rated due to insufficient FIFG-specific information        |
|                | Highlands and Islands ( <i>Objective 1</i> transitional support) |                      | Adequate   |
|                | <i>Merseyside</i> ( <i>Objective 1</i> )                         |                      | <i>Not rated due to insufficient FIFG-specific information</i> |
|                | Northern Ireland ( <i>Objective 1</i> transitional support)      |                      | Not rated due to insufficient FIFG-specific information        |
|                | West Wales & the Valleys ( <i>Objective 1</i> )                  |                      | Not rated due to insufficient FIFG-specific information        |

Programs shown in italics involve less than €15 million in direct FIFG funding.

(1) The quality assessment of the mid-term evaluation was undertaken independently by PwC as the mid-term evaluation has been done by Indecon, a consultancy related to London Economics.

(2) The two quality assessments were merged into a single review because the issues faced by the two regions are identical.

### 1.3 Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

Section 2 describes the progress made so far by FIFG-financed programmes;

Section 3 provides a synthesis of the findings on programme results and impacts;

Section 4 summarises the mid-term evaluations' key findings regarding the management of the FIFG-financed programmes;

Section 5 reviews the mid-terms evaluations' key observations regarding the integration of horizontal objectives such as sustainable development and equal opportunity;

Section 6 presents the evaluations' observations regarding the management of the programmes;

Section 7 briefly discusses the findings regarding the efficiency of the programmes;

Section 8 gives an overview of the mid-term evaluations' main recommendations;

Section 9 reviews the mid-term evaluations' recommendations regarding the possible allocation of the Performance Reserve,<sup>5</sup> and

Section 10 presents some concluding remarks.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the Council regulation establishing the general provisions on the structural funds, a reserve of 4% of the commitment appropriations was to be established at the beginning of the programming period and a mid-term allocation of the would be made by 31<sup>st</sup> March at the latest provided the OP or SPD were considered successful. For further details see, European Commission, The 2000-2006 Programming Period: Methodological working papers, Working Paper No 4, Implementation of the Performance Reserve, downloadable from:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/working/sf2000\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/sf2000_en.htm).

## 2 Financial progress of FIFG-financed programmes

This section provides an overview of the financial progress made so far by the FIFG-financed programmes.

The present report focuses primarily on the financial (commitment or expenditures) programmes. This is because information on outputs, and more particularly results and impacts, is much more limited and patchy. To a large extent, this reflects the fact that, in the vast majority of cases, the FIFG-funded programmes were well behind programme commitment targets when the mid-term evaluations were undertaken.

Table 3 reports summary information of the financial achievement at the evaluation cut-off date. This date was either 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002 or some point in 2003, depending on the mid-term evaluation. Because the reporting format of the programme's financial achievements varies greatly (actual spending as a percentage of total planned spending for either the programme's first term or full period, or commitments as a percentage of the programme budget for either the first term or the full period), we also provide an overall qualitative assessment of the financial achievements of the FIFG-funded programmes. Essentially, we rate programmes as:

- Problematic: actual commitments or spending are extremely low.
- Well behind target: only a limited volume of programme activity occurred.
- Behind target: a significant amount of activity took place, but the programme did not meet its financial targets.
- Good: the programme met or exceeded its financial targets.

Of the 49 cases:

- We rate nine programmes as good. These are the following programmes: Finland national, Finland East, Germany national Objective 1, Italy Campania, Portugal national, Spain national Objective 1, Spain national outside Objective 1, UK West Wales & the Valleys, and UK Highlands and Islands (Scotland). In the case of the German Objective 1 programme, the good progress is entirely due to the presence of one large-scale project.
- Eight programmes are somewhat behind target. These are: Austria national, Denmark national, Finland North, France national, Ireland

Border, Midland and Western Region, Ireland Peace II, Portugal Algarve and Portugal Centro;

- Twenty-five programmes are well behind target. These are: Austria Burgenland, Belgium national, France Guadeloupe, France Guyana, France La Réunion, Germany national outside Objective 1, Greece national, Ireland South and East, Ireland national Objective 1, Italy national Objective 1, Italy national outside Objective 1, Italy Calabria, Italy Molise, Italy Puglia, Italy Sardegna, Italy Sicily, Netherlands national outside Objective 1, Netherlands Flevoland, Portugal Azores, Portugal Madeira, Portugal Norte, Sweden national outside Objective 1, UK national, UK Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, UK Merseyside and UK Northern Ireland. In some cases, the evaluators comment on the implications of this slow rate of spending, as follows:
  - The evaluators of the Denmark national, France national and Netherlands national programme judge these programmes' progress to be good in light of their late starts.
  - The evaluator of the Netherlands national programme predicts that programme funds, including the Performance Reserve, will be fully utilised by the end of the programme.
  - In contrast, the evaluators of the Belgium national and Germany national outside Objective 1 programmes note that allocated funds are unlikely to be fully utilised by the end of these programmes.
- Seven programmes are problematic as they show very little progress. These are the following: Belgium Hainault, France Corsica, France Guadeloupe, France Martinique, Portugal Alentejo, Sweden Norra and Söodra.
  - It should be noted that the evaluator of the France Corsica programme believes that almost complete utilisation of funds is feasible while the other evaluators did not express such optimistic views.

Another key point that emerges from practically all the mid-term evaluations is that actual spending is running generally much further behind target than commitments.

**Table 3: Financial progress of FIFG-funded programmes**

| Country | Programme                                   | Achievement at mid-term evaluation cut-off date | Qualitative LE assessment  |
|---------|---|---|--|
| Austria | National (outside Objective 1)              | Programme is 27% behind planned spending        | Behind   |
|         | Burgenland                                  | Low take-up rate                                | Well behind  |
| Belgium | National (outside Objective 1)              | Only 24% of funds taken up                      | Well behind – unlikely that funds will all be used   |
|         | Hainault (Objective 1 transitional support) | No activity                                     | Problematic  |
| Denmark | National                                    | 36% of funds disbursed                          | Behind – evaluator judges adequate in light of the programme's late start                                      |
| Finland | National (outside Objective 1)              | Good, but no overall figure provided            | Good   |
|         | East (Objective 1)                          | Good, but no overall figure provided            | Good   |
|         | North (Objective 1)                         | Only 37% of total programme funds committed     | Behind   |
| France  | National (outside Objective 1)              | Only 37% of total programme funds committed     | Behind – evaluator judges good in light of the programme's late start  |
|         | Corsica (Objective 1 transitional support)  | Only 5% of total programme funds committed      | Problematic – evaluator judges catch-up possible   |
|         | Guadeloupe (Objective 1)                    | Only 19.8% of total programme funds programmed  | Problematic  |
|         | Guyana (Objective 1)                        | 63% of planned commitments achieved             | Well behind  |
|         | La Réunion (Objective 1)                    | Only 34% of total programme funds committed     | Well behind  |
|         | Martinique (Objective 1)                    | Only 9% of total programme funds committed      | Problematic  |
| Germany | National (Objective 1)                      | 53% of total programme funds committed          | Good – but results are largely due to one large-scale project that will not be repeated during the programme's |

**Table 3: Financial progress of FIFG-funded programmes**

| Country | Programme   | Achievement at mid-term evaluation cut-off date                      | Qualitative LE assessment  |
|---------|---|--|--|
|         |   |  | second term  |
|         | National (outside Objective 1)                            | 10% of planned spending for the period                               | Well behind - evaluator judges some programme acceleration is to be expected, but that funds are unlikely to be fully used |
| Greece  | National (Objective 1)                                    | 27.6% of operational budget spent                                    | Well behind  |
| Ireland | National (Objective 1)                                    | 13.1 of planned spending for the period                              | Well behind  |
|         | Border, Midland, and Western Region (Objective 1)         | 69.3% of planned spending for the period                             | Behind   |
|         | <i>South &amp; East (Objective 1 transitional support</i> | <i>51% of planned spending for the period</i>                        | <i>Well behind</i>   |
|         | <i>Peace II</i>   | <i>6% of planned spending for the period but 100% of commitments</i> | <i>Behind</i>  |
| Italy   | National (Objective 1)                                    | 35.4% of programme funds committed                                   | Well behind  |
|         | National (Outside Objective 1)                            | 39.3% of programme funds committed                                   | Well behind  |
|         | Calabria (Objective 1)                                    | Very low – no precise information                                    | Well behind  |
|         | Campania (Objective 1)                                    | 60% of programme funds committed                                     | Good   |
|         | <i>Molise (Objective 1)</i>                               | <i>25.5% of programme funds committed</i>                            | <i>Well behind</i>   |
|         | Puglia (Objective 1)                                      | Only 25.9% of programme funds committed                              | Well behind  |
|         | Sardegna (Objective 1)                                    | 12% of programme funds   | Well behind  |

**Table 3: Financial progress of FIFG-funded programmes**

| Country        | Programme   | Achievement at mid-term evaluation cut-off date    | Qualitative LE assessment                                   |
|----------------|---|--|---|
|                |   | committed  |   |
|                | Sicilia (Objective 1)                               | 35% of programme funds committed                   | Well behind   |
| Netherlands    | National (outside Objective 1)                      | Only 32% of programme funds committed              | Well behind - but evaluator predicts all funds will be used |
|                | <i>Flevoland (Objective 1 transitional support)</i> | <i>Low take-up – no specific information</i>       | <i>Well behind</i>  |
| Portugal       | National (Objective 1)                              | 94.6% of planned commitments for the period        | Good  |
|                | <i>Alentejo (Objective 1)</i>                       | <i>1.3% of planned commitments for the period</i>  | <i>Problematic</i>  |
|                | <i>Algarve (Objective 1)</i>                        | <i>46.3% of planned commitments for the period</i> | <i>Behind</i>   |
|                | Azores (Objective 1)                                | 28.3% of planned commitments for the period        | Well behind   |
|                | <i>Centro (Objective 1)</i>                         | <i>43.8% of planned commitments for the period</i> | <i>Behind</i>   |
|                | Madeira (Objective 1)                               | 32.6 of planned commitments for the period         | Well behind   |
|                | <i>Norte (Objective 1)</i>                          | <i>35.6% of planned commitments for the period</i> | <i>Well behind</i>  |
| Spain          | National (Objective 1)                              | 95% of planned commitments for the period          | Good  |
|                | National (outside Objective 1)                      | 83% of planned commitments for the period          | Good  |
| Sweden         | National (outside Objective 1)                      | 33% of total planned commitments                   | Well behind   |
|                | <i>Norra (Objective 1)<sup>1</sup></i>              | <i>14.7% of total planned commitments</i>          | <i>Problematic</i>  |
|                | <i>Södra (Objective 1)<sup>1</sup></i>              |  |   |
| United Kingdom | National (outside Objective 1)                      | 24.7% of total planned commitments                 | Well behind   |

**Table 3: Financial progress of FIFG-funded programmes**

| Country | Programme  | Achievement at mid-term evaluation cut-off date | Qualitative LE assessment |
|---------|--|---|---------------------------|
|         | Cornwall (Objective 1)                                   | 20% of total planned commitments                | Well behind               |
|         | <i>Merseyside (Objective 1)</i>                          | <i>23% of total planned commitments</i>         | <i>Well behind</i>        |
|         | West Wales & the Valleys (Objective 1)                   | 65% of total planned commitments                | Good                      |
|         | Highlands and Islands (Objective 1 transitional support) | 66.8% of total planned commitments              | Good                      |
|         | Northern Ireland (Objective 1 transitional support)      | 35% of total planned commitments                | Well behind               |

Programs shown in italics involve less than €15 million in direct FIFG funding.

It is also important to note that, in all cases, the programme take-up rate varies across the various FIFG-funded measures. At this stage, we focus only on the overall financial performance of the programme and in the next section we discuss the take-up of the various FIFG measures.

While many different factors are at play, a few common reasons seem to explain in many cases the relatively poor performance of the FIFG-funded programme so far. While some are of an administrative nature, many reflect deeper systemic issues that cannot easily be overcome.

Among the administrative reasons the evaluators view as having slowed the progress of the programme one notes the following:

- Most frequently, a delayed programme start due to late promulgation of the EU and national/regional regulations;
- Problems with the availability of the funds from the national/regional co-financing authorities (for example, Netherlands outside Objective 1<sup>6</sup> and Guadeloupe<sup>7</sup>;

<sup>6</sup> In the Netherlands, the State co-financing funds provided through a special fuel fund were frozen for almost 11 months.

<sup>7</sup> In the Guadeloupe, due to an administrative error in the regional budget, no State co-financing is available for the measure "modernisation of the fishing ports infrastructure".

- Inconsistency between programme implementation by the regional implementation authority and characteristics of the local fishery sector such as ineligibility of certain types of boats (for example, Corsica<sup>8</sup> and Guadeloupe<sup>9</sup>).
- Lengthy and complex administrative programme procedures and processes and long delays before actual payments occur. This is viewed as discouraging programme uptake.<sup>10</sup>
- Lack of promotion of the FIFG programme among stakeholders.

More importantly, a number of systemic reasons appear to affect the fundamental performance of the programmes throughout the EU. The three most frequently-cited systemic reasons are:

- The weak financial state of the fisheries sector. Many potential project sponsors do not have the financial resources necessary to put forward projects.
- Declining natural resources and the uncertain future of the fisheries industry. This discourages new investment into the sector.
- Fragmented industry frequently characterised by a lack of sector-wide professional organisations. This is major problem for the FIFG programme measures requiring sector-wide engagement such as promotion of fish products at home and abroad, etc.

In addition, a number of evaluations noted that the following additional factors have hampered programme progress:

- General lack of interest.
- Overestimated needs due to the fact that many of the necessary investments were already undertaken under the previous FIFG programme.
- Overlap with the completion phase of the previous FIFG programme.
- Difficulties in reaching small project sponsors.
- Effects of specific EU regulations such as the dioxin regulations regarding fish from the Baltic Sea.

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<sup>8</sup> According to local programme implementation only boats greater than 18 m<sup>2</sup> are eligible for FIFG assistance while in Corsica most of the boats are smaller than 18m<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> In the Guadeloupe, practically all small boats use petrol engines but, according to local implementation the petrol boats are not eligible for FIFG assistance.

<sup>10</sup> The evaluations of the Swedish Norra and Sörra programmes and the Belgium Hainault programme identify such factors as particular problems.

That being said, several mid-term evaluations noted that a pro-active programme promotion response by the responsible authorities following a slow start of the programme has succeeded in boosting programme take-up in a number of cases (for example, Portugal Centro and Norte programmes).

### 3 Use of the FIFG structural funds.

Among the many potential FIFG-financed activities listed in Table 4, so far the one related to the adjustment of the fishing effort proved very popular and in many cases shows a very high take-up rate (see Table 5).

**Table 4: Activities that FIFG 2000-2006 can fund**

- Adjustment of the fishing effort
- Fleet renewal and modernisation of fishing vessels
- Small-scale inshore fishing
- Fishing in inland waters
- Protection and development of aquatic resources
- Fishing port facilities
- Development of aquaculture
- Processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products
- Measures to identify and promote new markets outlets
- Social measures accompanying restructuring
- Measures by groups within the trade
- Temporary cessation of activities

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Source: European Commission, 2002, [Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance, Instructions for Use](#)

The take-up of the measure supporting the fishing fleet renewal and modernisation varies across countries. In some countries, there is strong take-up while in others the financial weakness of the industry and the poor economic prospects of the sector tend to dampen the sector's enthusiasm for this measure (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Take-up of “Adjustment of the fishing effort” and “Fleet renewal and modernisation of fishing vessels” measures by mid-term evaluation cut-off date**

| Country | Programme                                   | Priority “adjustment of fishing effort”                  | Priority “fleet renewal and modernisation”   |
|---------|---|--|--|
| Austria | National (outside Objective 1)              | No information   | No information   |
|         | Burgenland                                  | n.a.   | n.a.   |
| Belgium | National (outside Objective 1)              | Funds frozen to accompany new plan in support of new CFP | 9.6% of total programme funds committed  |
|         | Hainault (Objective 1 transitional support) | n.a.   | n.a.   |
| Denmark | National                                    | 109% of total expenditures planned for period            | 24% of total expenditures planned for the period   |
| Finland | National (outside Objective 1)              | n.a.   |  |
|         | East (Objective 1)                          | n.a.   | -  |
|         | North (Objective 1)                         | n.a.   | -  |
| France  | National (outside Objective 1)              | 21.7% of total programme funds committed                 | 46.3% of total programme funds committed   |
|         | Corsica (Objective 1 transitional support)  | 0%   | 0% <sup>1</sup>  |
|         | Guadeloupe (Objective 1)                    | n.a.   | 43.3% of total programme funds committed (includes one small project of priority 1)                            |
|         | Guyana (Objective 1)                        | 0%   | 138% of total programmed funds for the period  |
|         | La Réunion (Objective 1)                    | 0%   | So far 0% committed but programmed projects amount to 9\$£5 of total funds                                     |
| Germany | Martinique (Objective 1)                    | 0%   | 0%.  |
|         | National (Objective 1)                      | 18.8% of total programme funds committed                 | 71.7% of total programme funds committed   |
|         | National (outside Objective 1)              | 0% but reflects administrative quirk – will be adjusted  | 23.3% of funds committed for construction of new boats and 33.1% of funds committed for modernisation of boats |
| Greece  | National (Objective 1)                      | 55.7% of funds committed                                 | 27.0% of funds committed   |

**Table 5: Take-up of “Adjustment of the fishing effort” and “Fleet renewal and modernisation of fishing vessels” measures by mid-term evaluation cut-off date**

| Country     | Programme  | Priority “adjustment of fishing effort”       | Priority “fleet renewal and modernisation”                    |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| Ireland     | National (Objective 1)                                     | 0% of programme funds taken up                | 3.4% of funds planned for the period taken up                 |
|             | Border, Midland, and Western Region (Objective 1)          | n.a.  | n.a   |
|             | <i>South &amp; East (Objective 1 transitional support)</i> | <i>n.a.</i>                                   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|             | <i>Peace II</i>  | <i>n.a.</i>                                   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
| Italy       | National (Objective 1)                                     | 50% of funds committed                        | 12.8% of funds committed                                      |
|             | National (Outside Objective 1)                             | 59.8% of funds committed                      | 34.8% of funds committed                                      |
|             | Calabria (Objective 1)                                     | n.a.  | n.a.  |
|             | Campania (Objective 1)                                     | n.a.  | n.a.  |
|             | <i>Molise (Objective 1)</i>                                | <i>n.a.</i>                                   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|             | Puglia (Objective 1)                                       | n.a.  | n.a.  |
|             | Sardegna (Objective 1)                                     | n.a.  | n.a.  |
|             | Sicilia (Objective 1)                                      | n.a.  | n.a.  |
| Netherlands | National (outside Objective 1)                             | 47% of funds committed                        | 0% committed but 78% in process of being committed            |
|             | <i>Flevoland (Objective 1 transitional support)</i>        | <i>n.a.</i>                                   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
| Portugal    | National (Objective 1)                                     | 60% of funds committed                        | 121% of funds committed                                       |
|             | <i>Alentejo (Objective 1)</i>                              | <i>n.a</i>                                    | <i>n.a</i>  |
|             | <i>Algarve (Objective 1)</i>                               | <i>n.a.</i>                                   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|             | Azores (Objective 1)                                       | 65.6% of funds committed                      | No detailed information as measure is lumped with many others |
|             | <i>Centro (Objective 1)</i>                                | <i>n.a.</i>                                   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|             | Madeira (Objective 1)                                      | No financial breakdown by measure is provided |   |
|             | <i>Norte (Objective 1)</i>                                 | <i>n.a.</i>                                   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
| Spain       | National (Objective 1)                                     | 13.4% of funds committed                      | 41.0% of funds committed                                      |
|             | National (outside Objective 1)                             | 21.0% of funds committed                      | 65.9% of funds committed                                      |
| Sweden      | National (outside Objective 1)                             | 89% of funds committed                        | 33% of funds committed  |
|             | <i>Norra (Objective 1)</i>                                 | <i>0% of funds committed</i>                  | <i>No detailed information</i>                                |

**Table 5: Take-up of “Adjustment of the fishing effort” and “Fleet renewal and modernisation of fishing vessels” measures by mid-term evaluation cut-off date**

| Country        | Programme  | Priority “adjustment of fishing effort” | Priority “fleet renewal and modernisation” |
|----------------|--|---|--|
|                | <i>Södra (Objective 1)</i>                               | 20% of funds committed                  |  |
| United Kingdom | National (outside Objective 1)                           | 32% of funds committed                  | 4% of funds committed                      |
|                | Cornwall (Objective 1)                                   | n.a.                                    | n.a.                                       |
|                | Highlands and Islands (Objective 1 transitional support) | 94.7% of funds committed                | 68% of funds committed                     |
|                | <i>Merseyside (Objective 1)</i>                          | <i>n.a.</i>                             | <i>n.a.</i>                                |
|                | Northern Ireland (Objective 1 transitional support)      | n.a.                                    | n.a.                                       |
|                | West Wales & the Valleys (Objective 1)                   | n.a.                                    | n.a.                                       |

Programs shown in italics involve less than €15 million in direct FIFG funding.

Notes: n.a. = not applicable/ not available

(1) In Corsica, the fleet renewal and modernisation has been funded by the Collectivité territoriale de Corse using own funds only.

The take-up of the aquaculture measure is in many cases low, reflecting the long development period of such projects (environmental impact assessments, administrative authorisations, etc), a lack of interest and, in some cases, a lack of support from public authorities for such projects (see Table 6). In a few cases, however, such as Italy, Ireland and Portugal the measure appears to perform well.

Similarly, the take-up of the “processing and marketing” measure is relatively low, although in few cases (Portugal, Spain) this measure appears to perform well (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Take-up of “Aquaculture” and “Processing and marketing:” measures by mid-term evaluation cut-off date**

| Country | Programme                             | Priority “aquaculture”  | Priority “processing and marketing” |
|---------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Austria | <i>National (outside Objective 1)</i> | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>                         |
|         | <i>Burgenland</i>                     | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>                         |
| Belgium | National (outside Objective 1)        | Commitments of 10.4% of total planned programme spending <sup>1</sup> |                                     |

**Table 6: Take-up of “Aquaculture” and “Processing and marketing:” measures by mid-term evaluation cut-off date**

| Country | Programme  | Priority “aquaculture”                                       | Priority “processing and marketing”                                   |
|---------|--|--|---|
|         | <i>Hainault (Objective 1 transitional support)</i> | Commitments of 0% of total planned spending <sup>2</sup>     |   |
| Denmark | National   | Spending of 11% of total planned spending                    | Spending of 31% of total planned spending                             |
| Finland | National (outside Objective 1)                     | Commitments of 17.3% of total planned programme spending     | Commitments of 43.9% of total planned programme spending              |
|         | <i>East (Objective 1)</i>                          | <i>n.a.</i>  | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|         | <i>North (Objective 1)</i>                         | <i>n.a.</i>  | <i>n.a.</i>   |
| France  | National (outside Objective 1)                     | Commitments of 35.8% of total planned programme spending     | Commitments of 20.6% of total planned programme spending <sup>1</sup> |
|         | <i>Corsica (Objective 1 transitional support)</i>  | <i>Commitments of 6% of total planned programme spending</i> | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|         | <i>Guadeloupe (Objective 1)</i>                    | <i>Programmed commitments of 0.0% of total plan</i>          | <i>Programmed commitments of 4.9% of total plan</i>                   |
|         | <i>Guyana (Objective 1)</i>                        | <i>Programmed commitments of 140.0% of plan for period</i>   | <i>Programmed commitments of 53% of plan for period</i>               |
|         | <i>La Réunion (Objective 1)</i>                    | Commitments of 0% of total planned programme spending        | Commitments of 7% of total planned programme spending                 |
|         | <i>Martinique (Objective 1)</i>                    | <i>n.a.</i>  | <i>n.a.</i>   |
| Germany | National (Objective 1)                             | Commitments of 15.7% of total planned programme spending     | Commitments of 46.8% of total planned programme spending              |
|         | National (outside Objective 1)                     | Commitments of 10.60% of total planned programme spending    | Commitments of 21.5% of total planned programme spending              |
| Greece  | National (Objective 1)                             | Commitments of 26.8% of planned programme                    | Commitments of 19% of planned programme                               |

**Table 6: Take-up of “Aquaculture” and “Processing and marketing:” measures by mid-term evaluation cut-off date**

| Country     | Programme   | Priority “aquaculture” spending                                   | Priority “processing and marketing” spending          |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| Ireland     | National (Objective 1)                                    | n.a.  | n.a.  |
|             | Border, Midland, and Western Region (Objective 1)         | Commitments of 62.9% of planned programme spending for 2000-2002  | n.a   |
|             | <i>South &amp; East (Objective 1 transitional support</i> | <i>Actual spending of 51% of planned spending over the period</i> | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|             | <i>Peace II</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
| Italy       | National (Objective 1)                                    | n.a   | n.a.  |
|             | National (Outside Objective 1)                            | Commitments of 52.7% of total planned programme spending          | Commitments of 38.8% of total programme spending      |
|             | Calabria (Objective 1)                                    | n.a   | n.a.  |
|             | Campania (Objective 1)                                    | n.a.  | n.a.  |
|             | <i>Molise (Objective 1)</i>                               | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|             | Puglia (Objective 1)                                      | n.a.  | n.a.  |
|             | Sardegna (Objective 1)                                    | Commitments of 20.3% of total planned spending                    | Commitments of 3.8% of total planned spending         |
|             | Sicilia (Objective 1)                                     | n.a.  | n.a.  |
| Netherlands | National (outside Objective 1)                            | Commitments of 0% of total planned spending                       | n.a.  |
|             | <i>Flevoland (Objective 1 transitional support)</i>       | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
| Portugal    | National (Objective 1)                                    | Commitments of 111% of planned spending for the period            | Commitments of 86% of planned spending for the period |
|             | <i>Alentjo (Objective 1)</i>                              | <i>n.a</i>  | <i>n.a</i>  |
|             | <i>Algarve (Objective 1)</i>                              | <i>n.a</i>  | <i>n.a</i>  |
|             | <i>Azores (Objective 1)</i>                               | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|             | <i>Centro (Objective 1)</i>                               | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a</i>  |
|             | <i>Madeira (Objective 1)</i>                              | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>   |
|             | <i>Norte (Objective 1)</i>                                | <i>n.a</i>  | <i>n.a</i>  |

**Table 6: Take-up of “Aquaculture” and “Processing and marketing:” measures by mid-term evaluation cut-off date**

| Country        | Programme  | Priority “aquaculture”                                    | Priority “processing and marketing”            |
|----------------|--|---|--|
| Spain          | National (Objective 1)                                   | Commitments of 26.1% of total planned spending            | Commitments of 61.2% of total planned spending |
|                | National (outside Objective 1)                           | Commitments of 23.4% of total planned spending            | Commitments of 27.3% of total planned spending |
| Sweden         | National (outside Objective 1)                           | Commitments of 31% of total planned spending <sup>4</sup> |  |
|                | <i>Norra (Objective 1)<sup>1</sup></i>                   | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>                                    |
|                | <i>Södra (Objective 1)<sup>1</sup></i>                   | <i>n.a.</i>   | <i>n.a.</i>                                    |
| United Kingdom | National (outside Objective 1)                           | Commitments of 5% of total planned spending               | Commitments of 34% of total planned spending   |
|                | Cornwall (Objective 1)                                   | n.a.  | n.a.   |
|                | Highlands and Islands (Objective 1 transitional support) | Commitments of 63% of total planned spending              | n.a.   |
|                | Merseyside (Objective 1)                                 | n.a.  | n.a.   |
|                | Northern Ireland (Objective 1 transitional support)      | n.a.  | n.a.   |
|                | West Wales & the Valleys (Objective 1)                   | Spending of 12.1% of planned spending for the period      | n.a  |

Programs shown in italics involve less than €15 million in direct FIFG funding.

Notes: n.a. = not applicable/not available

- (1) Includes protection of aquatic resources, aquaculture, fishing port facilities, processing and commercialisation and inland fisheries
- (2) Aquaculture and processing and commercialisation
- (3) But a very strong project pipeline exists.
- (4) Priority III which includes protection and development of marine resources, aquaculture, fishing port facilities and inland fisheries

The take-up of the measure in support of fishing ports facilities appears to depend largely on the institutional, technical and financial capacity of local authorities to promote such projects.

In contrast, the measure aimed at supporting crosscutting sector wide-activities such as sectoral marketing and promotion generally shows a very low take-up rate. This is mainly due to the fact that, in many countries, the sector is generally highly fragmented and lacks professional organisations capable of undertaking such activities

The technical assistance measure generally shows a high take-up rate, while the utilisation record of the other measures is varied, with no common determinant emerging from the mid-term evaluations.

Finally, of note is the fact that the programme priority "social measures accompanying restructuring" is only very rarely included in the various national and regional FIFG-funded programmes.

## **4 Outputs, results and impacts of FIFG-funded programmes**

The mid-term evaluations focus primarily on outputs and contain very little detail on programme results and impacts, largely because so little spending through FIFG has taken place since 2000.

In many cases, even the output information is too limited to be able to draw general conclusions about the performance of the FIFG-funded measures because many projects were still in gestation when the mid-term evaluations were undertaken.

In addition, the recording and monitoring of indicator data is often deficient and many mid-term evaluations note explicitly the need to improve the indicator recording and monitoring systems.

Moreover, in a number of cases, evaluators express the view that information on additional more relevant indicators would need to be collected to be able to assess the effectiveness of the various FIFG measures.

Thus, at this stage, we are unable to offer any general conclusions about the effectiveness of the programme in terms of meeting its immediate and longer-term objectives.

## 5 Programme management

In general the evaluators judge the management of the programme to be effective and efficient.

However, in a number of cases, evaluators feel the programmes would benefit from a strengthening of their administration, both through greater human resources and capacity.

Moreover, in a number of cases, the evaluators view administrative procedures as excessively heavy and bureaucratic, and project approval and payments cycles as excessively long.

Below, we list the programmes that the evaluators judge would benefit from improvements in their administration.

- Improved administrative resources and capacity, and improved programme management:  
Denmark national, Finland national, Finland East, Finland North, France Corsica, France Guadeloupe, France Guyana, France Martinique, Netherlands national, Portugal Algarve, Sweden national, Sweden Norra and Sörra
- Improved and shortened project selection processes:  
France national, Netherlands national, Portugal Mare, Sweden national
- Shorter payment periods:  
France national, Greece national
- Better monitoring and recording of programme data (including indicator data):  
France national, France Guadeloupe, France Guyana, France Martinique, Germany national Objective 1, Germany outside Objective 1, Netherlands national, Spain national Objective 1, Spain national outside Objective 1, Sweden national.

## 6 Efficiency of the measures

Very few evaluations address extensively the issue of efficiency, in part because the actual programmes started very late and many projects are still in gestation.<sup>11</sup>

Among those that do, namely Denmark national, Greece national, Germany national Objective 1, Germany national outside Objective 1, Netherlands outside Objective 1 (adjustment of fishing capacity only), Portugal national and Portugal Centro, Spain national Objective 1 and Spain national outside Objective 1, all conclude that the programme is efficient.

However, in our view, the overall relatively small number of completed projects, the lack of proper benchmarks and cross-country information seriously limit the usefulness of an efficiency analysis at this stage of the programme.

Such analysis will need to be undertaken in greater detail in the ex-post evaluations.

It is also interesting to note that the concept of "programme efficiency" appears to be addressed differently by the various mid-term evaluations.

Those listed above adopt the standard view of assessing efficiency on the basis of the project costs and expected results or impacts.

In contrast, a number of mid-term evaluations focus on administrative efficiency, i.e. on programme management costs.

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<sup>11</sup> In France, the issue of programme efficiency is not a core concern of the authorities.

## 7 Horizontal objectives

The vast majority of the mid-term evaluations comment on the impact of the FIFG-financed activities on the EU's horizontal objectives (sustainable development, equal opportunity, social inclusion and rural development). However, very few examine whether the horizontal objectives were integrated into the selection criteria as practically none review the selection criteria in detail.

### *Sustainable development*

Many evaluations note deep inherent tensions in the FIFG 2000-2006 programme with respect to the horizontal objective of sustainable development.

While the measure "adjustment of the fishing effort" makes a major positive contribution to the sustainable development objective by bringing the fishing fleet capacity more in line with the resource that can be harvested on a sustainable basis, the measure "fleet renewal and modernisation" tends to have the opposite effect by expanding capacity. Moreover, the new fishing capacity is generally much more efficient than the withdrawn capacity. Thus, even at unchanged overall capacity, the net environmental impact on the natural resources would be negative.

The sustainable development impact of other FIFG measures ranges from positive to negative with no overall clear picture emerging from the mid-term evaluations. The development of port facilities and aquaculture facilities is generally viewed as having a negative environmental impact, even though such projects are typically subject to rigorous environmental assessments and norms. But, other measures, such as protection and development of aquatic resources, will definitely have a positive impact.

To summarise, at present the contribution of FIFG 2000-2006 to the sustainable development objective is uncertain. It cannot be definitely determined until the end of the programme, when the whole range of actual activities can be fully assessed for their environmental impact.

### *Equal opportunity*

Overall, the FIFG-funded measures are viewed as contributing very little to the equal opportunity objective although some measures, such as those

benefiting small family businesses or fish processing, are viewed as having potentially a marginal positive impact.

In short, the overall contribution of FIFG 2000-2006 to the equal opportunity objective is neutral to marginally positive.

### *Social inclusion and rural development*

The mid-term evaluations very rarely address these two horizontal objectives. This leads one to conclude that FIFG 2000-2006 does not make any significant contribution to the two objectives.

## 8 Key recommendations made by mid-term evaluations

Several mid-term evaluations recommend that, to increase the take-up of FIFG 2000-2006, the programme would need to be better promoted. Such a recommendation assumes that a latent demand for FIFG-funded measures exists and that lack of information is the key cause of the low take-up.

This may be the case in a number of regions. But, as noted earlier, several systemic reasons (e.g., the weak financial situation of potential project sponsors and the uncertain outlook for the industry) also contribute to the programme's low utilisation. It is not clear that in such circumstances a better promotion of the programme will and should increase programme utilisation rates. In cases where take-up rates are problematic, it may be worthwhile considering completely stopping the programme, as the Merseyside evaluation proposes.

That being said, Section 2 also notes a number of administrative impediments. In response, many mid-term evaluations put forward recommendations to simplify and shorten the project approval cycle, and accelerate the payment procedures.

Many mid-term evaluations also make strong recommendations to improve the monitoring systems through the timely collection and recording of agreed indicators and adjustments to the set of agreed indicators.

A number of mid-term evaluations also recommend that the administrative management of the programme needs to be strengthened, in terms of both resources and capacity.

Some mid-term evaluations also suggest that potential project sponsors be better supported through technical assistance during the project development phase so as to reduce project rejection rates.

Finally, many mid-term evaluations recommend that, within the originally approved plan, funds be re-allocated from the measures with low take-up rates to the measures showing the greatest demand or potential demand.

## 9 The Performance Reserve

Our review of the mid-term evaluations identified only a very small number of such evaluations making an explicit recommendation to allocate the Performance Reserve.

These recommendations are listed below:

- Austria national programme outside Objective 1: full allocation to the “processing and marketing infrastructure measures”.
- Denmark national programme: full allocation to measures supporting cross-sector efforts such as “food safety, traceability and documentation”.
- Finland national programme outside Objective 1: the mid-term evaluation provides a measure-by-measure analysis of which measures should be increased, decreased or remain unchanged.
- Finland East Objective 1: increase level of FIFG to a level comparable to that of the Southern Finland (national) programme.
- France national programme outside Objective 1: full allocation to following measures “adjustment of fishing capacity”, “small-scale inland fishery” and “horizontal activities: promotions, innovative activities”.
- Netherlands national programme outside Objective 1: no specific details about which measures or programmes should be supported.

In a few cases, Finland North, France Corsica, France Guadeloupe, France Martinique, Germany outside Objective 1, UK Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, the implicit or explicit recommendation is to not allocate the Performance Reserve as the programme is judged to have enough or excess funds.

In many cases, the mid-term evaluations discuss the progress made in achieving the Performance Reserve indicators but do not explicitly address the issue of the allocation of the Performance Reserve.

## 10 Concluding Remarks

A fundamental feature of the EU's fishing fleet has long been its 'chronic overcapacity'<sup>12</sup> (DG-Fisheries 2003). This overcapacity, due both to the large number of EU fishing vessels and to new technology that has increased the capacity of each vessel, means that EU fishing fleets have put tremendous pressure on ocean fish stocks. Therefore a key goal of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is to reduce ocean fishing activity. This is in direct conflict with the FIFG objective of fleet renewal and modernisation of the fleet.

Three factors have contributed to declines in returns to investment in fishing capacity. Firstly, depletion of fish stocks has led to smaller catches and the necessity for ships to travel further from Europe to find fish. Secondly, restrictions on fishing activity under the CFP have reduced the incentive to invest in ships. Third, the development of enclosed fish farms, also known as aquaculture, has put downward pressure on the price of fish.

In this context, it might not be surprising that, so far, the take-up of projects sponsored by FIFG to modernise ships is less than expected.

In general, FIFG programmes are well behind target for a wide range of reasons.

While the mid-term evaluations provide some information on the progress of the FIFG programmes, two factors limit their usefulness.

First, there is little detail on FIFG, partly because so little spending on FIFG has occurred to date. Nevertheless, it is obvious that, in addition to several administrative reasons, a range of deeper systemic reasons (the weak financial state of the industry and uncertain industry outlook) dampen programme take-up.

Second, the evaluators often adopted the view that local actors should take all steps to ensure all available funds are spent within the time allowed. Thus, more spending is typically viewed as good, with little concern as to the goals of that spending. This is a particular problem for FIFG, since the goal of FIFG

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<sup>12</sup> European Commission DG - Fisheries, (2003), Factsheets on the new CFP – 2003. Downloadable from [http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/doc\\_et\\_publ/pub\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/doc_et_publ/pub_en.htm)

- a reduction in EU fishing capacity - is not local but EU-wide. Only some of the reports consider the ultimate goals of FIFG and whether programmes to reduce fishing capacity and others to modernize fishing capacity actually clash with one another.