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Independent Evaluation of EFCA 2017-2021

Final report

Ipsos



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Glossary

List of acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym or abbreviation	Definition
ACTREP	Activity Report
AIS	Satellite Automatic Identification System
AOB	Any other business
AR	Annual Report
AWP	Annual Work Programme
BFT	Bluefin tuna
BSAC	Baltic Sea Advisory Council
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CEG	Control Expert Group
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CG	Coast Guard
COPA-COGECA	Comité des organisations professionnelles agricoles – Comité général de la coopération agricole de l'Union européenne
INTPA	Directorate-General International Partnerships
DG	Directorate-General
EAPO	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ED	Executive Director
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
EIR	Electronic Inspection Report System
e-IRS	Electronic Inspection and Surveillance Report
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
ENV	Directorate-General Environment
EP	European Parliament
EQ	Evaluation question
EQM	Evaluation questions matrix
ERS	Electronic Reporting System
ETF	European Transport Workers' Federation
EU	European Union
EUFA	European Fisheries Alliance
FCWC	Fisheries Committee of the West central Gulf of Guinea
FLUX	Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
IAS	Internal Audit Service

ICT	Information and communications technology
IMS	Integrated Maritime Service
IT	Information technology
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated
JDP	Joint Deployment Plan
KPI	Key performance indicator
LRIT	Long-Range Identification and Tracking
LO	Landing obligation
MCS	Monitoring, control and surveillance
MED	Mediterranean
MEDAC	Mediterranean Advisory Council
MS	Member State
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NS	North Sea
NWWAC	North-Western Waters Advisory Council
OPV	Offshore Patrol Vessel
PECH	European Parliament's Committee on Fisheries
PESCAO	Project 'Improved regional fisheries governance in Western Africa'
RA	Risk assessment
REM	Remote Electronic Monitoring
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
RPAS	Remotely Piloted Aircraft System
RRA	Regional Risk Assessment
SCIP	Specific Control and Inspection Programme
SG	Steering Group
SPD	Single Programming Document
SRFC	Sub-regional Fisheries Commission
SWO	Swordfish
SWWAC	South-Western Waters Advisory Council
TCA	Trade and Cooperation Agreement
TWA	Tripartite Working Arrangement
UK	United Kingdom
VCN	Virtual Coordination Network
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System (formerly known as Marsurv)

Definitions

Name	Definition
Case study	Case studies are a self-contained, in-depth assessment of specific projects, initiatives, or programmes.

Contribution analysis	Contribution analysis is an alternative to (quasi) experimental evaluation designs. When these are not feasible, contribution analysis is able to systematically assess whether the observed results are due to the intervention being evaluated, rather than other factors. In essence, it replaces the concept of 'attribution' (which can only be ascertained statistically) with that of 'contribution' (which is assessed based on the combined weight of the assembled evidence, including both qualitative and quantitative data).
EFCA Corporate systems	They include the EFCA website, intranet, e-mail services, file servers and any application developed or used internally in support to internal EFCA activities.
EFCA E-Learning	E-learning is the use of computer and internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions to enable distance learning and improve performance. The EFCA e-learning platform makes interactive courses and modules, video tutorials and other training resources available to EU and non-EU officials involved in fisheries control and inspection activities.
EFCA Electronic Inspection and surveillance Report System (EISR)	This system will allow EFCA to receive and parse SEIR messages, exchange them with the stakeholders involved in JDP operations, ensure data quality, integrity and reliability through validation operations, and to provide the user with a set of tools, accessible through a web user interface, to view, search, analyse and produce statistics and reports based on specific criteria.
EFCA Electronic Recording and Reporting System (ERS)	This system allows EFCA to receive and parse ERS messages, exchange them with the stakeholders involved in JDP operations, ensure data quality, integrity and reliability through validation operations, and to provide the user with a set of tools, accessible through a web user interface, to view, search, analyse and produce statistics and reports based on specific criteria.
EFCA Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)	The system allows EFCA to capture and process VMS data (which in addition to the vessels geographical position, course and speed, also includes the vessel's name, registration number, radio call-sign) and to present this information through a geographical information system to support JDP Operations for the various areas covered by the relevant SCIPs.
Evaluation question matrix	The evaluation question matrix is a table that includes the key questions that the study seeks to answer, alongside questions explanations, hypotheses (in the case of contribution analysis), data collection tools, and methods.
Fishnet	It is the portal to access most of EFCA applications (ERS, VMS, EIR, EFCA-IMS, JADE) and the portal to provide EFCA stakeholders with collaboration tools (e.g. sharing data and documents, exchanging information, teleconferencing). This system is designed to support decision-making, planning, operational coordination, assessment of joint control operations, and to promote remote collaboration in support of EFCA activities.
Intervention logic	The intervention logic provides a description and usually a diagram summarising the relationship between inputs and effects, or how a chain of events leads to the intended outcomes. The intervention logic is ultimately a tool that helps to explain (and often visualise) the steps and actors involved in the subject of the study. It is useful both as a communication tool and as an analytical tool. In evaluations, the concept of intervention logic combines elements from the logframe approach and the theory of change, and differences between approaches are not clear-cut, so that their meanings often overlap. There are therefore many possible formats or approaches to describe the logic of an intervention, and the Better Regulation Guidelines (2021) do not mandate a particular approach.
JADE	JADE is a web application to record, manage and report activity on JDPs.

Executive summary

The Five-Year Independent External Evaluation of EFCA 2017-2021 responds to the legal obligation defined by Article 48 of EFCA's Founding Regulation, which requires the Agency to carry out an independent evaluation every five years. This executive summary briefly illustrates the rationale for this study and the methodology used, and then presents the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the future of EFCA.

About this study

The purpose of the present evaluation is to provide an external and independent review of the Agency's progress and achievements for the period 2017-2021. The specific objectives are:

- Assess the overall impact of EFCA's Founding Regulation on the achievement of a high level of compliance by economic operators (i.e. fishing industry) with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy, including the 2016 Agency's extended mandate on European Coast Guard Cooperation;
- Assess EFCA's working practices, performance and flexibility in the light of the agency's available resources and increasing activities (e.g. related to EFCA's international dimension actions, from delegation agreements or ad hoc grants), including synergy effects with other EU bodies, and the financial implications;
- Assess the possible need to make changes to the Agency's tasks, scope, areas of activity, structure, functions and working practices in view of continuing or forthcoming operational and administrative challenges.

The scope of the evaluation covers the period 2017-2021, and relates to the implementation of EFCA's Founding Regulation, EFCA's mandate, mission, strategy, and areas of activity, as well as its structure, working methods, and working practices.

Methodology

This evaluation is based on research and analysis undertaken between January and July 2022. The evaluation followed a theory-based evaluation approach, founded in EFCA's intervention logic. The mixed-methods design used in this evaluation relies on a wide range of primary data (collected via a series of in-depth interviews with internal and external stakeholders and an online survey), as well as secondary data (including EFCA's Annual Reports, legislation, internal documents, meeting minutes, and monitoring information). Alongside this, two case studies were prepared to gather in-depth insights into two key EFCA's activities. In addition, contribution analysis was used to qualitatively assess EFCA's contribution to achieving a high level of compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) rules. This is the cornerstone of the theory-based approach underpinning the evaluation, and it is based on triangulating the various sources of evidence to confirm or refute a series of hypotheses that have been formulated in order to determine the potential contribution that EFCA's activities have made to CFP compliance. The hypotheses that inform the contribution analysis approach were linked to the questions set out in the Evaluation Question Matrix, and specific tests were developed to check whether the links in the intervention logic hold true, whether the assumptions hold true, and whether other factors contributed to the observed outcomes.

Evaluation findings

The evaluation assessed EFCA's performance against the five criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU added value, in line with the European Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines.¹ The results for each criterion are summarised in the ensuing paragraphs.

Effectiveness

The evaluation found that, over the period 2017-2021, EFCA had operated effectively, and that it had reached its objectives. In particular, survey and interview findings indicated that EFCA had successfully coordinated fisheries monitoring and control activities, it had promoted common standards in control, inspection and surveillance, and it had promoted compliance through effective and harmonised application of EU inspection procedures. Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs), one of EFCA's key activities, were seen as an important tool to favour, *inter alia*, best practice and operational know-how sharing among Member States and a coherent and targeted approach to control, although there were more mixed views on whether JDPs had been effective at reducing infringements. In addition, there was also broad support for EFCA's training programme, which was deemed crucial to promote a consistent application of CFP rules.

EFCA also emerged as a strong player in fisheries control at international level, in particular due to its unique expertise in relation to support in various activities conducted with third countries, such as training, technical support, and the assessment of catch certificates. Less positive feedback was received in relation to EFCA's IT systems and data sharing; the need to modernise some of the IT systems in use and promote seamless exchange of fisheries control data via the FLUX standard were highlighted as areas for improvement.

By and large, EFCA appears to have made a positive contribution to compliance with the CFP. The contribution analysis, which focused on a sample of activities, confirmed that EFCA had made a positive contribution through its JDPs and the training programme. It was less obvious whether EFCA had made a positive contribution to compliance with the landing obligation, but the evaluation found that the Agency was making progress in this regard..

Efficiency

The evidence collected and reviewed as part of this evaluation suggests that EFCA's resources enabled the Agency to operate efficiently. The budget increase that was granted in 2017 to EFCA allowed the Agency to consolidate its functions and expand its remit to cover Coast Guard functions and manage the risks related to Brexit. Stakeholders overall agreed that the additional budget was proportional to EFCA's new tasks, and that EFCA's financial management had been sound. Stakeholders also valued EFCA's ability to scale up and adapt its operations, and they commended its flexibility *vis-à-vis* the uncertainty brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. As regards the implementation of IT systems and facilitating data sharing, collection, and analysis, evidence shows that EFCA made progress during the evaluation period, in particular by developing specific frameworks to improve control activity data quality and system integration. Nevertheless, some shortcomings were highlighted by internal and external stakeholders, and are in part due to under-resourcing.

Further to this, the evaluation found that EFCA's internal working practices and mechanisms for programming, monitoring, and reporting were generally efficient, although room for improvement was identified in certain areas. Whilst external stakeholders generally held positive views of the Agency's

¹ European Commission, 2021. Better Regulation Guidelines, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/swd2021_305_en.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

functioning, some criticism was expressed in relation to EFCA's internal structure. As regards monitoring arrangements, stakeholders were by and large satisfied, although progress reporting was at times perceived as redundant.

Relevance

The sources consulted for this evaluation indicate that EFCA's objectives are highly relevant to the needs of fisheries control authorities in the EU. All objectives of EFCA are deemed important by the stakeholder consulted in the context of this study, with strong support for activities directly related to control and inspection in EU waters. In particular, EFCA was quick to react to some key challenges, such as the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and COVID-19, and embraced new technologies and ways of working as a result.

Coherence

Although stakeholders were not able to comment extensively on the level of integration between EFCA's activities and broader EU policies, the desk reviews indicates that coherence with some of the key EU priorities is high.

EFCA's mission directly contributes to the European Green Deal by supporting the goals of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 as regards the preservation of marine resources.² In addition to this, EFCA's work on digital services and data chimes with the ambition of creating a Europe fit for the digital age. Furthermore, EFCA promotes food safety and authenticity by supporting Member States to ensure the traceability of fishery products. Lastly, the Agency's cooperation with EMSA and Frontex improved synergies between maritime policy and space policy at EU and national level.

EU added value

The evaluation found evidence of high added value of EFCA in coordinating fisheries control resources, harmonising procedures, generating trust among Member States' fisheries control authorities and, more generally, levelling the playing field.

Feedback points at the technical expertise of EFCA as one of the key reasons for its added value. Survey and interview results showed that, in the absence of EFCA, Member States would still carry out control and inspection activities, but they would face coordination problems, and they would gradually diverge in their approach to fisheries control and inspection. Similarly, Member States might be able to carry out functions such as training of inspectors, but the outcomes might be sub-optimal and impinge on the level playing field. Stakeholders, particularly from national authorities, held the view that terminating EFCA's mandate would lead to considerable difficulties in ensuring a proper and coherent implementation of the CFP.

Conclusions

Overall, the evidence collected and analysed as part of this evaluation confirms that, throughout the period 2017-2021, EFCA performed well. EFCA's mission and objectives – in particular the three 'core' objectives of (1) promoting the highest common standards for control, inspection and surveillance under the CFP; (2) enhancing the coordination of EU Member States' fisheries control; and (3) promoting

² COM(2020) 380 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee Of The Regions, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

compliance through an effective and harmonised application of EU inspection procedures – were found to be highly relevant in view of the needs of CFP stakeholders.

EFCA's activities, overall, were deemed to be effective. The most important activities in this respect were the Joint Deployment Plans, which effectively foster coordination and exchange of good practices between Member States, and help to focus scarce resources on the most high-risk fleet segments and vessels, and the training and capacity building activities, which are highly valued by participants and wider stakeholders alike, and contribute to both 'levelling the playing field' and 'raising the floor' as regards control, inspection and surveillance practices across the EU. Other activities were also found to be effective – including EFCA's work on new technologies (such as the pilot project on Remote Electronic Monitoring), which has the potential to help address key challenges (such as the effective control of the landing obligation). International activities and the cooperation with EMSA and Frontex in the context of Coast Guard functions were also deemed to have been carried out effectively. Diverging views were also expressed by stakeholders in relation to the appropriateness and added value of EFCA's involvement in CEGs.

In view of this, the evaluation concludes that EFCA has made a positive and significant contribution to creating the conditions for achieving a high level of compliance with CFP rules. Although there is no reliable data on the evolution of overall CFP compliance levels over 2017-2021, and therefore EFCA's impact cannot be measured quantitatively, the evaluation has found strong evidence that EFCA's activities (in particular JDPs and training) have helped to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of Member States' inspection, control and surveillance efforts. This increases the likelihood that infringements are detected, and thereby acts as a deterrent to non-compliant behaviours.

By and large, EFCA is a well-functioning organisation. The evaluation identified no major shortcomings or weaknesses in its organisational performance, horizontal and administrative functions and procedures, or structure. EFCA disposes of an adequate level of resources, and of the right mix of skills and capabilities, and it adapted remarkably well to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is a sign of a sufficiently flexible, well-run organisation. However, the challenging labour market environment for IT services has slowed down progress in IT systems, one of EFCA's key areas of activity. Furthermore, there are some indications that the current organisational structure, which is the result of the gradual evolution of EFCA's tasks, leads to some overlaps and grey areas between the responsibilities of the two main operational units that should eventually be revisited and potentially clarified.

EFCA's mission and objectives, and the activities it carries out, support some of the EU's main priorities, such as protecting marine biodiversity as part of the EU Green Deal and promoting the use of digital tools for fisheries inspection and control, which resonates with the objective of building an EU fit for the digital age. EFCA's role is also paramount in supporting Member States as regards food safety.

Lastly, EFCA's added value resides in its expertise, and it has grown over the years. As feedback from stakeholders indicates, EFCA's contribution to levelling the playing field is almost irreplaceable, in particular around coordinated inspection and control activities and capacity building and training.

Recommendations

The evaluation has outlined the following recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Analyse the internal organisation of JDP activities..

- Recommendation 2: Explore the use of secondments from EU national agencies in IT, and the revision of the existing framework contract on IT services.
- Recommendation 3: Consider EFCA's role in CEGs in the context of the existing legal basis and EFCA's mandate.
- Recommendation 4: Maintain a proactive approach and continue preparing for potential new tasks under the proposed future fisheries control regulation.
- Recommendation 5: Continue to promote digitalisation and the harmonisation of common standards for data sharing.
- Recommendation 6: Create guidelines for Member States on how to promote training among Union inspectors.
- Recommendation 7: Continue using a hybrid format for training sessions.
- Recommendation 8: Expand the breadth of training courses.
- Recommendation 9: Further tailor the risk assessment methodology to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Recommendation 10: Ensure better and more inputs from the relevant experts in the risk treatment measures.

1 Introduction

This is the draft final report of the third independent evaluation of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA).³ The evaluation was conducted by Ipsos in partnership with Poseidon. It began in November 2021 and it will close in December 2022.

Its objectives, as per the Terms of Reference, are to assess:

1. The **overall impact** of EFCA's Founding Regulation⁴ on the achievement of a **high level of compliance** by economic operators (i.e. the fishing industry)⁵ with the rules of the CFP, including the 2016 Agency's extended mandate on European Coast Guard Cooperation.
2. EFCA's **working practices, performance and flexibility** in the light of the Agency's available resources and increasing activities (e.g. related to EFCA's international dimension actions, from delegation agreements or ad hoc grants), including synergy effects with other EU bodies, and the financial implications.
3. The **possible need to make changes** to the Agency's tasks, scope, areas of activity, structure, functions and working practices in view of continuing or forthcoming operational and administrative challenges.

The **scope** covers the entire five-year period from 2017 to 2021, and encompasses:

- The implementation of EFCA's Founding Regulation;
- EFCA's working methods and practices;
- The results obtained and the fulfilment of the Agency's mission and strategy; and
- EFCA's mandate, tasks, areas of activity, structure and functions as defined in the Founding Regulation.

1.1 Structure of the report

This interim report is the third formal deliverable of the evaluation. The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 describes the methodology used to conduct the evaluation.
- Chapter 3 summarises the role of EFCA and the key contextual factors that have affected EFCA's role and activities during the evaluation period (2017-2021).
- Chapter 4 includes key findings per evaluation criterion (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU added value) and answers the evaluation questions.
- Chapter 5 summarises the conclusions of the evaluation.

³ To comply with Article 48 of its Founding Regulation, EFCA commissions an independent external evaluation every five years. Previous evaluations were conducted in 2012 and 2017.

⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 768/2005 of 26 April 2005 establishing a European Fisheries Control Agency and amending Regulation (EEC) No 2847/93 establishing a control system applicable to the common fisheries policy.

⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, the term 'compliance' in the context of this study refers to the adherence by fishers and other actors in the fishing industry with their respective obligations.

- Chapter 6 provides strategic and operational recommendations for EFCA.
- The annexes include: the results of the online survey of stakeholders, the two case studies conducted as part of this evaluation, and details of the methodology used (evaluation matrix and contribution analysis framework).

2 Methodology

This chapter describes the overall approach and the methodologies used to undertake the evaluation.

The evaluation has followed a theory-based evaluation approach founded in EFCA's intervention logic (see chapter 3.2) and in the Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM) developed at the inception stage, which can be found in Annex 4. The evaluation team developed further the evaluation questions proposed in the terms of reference for this evaluation. Some evaluation questions were broken down in sub-questions (for instance, to explore in-depth the achievement of each of the objectives in EFCA's Founding Regulation), hypotheses/assessment criteria were added to each question based on the evaluation team's understanding of EFCA and on the results of the previous independent evaluation, and methods to collect and analyse information were mapped against each question. The EQM was reviewed and approved by the evaluation steering committee with the approval of the inception report.

The results reported in chapter 4 are organised around the evaluation criteria and evaluation questions, as per the EQM, and judgement is made based on the assessment criteria or hypotheses set for each question. For transparency purposes, when evidence was limited to provide a full assessment of the evaluation question, the limitation is acknowledged in the relevant chapter of the report. Overarching limitations that apply to the evaluation are also discussed in chapter 2.3.

2.1 Analytical methods

2.1.1 Contribution analysis

Evaluation Question 2 asked the following: What is EFCA's impact on achievement of a high level of compliance with rules made under the CFP?

Compliance with the CFP is hard to assess, as fisheries controls do not target all vessels, or a representative sample of all fishing vessels, and even if vessels are inspected, it is not always possible to detect all the infringements committed. Quantifying the attribution of EFCA to the level of compliance with the CFP is also not possible. In this evaluation, therefore, we have assessed the qualitative contribution of EFCA to this outcome through a contribution analysis framework.

We defined six hypotheses which summarise six different pathways by which EFCA may, or should, contribute to improving the effectiveness of inspections, hence increasing the likelihood that infringements are detected and acting as a deterrent for committing infringements. The contribution analysis framework is further described in chapter 4.1.2., and the full framework is available in Annex 5.

2.1.2 Case studies

The scope of this evaluation is very broad, and therefore two activities were selected for in-depth investigation. This allowed the evaluation team to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU added value of two activities with more level of detail, while also leaving some resources to analyse other activities at a higher level. The two case studies are the following:

- The JDP risk assessment case study: It was used to explore the extent to which risk assessments successfully identify high risk fleet segments (fish species, vessels, etc.), how this knowledge is applied in control activities, and how it improves the effectiveness of control.

- The case study on training for Union inspectors: It investigated the extent to which the training provided contributed to levelling the playing field for fisheries in the EU, and whether it had any effect on compliance with CFP rules.

2.2 Data collection methods

2.2.1 Desk research

The review of relevant documentation and monitoring data informed the development of the research tools, and was used as one of the sources during the evidence triangulation process. The desk research included both sources publicly available (e.g., EFCA annual reports, EFCA work programmes, relevant regulations, SCIP decisions, etc.), and confidential documentation and monitoring data shared by EFCA. Regarding the latter, EFCA provided the study team with sources relevant to the case studies, namely: JDP assessment reports, materials related to the implementation of Risk Assessment in JDPs (i.e. 2020 JDP assessment reports for the North Sea and Mediterranean JDPs), and data on the training of Union inspectors (e.g. statistics on the e-learning platform; summary reports on the training courses conducted; minutes of the Working Group on and Steering Group on Training and Exchange of Experience (WG-SGTEE)). The Agency also provided access to the e-learning platform to the Evaluation Team.

2.2.2 In-depth interviews

Overall, 38 interviews with 40 internal and external stakeholders were conducted (out of 84 stakeholders contacted). The first batch of interview invitations were sent out in early April, with first interviews being conducted in mid-April. Further stakeholders were invited for an interview as the study team received further contact details. All stakeholders suggested by EFCA were contacted with an email invitation tailored to the expertise and profile of the interviewee explaining the purpose of the interview, which was accompanied by an accreditation letter signed by EFCA confirming the official nature of the study, and a privacy notice informing about the confidentiality of their responses. Reminders (up to three) were sent to unresponsive contacts.

Table 1 below shows a breakdown of the interviews conducted by stakeholder group, including those focused on the case studies.

Table 1: Overview of progress made with the interview programme

Group	Stakeholder type	Interviewees
Inner circle	EFCA management, operational and support staff	8
	Administrative Board members (representatives of the European Commission and Member States)	7
	Advisory Board members (representatives of the Advisory Councils)	2
Outer circle	Staff of competent national authorities with direct exposure to one or more of EFCA's activities	14
	DG MARE desk officers with direct exposure to one or more of EFCA's activities	4
	Other EU Agencies	4
Periphery	NGO sector representatives	1

2.2.3 Online survey of stakeholders

The online survey of EFCA stakeholders was launched on 6 April 2022 and remained open until 9 May 2022. It was run via the Commission's survey system (EUSurvey). The survey was disseminated by EFCA directly via email, and it was also advertised by EFCA on their website and social media. A total of 167 stakeholders participated in the survey, out of around 500 invitations sent (around 33% response rate). Although the response rate is relatively high, few responses were received by specific groups (staff from other EU Agencies, and from certain Member States).

The survey consisted primarily of closed (multiple choice) questions, with open questions for stakeholders who wanted to provide more extensive feedback. The survey was designed around a number of profiling questions that were used to show each respondent only the questions that were more relevant to their level of familiarity with EFCA's activities and their role in the implementation of the activities. The analysis was segmented by three main groups of respondents: EFCA staff (30 respondents), national authorities (89), and other stakeholders (48), for a total of 167 respondents. Detailed information on the survey responses received can be found in Annex 1.

2.3 Challenges and limitations

The main challenge of this evaluation was its wide scope, compared to the resources allocated to it. To some extent, this challenge was mitigated with the selection of two activities that were analysed in depth. This provided sufficient level of detail on two core activities and allowed the team to draw some conclusions based on these activities that can be extrapolated to the overall performance of the Agency. These activities were strategically selected: the case study on the risk assessment provided inputs to assess the JDPs more broadly, which is EFCA's flagship activity. The case study on training of Union inspectors, on the other hand, allowed the team to evaluate EFCA's performance against another of its core objectives: the harmonised application of inspection procedures.

This left two objectives somewhat less explored: the international dimension and the coast-guard initiative. One of the main activities that EFCA performs in the international dimension is the assistance it provides to PESCAO. PESCAO was recently evaluated by a team led by Poseidon, who are also supporting this independent evaluation of EFCA.⁶ The lack of in-depth data collected to inform the achievement and relevance of the objectives in the international dimension was therefore mitigated by referring to the findings and conclusions of the evaluation of PESCAO.

The coast-guard initiative is the objective that has been covered the least in this evaluation, both through primary and secondary research. In total, 33 survey respondents were involved in coast-guard activities, of whom 22 are stakeholders external to EFCA (non-EFCA staff). Their responses provide an overarching picture of stakeholders' satisfaction with these activities, although they do not explain the reasons why stakeholders are satisfied or unsatisfied, or why agree with certain statements. We were able to conduct a few interviews with interviewees who were involved in activities in this domain (staff from EMSA, FRONTEX and some national authorities), and their responses provided a bit more nuance into these aspects. Nevertheless, the evaluation was not able to fully assess this objective with the information available.

Some limitations were encountered to assess evaluation question 3 (To what extent are the current activities carried out by EFCA appropriate for achieving its objectives?). Our hypotheses and assessment criteria to examine this question used as a starting point the results of the previous evaluation, which identified international activities as the least appropriate activity. This evaluation has

⁶ COWI and Poseidon (2022) Mid-term evaluation mission for ECOWAS Commission / PESCAO

found that international activities are now considered very appropriate among EFCA's stakeholders. The evaluation identified, instead, an activity where there is disagreement among stakeholders on whether it is relevant or not: EFCA's participation in regional Control Expert Groups (CEGs). Assessing the appropriateness of this type of activities would have required observing CEG meetings and interviewing different stakeholders who take part in them. This was not foreseen at the inception stage as a data collection tool (and even if anticipated, budget would have likely be a constrain to include this activity).

The evaluation also experienced some minor limitations to assess question 2 on the impact of EFCA in improving the level of compliance with the CFP. In addition to the challenges mentioned in chapter 2.1.1 that explains the rationale to use contribution analysis, it should be mentioned that the evaluation team was not able to perform all the tests that were set at the inception phase to assess whether the hypotheses are true or false (i.e. to confirm or refute whether EFCA is making a positive contribution) due to lack of data to assess some of the tests. This has not represented a major challenge since this only applies to a reduced number of tests, and the team was able to provide a robust conclusion for all of the hypotheses.

Finally, some limitations and challenges experienced during data collection should be mentioned. The evaluation plan included up to 50 interviews, of which 40 were conducted. The types of stakeholders who participated less than expected in interviews are Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and industry organisations. Some of them, however, participated in the survey, and therefore their views are incorporated (although not at the same level of depth as interviews would have provided).

3 The European Fisheries Control Agency

3.1 The Agency

In 2002, EU Member States agreed to establish the European Fisheries Control Agency as part of the reform “to instil a culture of compliance within the fisheries sector across Europe”.⁷ The necessary legislation to set up EFCA was adopted in 2005,⁸ and in September 2016, EFCA’s Founding Regulation was significantly amended extending EFCA’s role to European cooperation on Coast Guard Functions.⁹

EFCA’s mission is to promote the highest common standards for control, inspection and surveillance under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).¹⁰ With this aim, the Agency’s activities span from the operational coordination of fisheries inspection and control across the EU, to supporting the EU’s international action, especially with regard to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU), an to cooperation on Coast Guard functions.

3.2 Mission of the Agency

3.2.1 Legal framework

EFCA’s role and responsibilities are defined by its Founding Regulation,¹¹ and were then expanded in Regulation (EU) 2016/1626,¹² and include:

- Cooperation with and assistance to Member States (MS) and the European Commission in control and inspection obligations at international level;
- Coordination of control and inspection activities of Member States, including via Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs) and national operational plans, with the use of IT systems for data and information sharing;
- Assistance to Member States in the effective and harmonised application of CFP rules via the provision of training and the development of common methodologies and procedures to enhance fisheries control and inspection;
- Collaboration with other EU Agencies (EMSA and Frontex) in the context of Coast Guard functions;

⁷ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2022. Mission and strategy, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/objectives-and-strategy> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁸ Council Regulation (EC) No 768/2005 of 26 April 2005 establishing a Community Fisheries Control Agency, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=celex:32005R0768> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁹ Regulation (EU) 2016/1626 of the European Parliament and the Council extends EFCA’s mandate to cover Coast Guard functions, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0022:0061:EN:PDF> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

¹⁰ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2022. Mission and strategy, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/objectives-and-strategy> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

¹¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 768/2005 of 26 April 2005 establishing a Community Fisheries Control Agency, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=celex:32005R0768> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

¹² Regulation (EU) 2016/1626 of the European Parliament and the Council extends EFCA’s mandate to cover Coast Guard functions, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0022:0061:EN:PDF> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

- Provision of contractual services to Member States relating to control and inspection obligations.

In addition to this, other EU legal acts are related with the roles and responsibilities for EFCA.

- **Council Regulation (EC) 1224/2009 CFP new control regime**,¹³ which establishes an EU-wide system for the control, inspection and enforcement by national authorities of the CFP rules. It provides for, *inter alia*, the requirements to produce catch certificates and sales notes, vessel monitoring and inspection provisions, and enforcement rules. The main objectives of the control regulation are to i) ensure that only the permitted quantities of fish are caught; ii) collect the necessary data for managing fishing opportunities; iii) clarify the roles of the EU Member States and the European Commission; iv) ensure the rules are applied to all fisheries in the same way and with harmonised sanctions throughout the EU (i.e. level playing field); and v) ensure that fisheries and aquaculture products can be traced back and checked throughout the supply chain.
- **Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 CFP Basic Regulation**,¹⁴ which contains the basic rules of the EU's CFP. The main objectives of the CFP Basic Regulation are to: i) bring fish stocks to sustainable levels; ii) end wasteful fishing practices (including, *inter alia*, via the enforcement of the landing obligation); and iii) create new opportunities for growth and employment in coastal regions.
- **Regulation (EU) 1379/2013 common organisation of markets in fishery and aquaculture products**, which is an integral part of the CFP and provides for a set of rules around i) professional organisations, ii) marketing standards, iii) consumer information, iv) competition rules, and v) market intelligence in the fishery and aquaculture sector.
- **Regulation (EU) 1005/2008 Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing**,¹⁵ which aims to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal fishing activities. It also introduces the requirement to produce catch certificates and, for Member States, the requirement to share lists of vessels that are in breach of existing rules. In addition, it prohibits the import of fish from vessels or countries that fish illegally.
- **Decision (EU) 2018/1986 establishing specific control and inspection programmes for certain fisheries**,¹⁶ which imposes specific rules and control and inspection programmes for particular fisheries in the different EU areas. It also constitutes the basis for EFCA's JDPs.

¹³ Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32009R1224> (last accessed: 20 July 2022)

¹⁴ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0022:0061:EN:PDF> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

¹⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32008R1005> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

¹⁶ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1986 of 13 December 2018 establishing specific control and inspection programmes for certain fisheries, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018D1986&rid=3> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

Figure 1 explores the main activities that EFCA carries out to fulfil its responsibilities under each of the above-mentioned regulations, as well as the responsibilities that fall under the remit of national inspection authorities and the European Commission.

Figure 1: EFCA's activities per relevant regulation

	1 Council Regulation (EC) 1224/2009 CFP new control regime	2 Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 CFP Basic Regulation & international law (LOSC)	3 Regulation (EU) 1005/2008, Illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing
EFCA responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support uniform implementation of control system of CFP Ensure the organisation of operational cooperation Provide assistance to MS Assignment of Agency officials as Community inspectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate at international level to strengthen compliance with existing rules, especially to combat IUU fishing Cooperation and coordination between MS Assist the expert group on compliance meetings as an observer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate in the identification of fishing vessels carrying out IUU fishing Assist EC and MS in their relations with RFMOs and third countries, and in the implementation and control of the EU IUU Catch Certification scheme, through workshops and exchange of experiences
EFCA activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and coordinate operational plans Carry out inspections as necessary Develop a core curriculum for the training of national and Community inspectors Undertake joint procurement of goods and services relating to control and inspection activities by MS Elaborate criteria for the exchange of means of control and inspection Conduct risk analysis Develop common inspection methodologies and procedures Develop and manage data and systems on Fisheries activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All EFCA activities contribute to their responsibilities towards CFP (see adjacent boxes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Commission in the identification of fishing vessels suspected of carrying out IUU fishing, on the basis of risk management
MS inspection authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose to the EC Union inspectors (need to meet certain requirements) Participate (together with EFCA and EC) in the establishment of standardised and coordinated inspection procedures at sea and on land Collect and report information on fishing activities to the EC EFCA, and other MS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National coordination in collection and management of scientific data on fish stocks Coastal state responsibility: police vessels in their own waters Port state responsibility: control vessels coming into their ports Flag state responsibility: oversee activity of vessels in their own registry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flag State to take action against vessels involved in IUU fishing and inform EC about the measures taken Cooperation with EC and third countries to investigate and sanction IUU fishing Provide EC with a list of designated ports (annually) Carry out inspections in respective designated ports of at least 5% of third country fishing vessels operations Notify the EC of the quantities landed and/or transhipped by third country vessels (quarterly) Flag state to validate catch certificates
European Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a list of Union inspectors for the implementation of specific control and inspection programmes and international fisheries control programmes Participate (together with EFCA and MS) in the establishment of standardised and coordinated inspection procedures at sea and on land Develop common standards to ensure communication between MS and between MS, EFCA and the EC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate and conclude sustainable fisheries partnership agreements with non-EU countries Cooperation and coordination between MSs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place vessels engaging in IUU fishing under the Community IUU vessel list Cooperation with MS and third countries to investigate and sanction IUU fishing Publish list of designated ports (OJEU) Issuance of alerts Compile and analyse all IUU fishing information Identify non-cooperating third countries Identify vessels involved in IUU fishing and notify relevant flag States

4 Regulation (EU) 2015/812 Landing Obligation

5 Decision (EU) 2018/1986 specific control & inspection for certain fisheries

6 Regulation (EU) 2016/1626, EFCA's mandate covering Coast Guard functions

EFCA responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with MS and regional bodies to support uniform implementation of the LO Develop regional approaches to implement the LO, using JDPs to obtain regional indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with MS to establish a harmonised risk assessment methodology Assist MS and EC in the training of fisheries inspectors/officials (MS and third countries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-agency cooperation between EFCA, EMSA, and Frontex in Coast Guard functions Support MS carrying out coast guard functions at national, EU and international level Provide MS with surveillance and communication services, capacity building and exchange of information Cooperate with the EC and MS to elaborate a practical handbook on European cooperation on coast guard functions
EFCA activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor compliance with the LO, using tools such as REM Assist MS and EC in the training of fisheries inspectors/officials (MS and third countries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a standard risk assessment methodology along with Member States and plan JDPs Deploy of control means and exchange of information between competent authorities Organise regional trainings on the implementation of JDPs and common interpretation of rules and standardised procedures Daily follow-up of control activities to address CFP challenges (e.g. EU-UK trade agreement) Coordinate and implement operational plans and pilot projects Organise Regional Steering Groups in areas covered by a SCIP/JDP or Joint International Inspection Scheme Support the implementation of regional projects in cooperation with MS regional groups Provide of a set of training manuals, training courses and e-learning material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and facilitate use of new fisheries control technologies for MS Use of EFCA's charter of control means in coordinated operations Planning, analysis and assessment of EUCG multi-purpose operations Share reporting assets and other capabilities with MS and other agencies involved in multipurpose operations Provision of joint training courses with other EU agencies, in the context of the EUCG Functions
MS inspection authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the catch composition by way of sampling Ensure catches falling under de minimis exemption do not exceed the limit established Control of compliance of landing of catches below the minimum and its conservation Use of control observers on board fishing vessels to monitor fisheries subject to LO Apply point system for serious infringements and violations of the LO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with EFCA to establish a standardised risk assessment methodology Assess risks with regard to relevant fisheries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with the EC and Agencies to elaborate a practical handbook on European cooperation on coast guard functions Participate in relevant EUCG multi-purpose operations
European Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit annual report to the EP and the Council on the implementation of the LO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish specific control and inspection programmes for several sea basins, together with MS and EFCA (via JDPs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with MS and Agencies to elaborate a practical handbook on European cooperation on coast guard functions Adopt the handbook in the form of a recommendation

Source: Authors' elaboration based on literature review

3.2.2 Intervention logic

The intervention logic (sometimes also referred to as ‘theory of change’¹⁷) of EFCA for the period 2017-2021 is presented in Figure 2. The intervention logic is presented in the form of a visual aid that shows the legal framework within which EFCA operates, its resources, and the steps taken to achieve impacts in terms of cause and effect.

In particular, the intervention logic sought to find commonalities between the various annual and multi-annual workplans published throughout the reference period; this was done by highlighting core activities and themes. The purpose of the intervention logic is to illustrate the activities carried out by EFCA, and how these contribute towards specific outputs and outcomes, which in turn cause specific impacts. Therefore, the intervention logic provides a clear analytical framework for the evaluation of EFCA between 2017 and 2021, defining the activities and outcomes that need to be examined, the causal links to be tested, and the issues that need to be considered in evaluating the Agency.

Legal framework and resources

The overall legal framework governing EFCA’s activities sets the scope of the Agency’s work. In addition to this, direct transfers and grants constitute the sources of funding that EFCA relies on. EFCA’s budget increased considerably in 2017 (from €9.2m in 2016, €17.1m in 2017), as the Agency became involved in coast guard functions. Specific contributions are also provided by the European Commission in the form of grants or contribution agreements, or additional funds might be provided by Member States in cases in which the agency provides *ad hoc* services to them.

Activities

The activities are structured around the objectives pursued by EFCA. In the intervention logic, these are grouped in line with the areas of intervention as defined in EFCA’s latest SPD. Activities mainly involve:

- **Operational activities**
 - **Operational coordination:** This includes all activities related to controls and inspections that are carried out to plan, coordinate, implement, and assess JDPs and other programmes; exchange of data and information on fisheries activities; and control and inspection of fisheries.
 - **Assistance to cooperation:** Common methodologies for data management, risk assessment, and training of Member States’ inspectors are used to promote a level playing field within the EU.
 - **International dimension:** This set of activities centres around EFCA’s work with third countries, and EFCA has a supporting role to the European Commission and the Member States.
 - **EU cooperation in Coast Guard:** The Agency is involved in joint operations with EMSA and Frontex, which are an opportunity for all the agencies involved to share technologies and best practices.

¹⁷ European Commission (2021). Better Regulation Toolbox November 2021, page 389, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/br_toolbox-nov_2021_en_0.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

▪ Horizontal activities

- **Communication and representation:** EFCA seeks to share information about its activities among all the relevant stakeholders.
- **Administration and governance processes:** EFCA has a series of internal procedures in place to ensure the smooth achievement of the Agency's objectives.
- **ICT and information security:** development and management of IT data systems for exchange of information and data, including guaranteeing data security, confidentiality, and integrity of fisheries control data.

Outputs and outcomes

Outputs and outcomes are the most tangible result of the activities carried out by EFCA. These are summarised in six different categories.

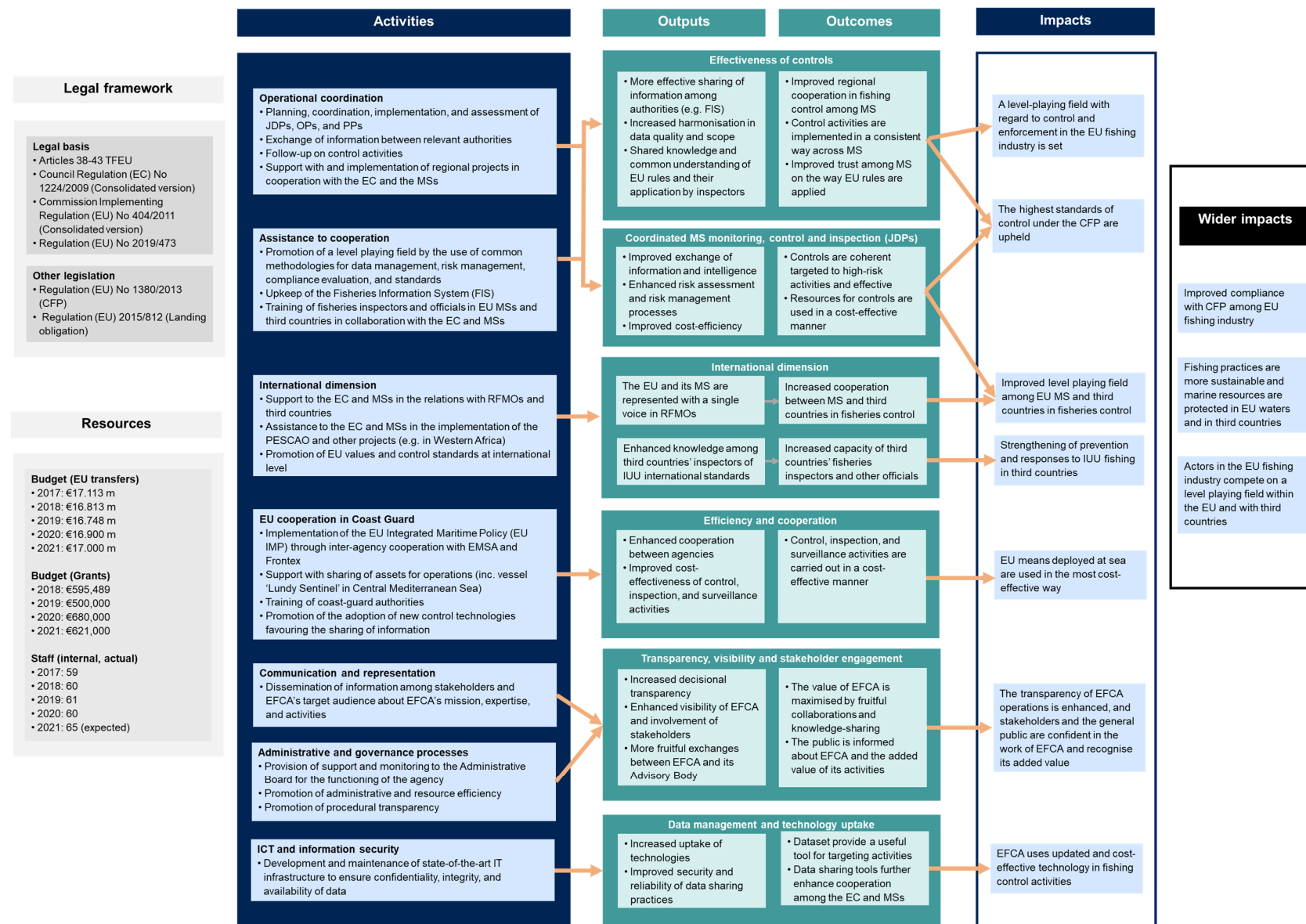
- **Effectiveness of controls**, and the capacity building activities including through the use of the EFCA e-learning platform.
- **Coordinated Member State monitoring, control, and inspection (JDPs):** The main outcome of coordinated implementation of JDPs centres around enhanced controls, which are targeted to high risk activities, species, or vessels, and thus allow to achieve economies of scale.
- **International dimension:** In its supporting role, EFCA promotes increased cooperation in relation to fisheries controls and improve technical capabilities in third countries.
- **Efficiency and cooperation:** EFCA's involvement in coast guard functions is expected to lead to enhanced inter-agency cooperation and cost-effectiveness of controls.
- **Transparency, visibility, and stakeholder engagement:** EFCA's efforts in terms of communication activities are expected to lead to increased transparency and improved working relationships between the various structures of EFCA, maximising the value of EFCA's activities.
- **Data management and technology uptake:** This encompasses outputs such as the development and management of IT systems for the aggregation and analysis of fisheries monitoring and control data, supporting exchange and sharing of data, information, and knowledge among authorities, as well as the uptake of new technologies for control and inspection activities, such as satellite images or the use of drones. Operational control activities are carried out via a series of systems, which include: Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), Recording and Reporting System (ERS), EFCA Integrated Maritime System (EFCA IMS), Electronic Inspection Report (EIR), and Electronic Jade. Alongside these, Fishnet is a platform used by Member States and EFCA to exchange files and collaborate on projects. These activities are expected to contribute to the overall functioning and cost-effectiveness of EFCA.

Impacts

All the activities, outputs, and outcomes described previously are expected to lead to a series of impacts that align with EFCA's core mission. Through its activities, EFCA seeks to achieve the highest standards

of control, inspection, and surveillance and a levelling of the playing field in fishing controls across Member States. A level playing field is also expected to be achieved between the EU and third countries, especially in relation to the prevention of IUU fishing. A further impact of EFCA's activities relates to transparency, with stakeholders and the general public recognising the added value of the Agency in its field. Additionally, EFCA also seeks to achieve cost-effective use of its resources for control and inspection activities. Ultimately, these impacts will result in a set of wider impacts, including: improved compliance with the CFP rules by the EU fishing industry, the establishment of a level playing field for the fishing industry within the EU and with third countries, and more sustainable fishing practices, leading to enhanced protection of marine resources.

Figure 2: EFCA's intervention logic for 2017-2021



3.3 Organisation and governance

The **Administrative Board** is the governing body of EFCA, and it comprises one representative for each Member State and six representatives from the European Commission. The chairperson of the Administrative Board is nominated from among its European Commission members, and the Board as a whole appoints the Executive Director of EFCA.

The **Executive Director** is responsible for the overall management of EFCA, and it acts under the supervision of the Administrative Board. The current Executive Director, Dr Susan Steele, took office on 1st September 2021, replacing Pascal Savouret, who had held the post since 2011.

In addition to these roles, the **Advisory Board** advises the Executive Director and ensures close cooperation with stakeholders. It is composed of representatives of the 11 **Advisory Councils**. These Councils bring together stakeholder organisations from the fishing industry and other interest groups, and are key partners in EFCA's communication strategy, whilst providing expert recommendations to the Agency.

One representative from the Advisory Board and the Executive Director take part in the Administrative Board's meetings, but have no voting rights.

EFCA's organisation chart has changed between 2017 and 2021. The most notable change is the reduction from four Units in 2017 to three Units in 2018, which was primarily due to the resignation of one of the Heads of Unit. Functions previously grouped under the 'Operations' Unit were redistributed across the other operational Units.

3.4 Past and future changes to EFCA

3.4.1 The proposed future Fisheries Control Regulation

The current Fisheries Control Regulation¹⁸ (see section 3.2.1 above) was adopted in 2009 and came into force in 2011 to provide a system of monitoring, inspection and enforcement for fishing operations in EU waters and activities of the EU fleet globally. However, in line with the EU's REFIT programme, **the Commission decided in 2018 to initiate a revision**. The overall objective of the revision is to modernise, strengthen and simplify the EU fisheries control system, ensure sustainability, and increase the level playing field in fisheries control. On 30 May 2018, the European Commission published a proposal for a new Fisheries Control Regulation.¹⁹ The proposal was developed following a Special Report from the European Court of Auditors,²⁰ which found that fisheries controls were not sufficiently effective nor harmonised. The Fisheries Control regulation proposed by the European Commission aims to simplify the rules whilst modernising the way controls are carried out, in light of the technological

¹⁸ Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32009R1224> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

¹⁹ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1005/2008, and Regulation (EU) No 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018PC0368> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

²⁰ European Court of Auditors, 2017. Special Report No 08/2017: EU fisheries controls: more efforts needed, available at: https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR17_8/SR_FISHERIES_CONTROL_EN.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

progress made in this field since the entry into force of the current Fisheries Control Regulation in 2010.²¹

The proposed future fisheries control regulation (as per the European Commission's original proposal) would introduce a number of notable changes, including, *inter alia*, the following elements:²²

- Mandatory **position tracking** systems would need to be installed on all fishing vessels, either as a satellite connection or via land-based mobile network;
- Fishing vessels would be required to have **electronic logbooks** containing information on catches;
- All fishing vessels would need to complete a **landing declaration**,²³ to be submitted electronically;
- A new process of **verification of the engine power** would be in place, and certain types of vessels using active gear would be subject to automatic **monitoring of their engine power**;
- **Digital inspection reports** would be mandatory;
- As regards the landing obligation, **CCTV** would need to be installed on a minimum percentage of vessels fishing for species subject to the landing obligation;
- **Traceability of fishery products** would be enhanced by ensuring that lots are linked to specific landings, based on unique fishing trip numbers;
- A list of 'serious infringements' leading to specific **administrative sanctions** would be implemented.

Furthermore, with the proposed future fisheries control regulation, EFCA would be responsible for the "harmonisation of the application of the common fisheries policy as a whole" and, in particular, it should have the mission of "research and development in the area of control and inspection techniques and provision of assistance to the Commission in specific fields" (Article 67).²⁴

Thus, the proposed future control regulation would review EFCA's mandate to align its objectives with the reformed CFP and the IUU Regulation.²⁵ EFCA would have additional responsibilities particularly in relation to IT systems and data collection and sharing. Under the proposal, EFCA would be in charge of the implementation and operation of the CATCH database, which is expected to replace the current

²¹ Consolidated text: Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Union control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02009R1224-20190814> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

²² European Parliament, 2022. Revision of the fisheries control system In "A European Green Deal", available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-european-green-deal/file-revision-of-the-fisheries-control-system> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

²³ Exceptions apply for transshipment declarations.

²⁴ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1005/2008, and Regulation (EU) No 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018PC0368> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

²⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32008R1005> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

paper-based catch certification scheme.²⁶ In addition to this, under the European Parliament's proposed amendments to the Fisheries Control Regulation (March 2021), EFCA would assume a central role also in relation to other databases, such as those for electronic inspection reports.²⁷ However, the amendments proposed by the European Parliament would also limit the use of CCTV for the purpose of the enforcement of the landing obligation.^{28,29}

In June 2021, the Council adopted a "general approach" on the revision of the fisheries control system, which is intended to pave the way for inter-institutional negotiations with the European Parliament.³⁰ The revision of the fisheries control system was included by the three EU institutions in their list of common legislative priorities for 2021, on which they intended to ensure "substantial progress".³¹ The proposal, part of the European Green Deal, is currently at trialogue stage.

3.4.2 European Cooperation on Coast Guard Functions

In September 2016, EFCA's Founding Regulation³² was amended to allow the Agency – together with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) – to support national authorities carrying out coast guard functions at national and Union level and, where appropriate, at international level.³³

After a pilot project in 2016-2017, the cooperation between the three Agencies was formally defined by a Tripartite Working Arrangement (TWA) that entered into force in March 2017, initially for a period of four years³⁴. The agreement was then renewed in March 2021 with no end date³⁵.

Under the TWA, the Agencies carry out a series of activities, as described below:³⁶

- Information sharing (e.g. vessel position and earth observation data, via a series of technologies and IT systems);
- Surveillance and communication;
- Capacity building (e.g. staff exchanges);

²⁶ European Parliament, 2022. Revision of the fisheries control system In "A European Green Deal", available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-european-green-deal/file-revision-of-the-fisheries-control-system> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

²⁷ Amendment 277, Report on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1005/2008, and Regulation (EU) No 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0016_EN.html (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

²⁸ Amendment 120. Except for cases in which vessels have committed two or more serious infringements (Amendment 125).

²⁹ Amendment 124.

³⁰ Outcome of the 3806th Council meeting – Agriculture and Fisheries, 28-29 June 2021. Further information available at URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/50983/st10238_edited-en21.pdf

³¹ Available at URL: <https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/thematicnote.do?id=2066000&l=en>

³² Regulation (EU) 2019/473 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 on the European Fisheries Control Agency, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32019R0473> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

³³ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2022. EU Coast Guard and Chartered Means, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/eu-coast-guard-and-chartered-means> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

³⁴ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2022. EU Coast Guard and Chartered Means, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/eu-coast-guard-and-chartered-means> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

³⁵ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2022. EU Coast Guard and Chartered Means, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/eu-coast-guard-and-chartered-means> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

³⁶ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2020. Single Programming Document: Multiannual work programme 2020-2024 and Annual work programme 2020, pages 39-40, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/QV-AC-20-001-EN-N%20web%2031%2003%2020.pdf> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

- Risk analysis;
- Asset and capacity sharing.

The TWA is informed by a common annual strategic plan and is complemented by specific Service Level Agreements for the provision of control means.³⁷

3.4.3 Chartered means and Brexit

In 2017, EFCA received a substantial budget increase in order to lease an offshore patrol vessel (OPV) for the first time, the *Lundy Sentinel*. The vessel is primarily employed as a patrol vessel in EU and international waters in the context of JDPs. It also contributes to multipurpose operations in the context of the TWA with EMSA and Frontex. In 2021 EFCA chartered another vessel, the *Aegis*³⁸, with a third fisheries inspection vessel expected to be leased in or after 2022.

In response to Brexit, the Agency, in cooperation with the European Commission and the concerned Member States, organised a number of activities and meetings on Brexit-related issues, such as, in 2020, addressing Brexit-related monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) issues in the North Sea and Western Waters JDPs, or on inspector training on the application of IUU and NEAFC regulations for landings and imports of fishery products from the UK. Resources were further increased in 2020, when the Steering Groups of the North Sea and Western Waters JDPs agreed to put in place additional resources to deal with the uncertainty around Brexit. As a result, EFCA established a Virtual Coordination Network (VCN), which aimed to improve the awareness of the consequences of Brexit and of the risks related to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) with the UK. The VCNs met over 50 times throughout 2021, and discussed aspects such as common challenges with UK vessels and the potential impacts of regulatory divergence between the EU and the UK.³⁹ In addition, new technologies, such as IMS, were trialled in the area to monitor the presence of UK vessels.⁴⁰

On an *ad hoc* basis, EFCA may also utilise EMSA's contracted RPAS.

³⁷ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2017. Annual Report 2017, page 6, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/atoms/files/EFCA%20Annual%20Report%20for%20the%20year%202017-final.pdf> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

³⁸ This vessel was chartered as a result of the cooperation with EMSA. Further information is available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/chartered-means> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

³⁹ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Annual Report 2021, pages 48-49, available at: https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EFCA%20Annual%20Report%20%28AR%29%20for%20year%202021-%20correction%2025.5.22_0.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁴⁰ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Annual Report 2021, page 48, available at: https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EFCA%20Annual%20Report%20%28AR%29%20for%20year%202021-%20correction%2025.5.22_0.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

4 Evaluation findings

This chapter summarises the evaluation findings, which are organised by evaluation criteria and evaluation questions, as per the EQM (see Annex 4). The sub-chapters are, therefore: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU added value.

4.1 Effectiveness

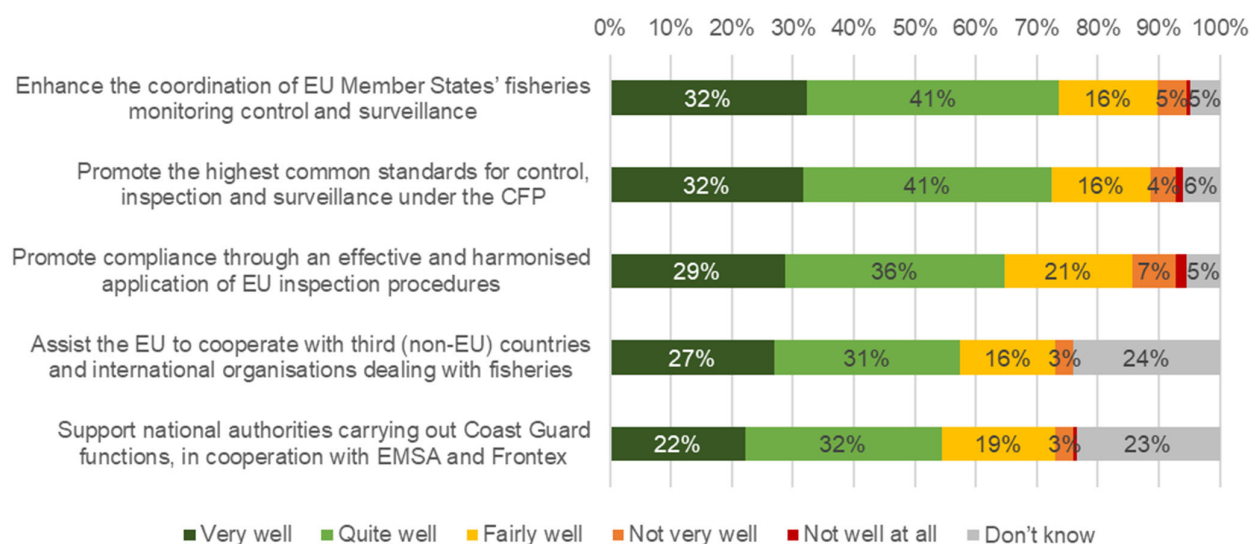
4.1.1 Effectiveness of the Agency at reaching its expected objectives and results (EQ1)

This evaluation assessed the effectiveness of EFCA at reaching its objectives, as per the Single Programming Document (SPD) 2022-2026:⁴¹

- Enhanced coordination of fisheries monitoring control and surveillance.
- Promote compliance through an effective and harmonised application of Union inspection procedures.
- Assist the EU in its international dimension in accordance with article 30 CFP Regulation.
- Provide operational support to national authorities in Coast Guard functions.

The extent to which EFCA has successfully met these objectives has been assessed via interviews, the online survey of stakeholders, and analysis of documentation reviewed. This chapter summarises the results of this assessment for each of these four objectives.

Figure 3: In your view, how well does EFCA meet these objectives?



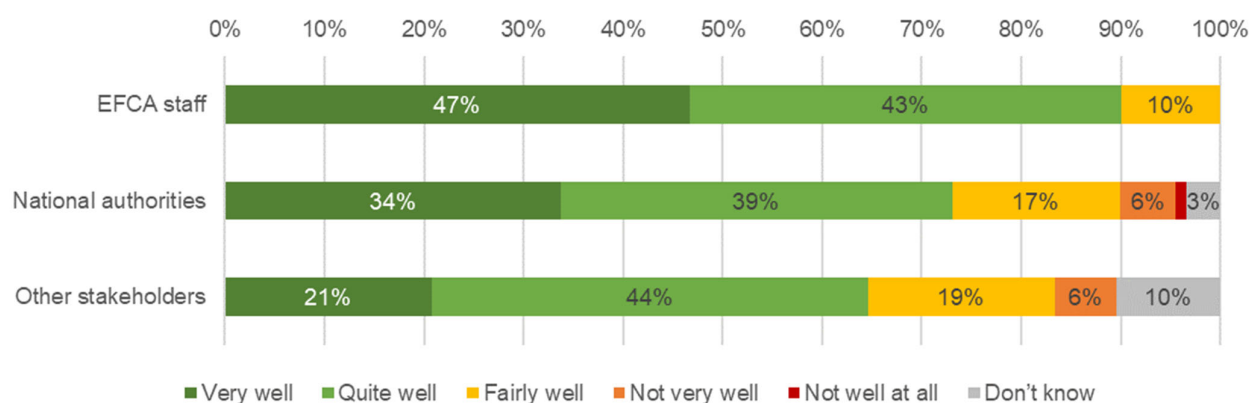
Base: 167

⁴¹ The evaluation scope covers the years 2017-2021. However, at the inception phase, the evaluation steering group informed that the objectives have remained the same since then, with only minor changes in wording.

Enhanced coordination of fisheries monitoring control and surveillance (EQ1.1)

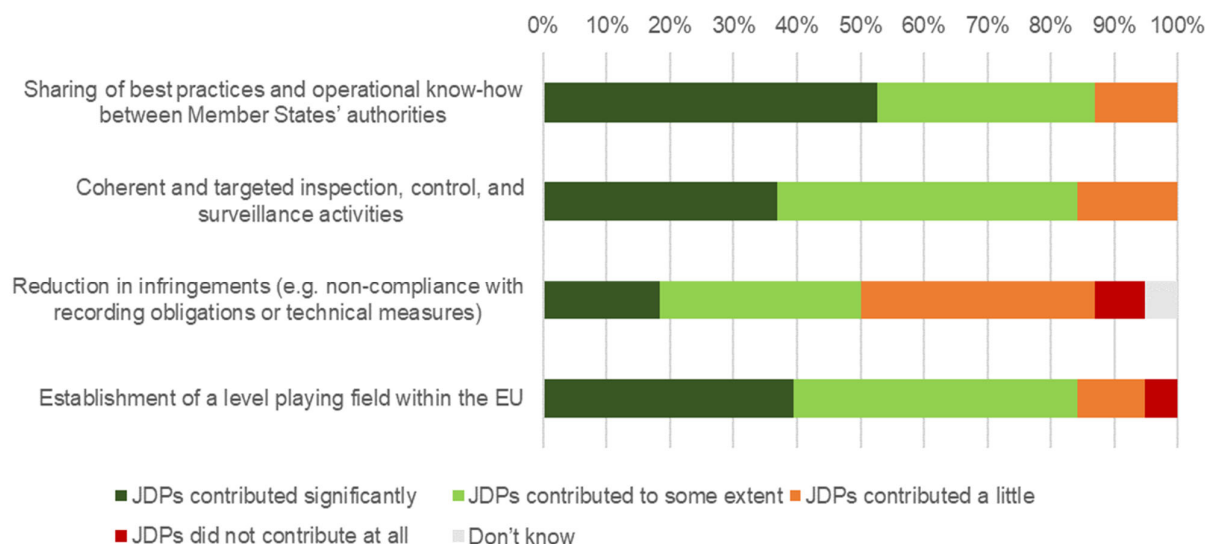
Overall, stakeholders consulted through the survey and interviews agreed that EFCA has enhanced coordination of fisheries monitoring control and surveillance. In the survey, EFCA staff were more positive about the Agency's performance than national authorities or other stakeholders, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: In your view, how well does EFCA meet these objectives? Enhance the coordination of EU Member States' fisheries monitoring control and surveillance

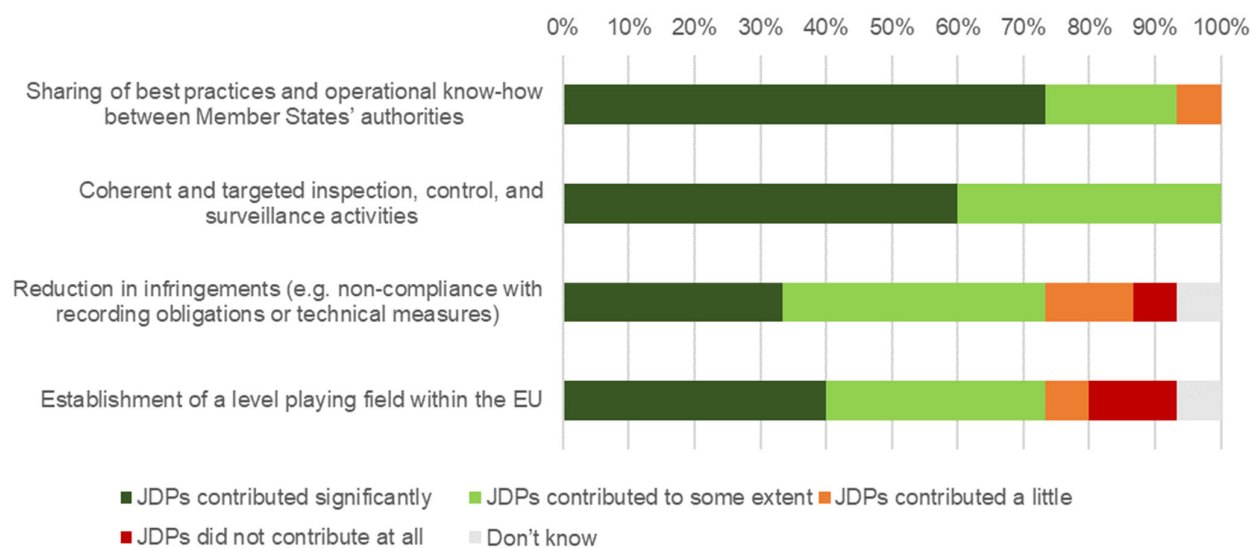


Base: 30 EFCA staff, 89 national authorities, 48 other stakeholders

Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs) are the main activity that EFCA undertakes to coordinate fisheries control across Member States. By and large, the JDPs were considered by interviewees the most important activity that the Agency undertakes to meet its mission and objectives. Survey respondents considered that the main achievements of the JDPs are their contribution towards *sharing of best practices and operational know-how between Member States*, and their contribution to *establishing coherent and targeted inspection, control, and surveillance* (89% and 91% of respondents who were involved in JDPs agreed, respectively, that JDPs contributed significantly or to some extent to these outcomes). There was also a general high level of agreement that JDPs contribute to establishing a level playing field within the EU (83% of survey respondents thought JDPs contribute significantly or to some extent).

Figure 5: Based on your experience, to what extent do JDPs contribute to the following? (National authorities)

Base: 38 (National authorities)

Figure 6: Based on your experience, to what extent do JDPs contribute to the following? (Other stakeholders, excluding EFCA staff and national authorities)

Base: 15 (Other stakeholders)

In interviews, stakeholders explained that cooperation among Member States' fisheries authorities has gradually improved over the years thanks, in great part, to EFCA's coordination. In the words of one interviewee, EFCA has been "successful at making Member States speak the same language".

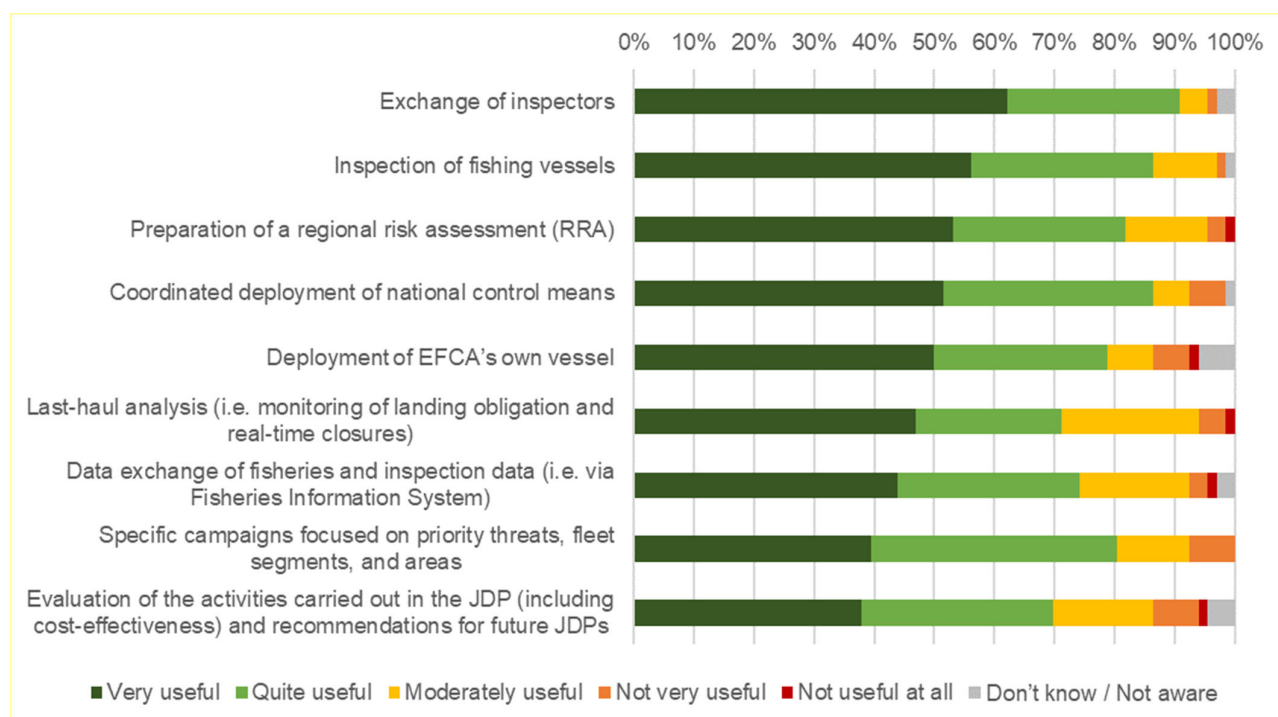
There was a lower level of agreement among survey respondents about the fact that JDPs contribute to reducing infringements. Around a third of respondents considered that JDPs do not contribute at all, or only contribute a little, to this outcome. In interviews, stakeholders explained that it is easier to measure the direct results of EFCA's activity (e.g., improved cooperation), than the impact on overall levels of compliance by economic operators.

Survey respondents were also asked whether they found some activities within JDP preparation, implementation and assessment useful to meet CFP objectives (see Figure 7). Overall, at least 70% of survey respondents agreed that these activities are very useful or quite useful. The activities considered the most useful are the exchange of inspectors and the coordinated deployment of national means. The results align with the feedback provided by interviewees, who also highlighted the exchange of inspectors as a useful activity to improve communication among Member States' control authorities and to harmonise the way inspection and control activities are undertaken by Member States.

On the other hand, the activities considered the least useful are the last-haul analysis and the evaluation of the activities carried out in the JDPs. Interviewees also agreed with these results, and some explained that last-haul analysis is ineffective at controlling compliance with the landing obligation. EFCA is aware of this limitation; however, last haul analysis continues to be recommended as a risk treatment measure in regional risk assessments (RRA) in the absence of better control means, or lack of political support for more effective means to control the landing obligation (e.g. REM).

Regarding the evaluation of results, interviewees across all groups agreed that evaluating the effectiveness of the JDPs and their contribution to reducing infringements is a difficult task. This may be the reason why the activity scores relatively low on usefulness in the survey. Interviewees were not able to offer suggestions on better ways to evaluate JDP results.

Figure 7: How useful did you find the following aspects of JDPs preparation, implementation, and assessment?



Base: 66

The case study on **risk assessment**, which is part of the planning phase of JDPs, offers more details on the effectiveness of this activity to meet EFCA's objectives. Overall, the risk assessment is found to be effective at identifying high-risk fleet segments, although a few national authorities in the Mediterranean (Med) would like to have a more tailored methodology for the Med that identifies smaller fleet segments (or sub-segments) and indicators that are better suited to the data available in the Med (the main limitation is the lack of e-logbooks in large part of their fleet). Interviewees also saw room for

improvement in the way risk treatment measures are selected. Some stakeholders commented that they would like more input from experts in the treatment measures, and others commented that some treatment measures recommended are ineffective, either because they do not adequately mitigate the risks they tackle (e.g., last haul interventions to monitor the landing obligation), or because they focus resources on fleet segments with low risk (inspections of acoustic deterrent devices in the Baltic Sea was provided as an example, although the evaluation has not been able to verify this statement). More broadly, several national authorities interviewed commented that they would like to have fewer, more focused risk treatment measures.

In addition to the JDPs, the use of the Lundy Sentinel vessel was highlighted by a few survey respondents and interviewees, particularly from EU institutions, as an important means to coordinate and harmonise controls. Stakeholders mentioned that it optimises the use of resources (see chapter 4.2 on efficiency) and applauded the fact that EFCA will soon charter two additional vessels.

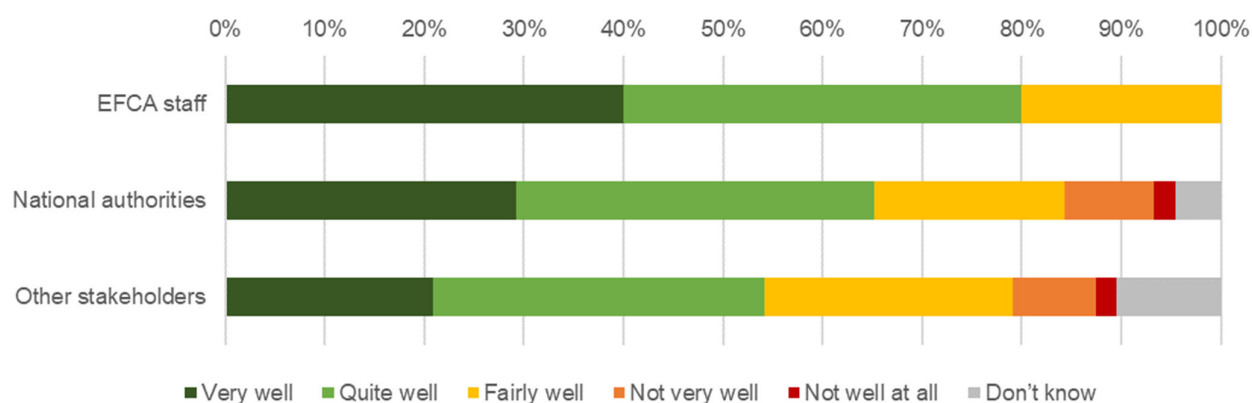
This [Lundy Sentinel] allows EFCA also to stay very much in touch with the fisheries situation at sea and provides an excellent platform for training of inspectors and developing control strategies. – Survey respondent (EU institution)

Last, an activity considered effective by interviewees at enhancing coordination among Member States is the **working groups**. Working groups were appreciated by members of the Administrative Board, as they help to progress on key issues (e.g. REM). In relation to the latter, some interviewees commented that it might be more effective for EFCA to treat it as a horizontal activity, instead of having different working groups by sea basins, as all Member States are going through the same difficulties to implement it.

Effective and harmonised application of Union inspection procedures (EQ1.2)

Overall, around two thirds of survey respondents agreed that EFCA meets the objective of promoting compliance through an effective and harmonised application of EU inspections procedures very well, or quite well. There are 10 respondents from national or sub-national authorities (9%) who thought that EFCA does not meet this objective very well, or well at all, and 17 (19%) thought it does it fairly well.

Figure 8: In your view, how well does EFCA meet these objectives? Promote compliance through an effective and harmonised application of EU inspection procedures



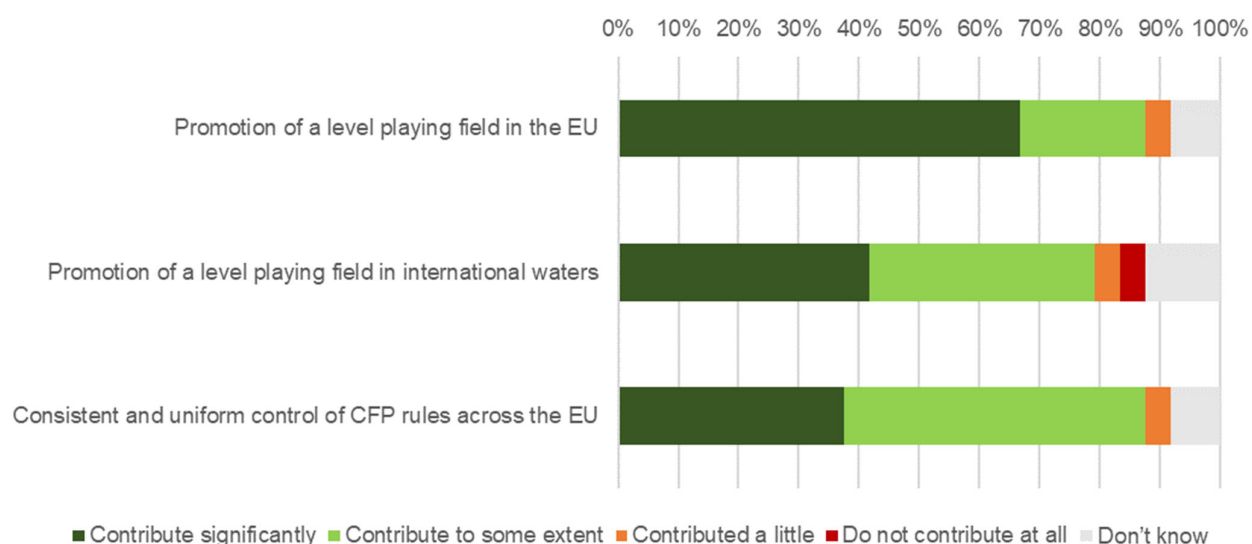
Base: 30 EFCA staff, 89 national authorities, 48 other stakeholders

One of the main activities that EFCA undertakes to promote an effective and harmonised application of EU inspection procedures is the **training of Union inspectors**. Several interviewees stressed that

EFCA's training programme, especially within the context of JDPs, is essential to ensure that inspectors from different Member States have a common understanding of the legislation and can therefore carry out joint control and inspection activities. EFCA's expertise of the legislation, together with the technical know-how of control and inspection procedures were considered the main factors driving the successful implementation of the training programme.

The survey results related specifically to the training programme are somewhat more positive than the overall results regarding the achievement of this objective in general. These results are more relevant for the evaluation, since these questions were only routed to those who participated in training, either as trainers or as trainees. There was a clear consensus among survey respondents that the training for Union inspectors actively contributes to the promotion of a level playing field in the EU. Stakeholders also believed (albeit less strongly) that the training programme for Union inspectors was able to contribute to a level playing field in international waters and that, overall, it fostered the consistent control of CFP rules across the EU.

Figure 9: Do you think the training of Union inspectors contributes to the following? Please note: by 'establishing a level playing field' in the EU and with third countries, we mean that fisheries control rules are interpreted and applied in a consistent way across the EU and third countries. (All stakeholders that were involved in training)



Base: 24

Overall, information gleaned from different stakeholders suggests that the training of Union inspectors contributed to the harmonisation of control practices also through the exchange of best practices between Union inspectors and EFCA staff during the course of training sessions and workshops. According to one inspector, the training received from EFCA gave them the confidence to be applying the CFP correctly and consistently.

"After the training, I felt I had a much greater understanding of the EU legislation, and I was able to apply correctly the control procedures. [...] Overall, it gave me confidence. [The training] is followed by JDP experience, so that one can immediately put everything [they learnt] into practice". (National authority official)

Finally, another activity considered effective at harmonising the application of inspection procedures is the **exchange of inspectors**. According to staff from national authorities interviewed, it helps to improve

communication among Member States control authorities and to harmonise the way inspection and control activities are undertaken by Member States.

Assist the EU in its international dimension (EQ1.3)

Based on information provided by interviewees, and analysis of relevant documentation, the evaluation concludes that EFCA has positioned itself as a **key actor** in fisheries control in the EU and beyond. The quality of the documents it produces and its *genuine* approach to fisheries control, i.e. pushing for more strict control while not interfering in political decisions, have granted it **authority and credibility** among Member States, at the European Commission and among third countries. This helps Member States and the Commission to negotiate with third countries, as it brings information that it is perceived as neutral by all parties, and it helps EU Delegations to anticipate problems that may emerge. Some interviewees provided concrete examples of instances where EFCA's support had been fundamental to initiate dialogue or progress negotiations (e.g., the pilot project on voluntary inspection programme in the Black Sea in 2019, which involved Bulgaria and Romania as well as Georgia, Ukraine and Turkey).

Related to the above, some interviewees from the Commission were appreciative of the **expertise and skillset** that EFCA staff provide, for instance to implement certain aspects of the international dimension (training to third countries, technical support for joint patrols and the mutualisation of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance resources as part of implementation of PESCAO, assessment of catch certificates), which the Commission could not conduct by itself.

A recent evaluation of PESCAO was also positive about its effectiveness and about EFCA's contribution to the project.⁴² The evaluation found that EFCA contributed to build capacity in countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to combat IUU fishing via the following main activities:

- Support provided to ECOWAS Member States to identify their level of alignment with international standards, and to establish a gap analysis with regard to the fight against IUU fishing, as well as further support to some countries to improve their legal frameworks. According to the evaluation, EFCA's assistance probably contributed to some extent to the ratification of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) by four ECOWAS coastal Member States (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Benin) since 2018, in addition to the ECOWAS coastal Member States that had already ratified the PSMA before PESCAO.⁴³
- Training of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance staff in the Member States of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) and the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea, and training of judicial personnel, for which the evaluation reported positive feedback.
- Joint patrols organised with EFCA support in the waters of SRFC Member States, based on the results of a risk assessment that used data provided by EFCA. The evaluation found that joint patrols were effective in maintaining and supporting a culture of cooperation between Member States and in deterring IUU fishing activities, and that new risk-based methodologies promoted by EFCA were likely to improve the effectiveness of joint operations in the future.

⁴² Poseidon and COWI (2022) Mid-term evaluation mission for ECOWAS Commission / PESCAO Mid-Term Evaluation

⁴³ Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo

Survey respondents were also asked about their views on the effectiveness of the activities conducted by EFCA in the international dimension. However, very few respondents were involved in such activities. Only six respondents who were not EFCA staff were involved in capacity building projects with third countries and/or IUU evaluations, and four respondents, excluding EFCA staff, were involved in international JDPs and RFMOs. Notwithstanding, all respondents agreed that the activities contribute significantly or to some extent to EFCA's objectives in the international dimension (e.g. levelling up the playing field in fisheries between EU and non-EU countries, tackling IUU fishing, or promotion of a culture of compliance, to name a few objectives).

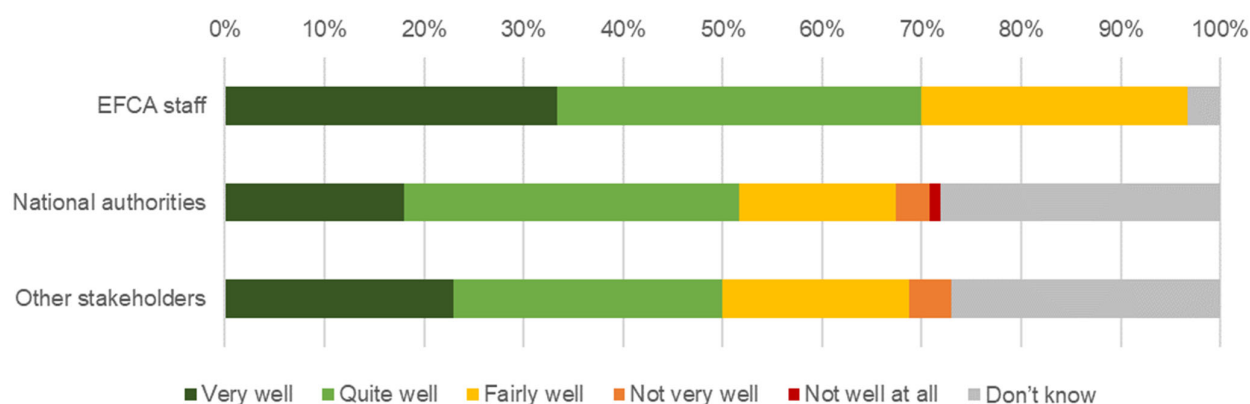
Provide operational support to national authorities in Coast Guard functions (EQ1.4)

The **tripartite working arrangement with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and Frontex** was highlighted as a key recent activity that has contributed to making inspection and control more effective and efficient. The tripartite agreement provides a basis for national authorities in the fields of fisheries control, border management, and maritime safety to share resources for control activity in their waters. As a result of this cooperation, members of border control agencies have been trained on fisheries control and are now able to perform inspections, and fisheries inspectors can board border control vessels to conduct fisheries control. Frontex and EFCA also benefit from data and resources shared by EMSA (e.g., drones and other aerial surveillance means). In those Member States where there was no previous cooperation among national agencies for fisheries control, maritime safety, and border management, the tripartite collaboration at EU level has facilitated this cooperation (except in some cases where there is no willingness to cooperate among agencies at national level). In those Member States where cooperation at national level was already in place, the benefits of the partnership are less tangible. However, all interviewees agreed on the importance of the agreement, of sharing information among the Agencies, and of using control resources in the most effective way. There was also common agreement across all stakeholders on the benefits from the bilateral cooperation between EFCA and EMSA to monitor vessels' movement through the Integrated Maritime System (IMS).

Interviewees were also very positive about the new capabilities that the cooperation brings for fisheries control in terms of being able to use satellite imagery and drones. One interviewee mentioned an example of when they received information about third country vessels from Frontex. However, interviewees also noted that these benefits have not fully materialised yet, or were not able to offer specific examples where the tripartite agreement has been beneficial for their agency. Interviews with staff at EMSA and Frontex also revealed that there is still work to do by the Agencies to fully implement the collaborative approach: developing processes, sharing capacity, exchange information, and developing trust.

In the survey, this was the objective where respondents were less positive on how well the Agency is meeting its objectives. This is probably because it is a relatively new activity, and the benefits, as explained above, have not materialised yet. It is also the objective where the largest proportion of respondents answered "Don't know" (even among national authorities), which may mean that the benefits or the results of this cooperation have not been shared yet with stakeholders, or not very effectively.

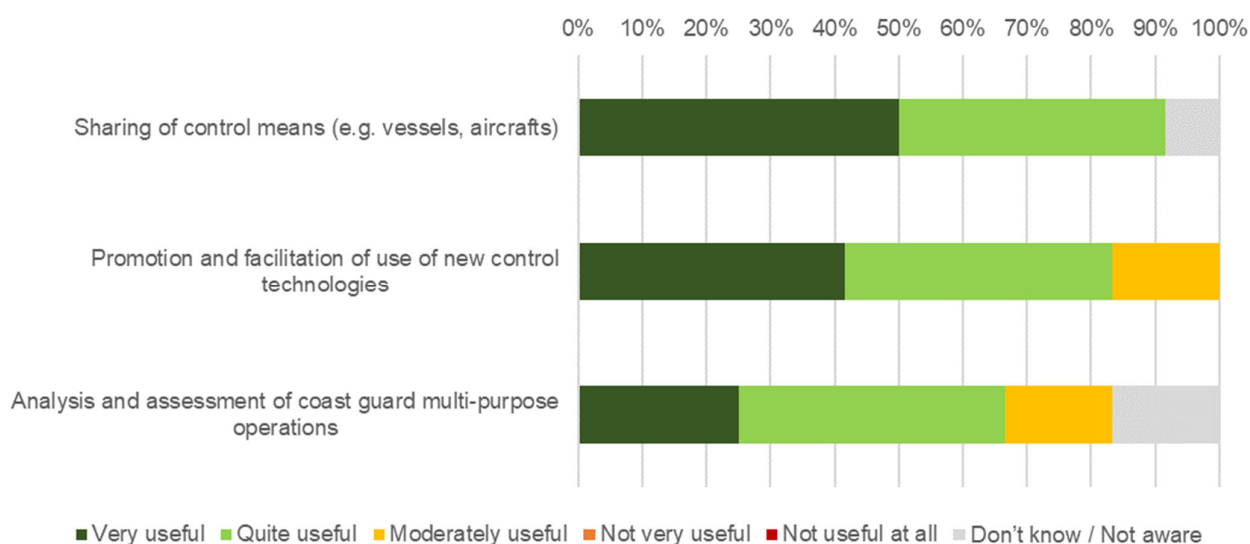
Figure 10: In your view, how well does EFCA meet these objectives? Support national authorities carrying out Coast Guard functions, in cooperation with EMSA and Frontex



Base: 30 EFCA staff, 89 national authorities, 48 other stakeholders

Nevertheless, those who were involved in coast guard activities found all the activities very useful, or quite useful, especially the sharing of control means such as vessels and aircrafts.

Figure 11: How useful did you find the following aspects of EFCA's activities for the achievement of the above outcomes? (National authorities)



Base: 12

Overall assessment of EFCA's effectiveness at reaching its objectives and results

The Agency has been very effective at meeting its objectives, especially: enhanced coordination of fisheries monitoring control and surveillance, effective and harmonised inspection of Union inspection procedures, and assisting the EU in its international dimension.

Enhanced coordination of control activities takes place mainly through JDPs. Within JDPs, activities related to implementation are more effective, according to stakeholders interviewed and survey respondents, than activities related to planning and evaluation. The implementation of the JDP runs smoothly and in a coordinated way, and it allows Member States to share resources for fisheries control.

In the planning phase, the evaluation has identified that, although the risk assessment, overall, is effective at identifying high-risk fleet segments, there is some room for improvement in the Med JDP and in the way treatment measures are defined. In the evaluation phase, all stakeholders interviewed commented on the difficulty of assessing the effects of the JDPs on the levels of compliance with the CFP.

Effectiveness at promoting an effective and harmonised application of Union inspection procedures is also high. The feedback received from Union inspectors on the training programme is very positive, and the exchange of inspectors also contributed to this outcome. Union inspectors that have participated in the training recognised the importance that the training activities had in their day-to-day work, and valued the indirect benefits of the training programme, such as the possibility to exchange views and advice with colleagues from other Member States when taking part in in-person training sessions.

The Agency has also been very effective at assisting the EU in its international dimension. This is evidenced by feedback provided by interviewees from DG MARE, feedback on the training in third countries received through the survey, and the findings of the evaluation of PESCAO.

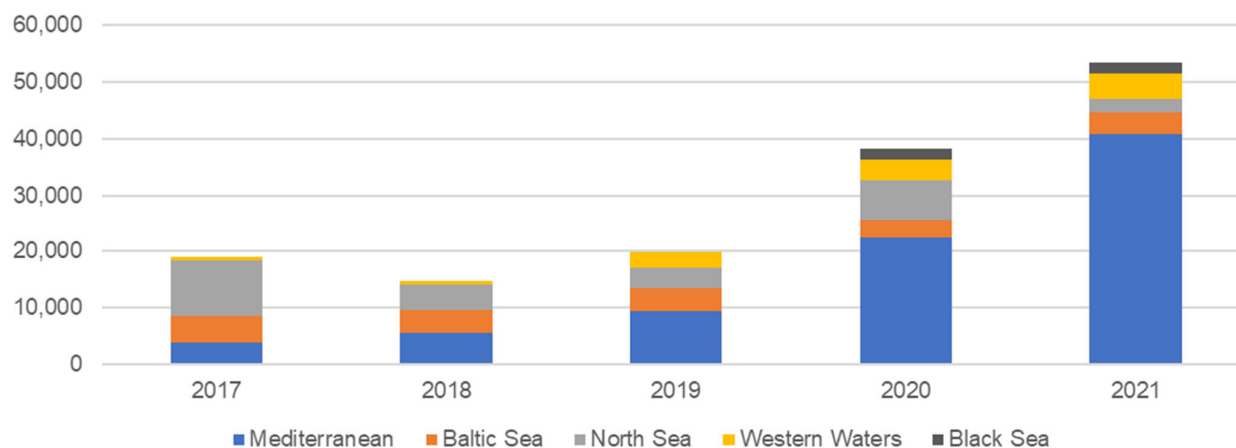
Finally, the objective which EFCA has met less effectively, or, in other words, where less progress has been made, is in providing operational support to national authorities in coast guard functions. This is only natural, as it is a relatively new activity and cooperation between the three agencies needs to be further defined and implemented (designing processes for cooperation, building trust, etc.). In the survey, a significant number of respondents from national authorities did not know how well EFCA has met this objective, and in interviews, staff from national authorities were not able to provide many examples where their national agencies had benefited from the tripartite agreement. Nevertheless, all interviewees were of the opinion that cooperation among the three agencies (fisheries control, border management, and maritime safety) is very important, as it maximises the value for money of European and national resources for controlling maritime activities. Interviewees were also very positive about the benefits of sharing data among the three agencies, with VMS data being integrated in IMS mentioned as the most important and tangible benefit for fisheries authorities.

4.1.2 EFCA's impact on level of compliance with rules made under the CFP (EQ2)

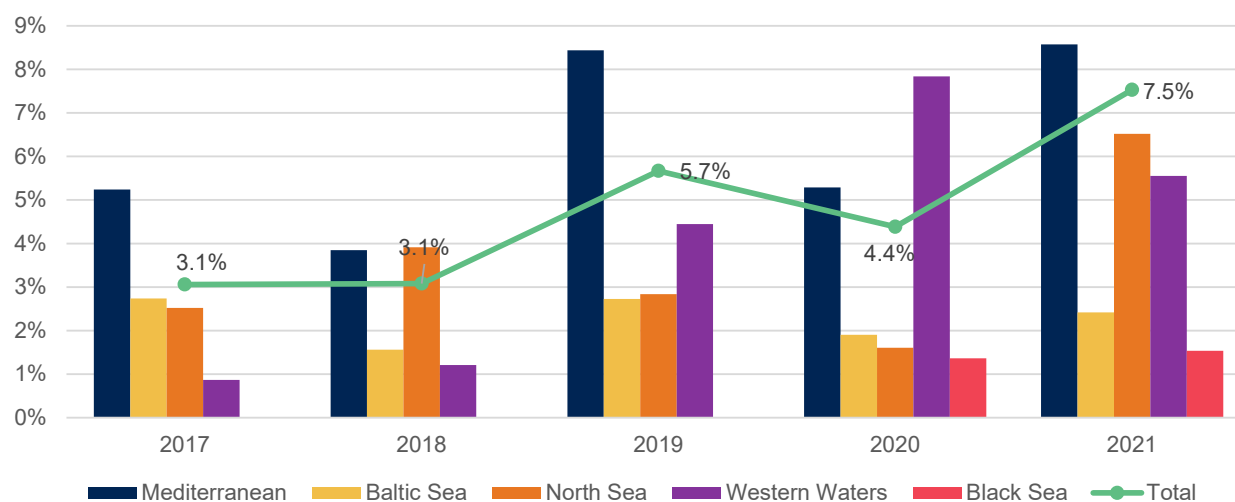
As mentioned in chapter 2.1.1, a quantitative assessment of compliance with the CFP in the EU cannot be undertaken with the data available, and EFCA's contribution cannot be quantitatively measured either. Although the available data⁴⁴ shows that more inspections are being carried out, more suspected infringements are being detected, and that the 'hit rate' of controls⁴⁵ has increased (at least in the context of the JDPs, see Figure 12), this is a good indicator of the effectiveness of inspections, but not of compliance per se, since obviously, the number of infringements that are *detected* does not tell us anything about the number of infringements that are *committed*.

⁴⁴ European Commission (2021): Report on the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 establishing a Union control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy as required under Article 118 for the period 2015-2019. COM(2021) 316 final

⁴⁵ Hit rate is defined as the share of suspected infringements out of all physical inspections.

Figure 12: Evolution of the number of inspections in the context of Joint Deployment Plans

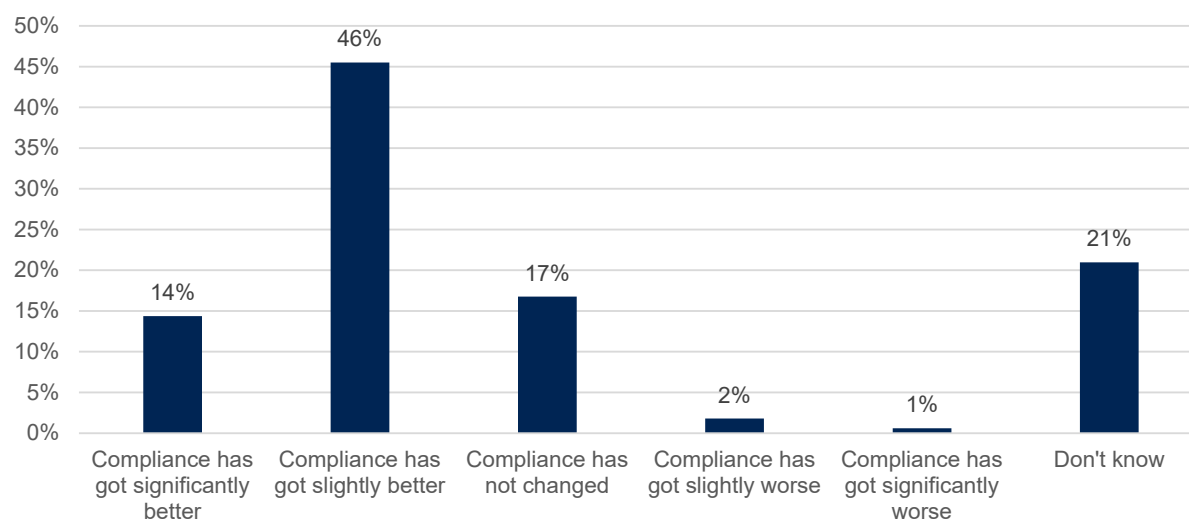
Source: Authors' analysis based on data from EFCA Annual Reports and JDP Reports, 2017-2021.

Figure 13: Percentage of inspections with suspected infringement (hit rate)

Source: Authors' analysis based on data from EFCA Annual Reports and JDP Reports, 2017-2021.

Although it is encouraging that around six out of ten respondents to the survey carried out as part of this evaluation believed that compliance levels had improved over the last five years, while hardly any respondents thought they had deteriorated (Figure 14), it needs to be acknowledged that the majority of respondents were involved in control activities in some way, shape or form, and so have a vested interest in (the perception of) their effectiveness, which means their responses may be subject to bias.

Figure 14: In your experience, has the overall level of compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) rules changed in the past five years?



Base: 167

This evaluation has therefore used a qualitative approach based on contribution analysis. There are several factors that might lead to non-compliance. For example, fishers might have different ethical standards as regards the CFP, or might not be aware of (some of) the legislation or of its correct interpretation. Fishers might also ignore the long-term benefits to the ecosystem and the survival of fisheries that the legislation seeks to achieve. In some cases, the decision to comply or not with rules might be the result of an assessment of the potential benefit obtained (or loss avoided) from committing an infringement. The level of enforcement measures (i.e. penalties) in place to counter infringements might also affect compliance behaviour. However, EFCA has limited influence over these aspects. Instead, EFCA can influence compliance primarily via control tools.

In fact, to improve compliance with CFP rules, EFCA can only act on the probability of a vessel being caught committing an infringement. Enforcement measures are decided and applied by Member States, and other factors such as awareness of the legislation, ethical considerations, and fishers' assessment of benefits of committing the infringement are out of EFCA's control. By improving control and inspection, EFCA may contribute to increase the probability that a vessel is caught (which acts as a deterrent to non-compliance). EFCA attempts to do this through a range of coordination and support activities including, for instance, the JDPs and the REM pilots.

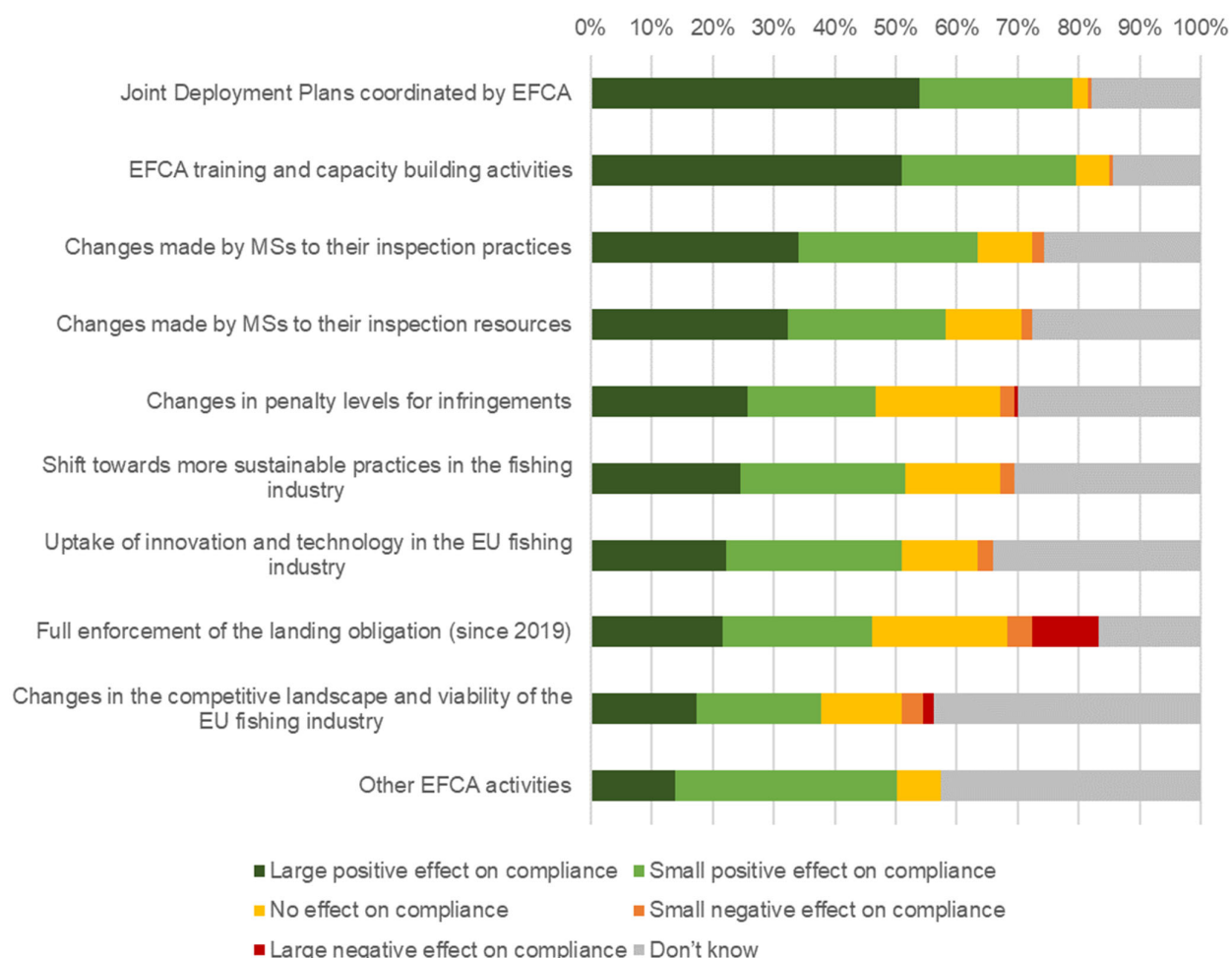
EFCA can also influence behaviour through other tools. For instance, one of its main objectives is to establish a level playing field in fishing control activities among Member States, which in turn contributes to a level playing field for the fishing industry. Fishers will be more likely to comply with the rules if they feel that the system is fair and if other fishers are not obtaining unfair competitive advantages by committing infringements.

To analyse EFCA's impact on level of compliance with the CFP, the evaluation team designed a contribution analysis framework (see chapter 2.6 for more information on this approach). As a way of limiting the scope of this analysis, it was hypothesised that EFCA may influence on the level of compliance through five main activities, or groups of activities. The hypotheses were tested through analysing EFCA's theory of change and other external contributing factors. The hypotheses are:

- **Hypothesis 1a:** Risk assessments effectively identify high-risk fleet segments, which help Member States to effectively focus their fisheries control resources, hence increasing the likelihood that controls detect any infringement committed and disincentivising them.
- **Hypothesis 1b:** Member States develop a list of high-risk vessels that is shared with EFCA and other Member States. This list complements the risk assessment and helps to focus resources on the highest risk vessels. Without EFCA, Member States would not exchange information on high-risk vessels. Vessels who are in the list are disincentivised to commit infringements.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Joint Deployment Plans improve coordination in control and surveillance among Member States, which enhance the enforcement and uniform implementation of the CFP, and contribute to higher compliance with the CFP.
- **Hypothesis 3:** EFCA activities in the field of the landing obligation contribute to developing methodologies to assess compliance with the landing obligation and to harmonising control procedures across Member States, which levels the playing field and disincentivises infringements.
- **Hypothesis 4:** The training for Union Inspectors contributes to harmonising the way inspections are conducted across Member States, hence increasing the level playing field and reducing the likelihood that fishers commit infringements against the CFP.
- **Hypothesis 5:** EFCA activities contribute to establish a culture of compliance with the CFP (through communication and awareness raising activities).

The survey also asked stakeholders to rate how much EFCA activities contribute to improving the level of compliance with the CFP, and how much external factors contribute. The results are very positive, with stakeholders rating the JDP and the training union inspectors are the factors that have contributed the most to improving compliance (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: A number of factors (some but not all related to EFCA) may have had a positive or negative impact on the level of compliance with CFP rules in the last five years. In your opinion, what difference (if any) has each of the following factors made?



Base: 167

The ensuing sections in this chapter elaborate further on the contribution of EFCA to improving the level of compliance with the CFP, as per the six pathways identified in the contribution analysis framework.

Hypotheses 1a and 1b: Risk assessment

By and large, the evidence gathered as part of this evaluation suggests that EFCA's risk assessment are effective, at least to a certain extent, at reducing non-compliance, and therefore H1a and H1b are at least to a certain extent true. In relation to H1a, stakeholders interviewed agreed that the RA methodology is effective at identifying high risk fleet segments, although there is room for improvement. As explained in chapter 4.1.1, and in more detail in Annex 2 *Case study on risk assessment*, the risk assessment methodology could be better tailored to the Med. The main challenges that national authorities in this sea basin encountered are the lack of e-logbooks in a large part of the fleet in the Med and the large size of the fleet segments identified (in terms of number of vessels within a given segment). Other challenges identified in the risk assessment are the lack of indicators for some threats, and the poor quality or lack of timely submission of data by Member States. In addition, interviewees also identified room for improvement in the workshops and the recommendations stemming from them (the risk treatment measures).

The evaluation has also confirmed that the theory of change for the risk assessment holds true. In other words, that Member States follow EFCA's guidelines throughout the process: Member States apply EFCA's methodology when doing their national risk assessments, they implement control and inspection activities in line with the treatment measures identified, and they (the sample of Member States interviewed) do not conduct alternative risk assessments on their own following their own methodologies, which otherwise might refute the hypothesis. There is only one process that some Member States fail to fully comply with: according to the JDP assessment reports reviewed (Med and NS JDP reports for 2020), some Member States did not provide data on time, or data that was complete to inform all indicators.

H1b has also been confirmed in the evaluation, with strong evidence. Stakeholders were very positive about the usefulness of the list of high-risk vessels and, as with the risk assessment, Member States follow EFCA's processes: national authorities prioritise vessels that are in the list when doing inspections, they find it easy to access the list of high-risk vessels from other Member States through Fishnet, and national authorities trust the lists shared by other Member States, even if they are not always up to date. The latter, the lack of updated lists or lists at all (some Member States do not compile or share their lists) is the only test that refutes the hypothesis.

National authorities staff interviewed confirmed that they conduct inspections in line with the recommended treatment measures and prioritising inspections on high-risk vessels within target fleet segments over other fleet segments or vessels, hence reinforcing the hypothesis that the RRA and the list of high-risk vessels contribute to increasing the likelihood of detecting infringements.

In addition to the CA framework, analysis of quantitative data on inspections and infringements also provides an indication of the effectiveness of the RA and the list of high-risk vessels. Effectiveness can be assessed by comparing the difference in percentage of inspections with suspected infringements in target vessels, versus the percentage of inspections with suspected infringements in non-target vessels. In 2020 in the NS JDP, the percentage of inspections with a suspected infringement was 8% for target vessels (nearly double from 2019) and 1% for non-target vessels, suggesting that the list was successful at identifying high-risk vessels in the NS in 2020. This indicator is not available for the Med in 2020.

Hypothesis 2: JDPs

There is some evidence that the implementation of JDPs is contributing to improving compliance with the CFP. Overall, national authorities interviewed and those who participated in the survey agree that JDPs improve coordination and surveillance among Member States, and that without JDPs, Member States would find it more difficult to coordinate resources, cooperate, and share data with each other. As explained above, survey participants were asked to rate the impact of several factors that included some EFCA activities, as well as external contextual factors, on the level of compliance with the CFP. The JDPs were the factor with the highest perceived positive effect on compliance with CFP (see Figure 15).

However, the evaluation has not been able to gather evidence to provide an answer to all the tests that would help to confirm whether the hypothesis is or is not true. The large scope of the evaluation did not allow the evaluation team to explore in-depth some aspects related to the implementation of JDPs such as the assistance provided to Member States to implement the recommendations set in JDP assessment reports, or whether special campaigns/actions are implemented effectively.

There are a number of external factors that affect the effectiveness of JDPs. The most prominent aspect is the fact that EFCA coordinates resources that are deployed by Member States. Therefore, EFCA's activities can only be effective if the Agency knows in advance the resources that Member States can

commit, and if Member States deploy the resources they have committed. The interviews conducted with national authorities indicate that Member States have, in most cases, scarce resources to undertake fisheries control activities, and that the pandemic has further exacerbated the difficulty to control vessels due to restrictions (e.g. inspectors could not board other vessels, or fewer than in normal circumstances) and to sickness absences that could not be replaced. Fewer control activities decrease the deterrent effect, and the likelihood that infringements are identified, and may thus reduce compliance with the CFP.

Further to this, the survey indicated that stakeholders perceived some positive effect on the level of compliance of changes made to inspection practices and resources. Results were less clear in relation to enforcement procedures, with some respondents assigning it a negative effect, others a neutral effect, and others a positive effect (see Figure 15).

In conclusion, the evidence analysed suggests that JDP activities have significantly contributed to improving the level of compliance with CFP; however, evidence is not very strong, primarily due to the relatively high-level analysis in this evaluation of JDP implementation activities.

Hypothesis 3: Activities in the field of the landing obligation

The contribution of EFCA to improving compliance with the landing obligation appears to be limited so far. Last haul observations have been recommended as a treatment measure to control the landing obligation, and although the measure helps to analyse data on catches and estimate levels of compliance, it is not a deterrent for infringing the regulation. This is because last haul observations cannot normally detect whether infringements have been committed (e.g. fisheries vessels will not discard fish if they see a patrol vessel approaching, or if they know a patrol vessel is in the area; however, they may discard fish before and after the patrol vessel conducts the inspection).

However, EFCA is working with Member States to pilot Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) projects. According to the stakeholders interviewed, REM has proved to be an effective mechanism to control compliance with the landing obligation, as it provides permanent CCTV monitoring. Interviewees commented that the pilot projects conducted so far have provided positive results. EFCA is working with Member States to assess how REM could be implemented and legal barriers overcome (e.g., use of CCTV footage in court) and behavioural barriers (e.g., fishers' unwillingness to install REM systems in their vessels).

The proposed future control regulation, if approved, will mandate the use of REM to control the landing obligation. In this regard, the evaluation concludes that EFCA is on the right path to support Member States to implement the new system, and it is likely that EFCA activities will have a positive contribution to the level of compliance with the landing obligation if and when the new rules come into force.

Hypothesis 4: Training for Union inspectors

Overall, the findings from the case study on training for Union inspectors (see Annex 3) confirm the hypothesis that the training programme for Union inspectors is effective at fostering a harmonised approach to inspections, and thus makes the playing field more level whilst reducing the likelihood of infringements.

Participants who took part in the interviews and responded to the survey found the training useful and acquired specific knowledge and skills that they applied in their day-to-day job. There was a general sense among training participants (but, more generally, also among other stakeholders familiar with the training) that the training programme enhances the level playing field across the EU.

National officials tend to attend multiple training sessions or workshops more than once during their career, and satisfaction rates are consistently high, although there are indications that Member States might not always promote the programme effectively.

The contribution analysis framework also tested other external factors that might have a positive or negative contribution to harmonising inspections. However, no other external factors (e.g., other training programmes) seem to have had a significant contribution towards this outcome.

Hypothesis 5: Establishing a culture of compliance

Overall, survey respondents agreed that the playing field is more levelled now than it was five years ago, both within the EU and with third countries' fisheries. They attributed a positive contribution of all EFCA activities (JDPs, training and capacity building, and activities conducted in the international dimension) to the promotion of a culture of compliance with the CFP. Raising awareness among the fishing industry of the importance of complying with conservation measures, however, is not within EFCA's core remit. Therefore, the contribution of EFCA to establishing a culture of compliance is likely to be positive, but small.

Overall assessment of EFCA's contribution to compliance with CFP

As mentioned previously, it is unknown whether compliance with the CFP has improved or got worse during the period 2017-2021, although there are significantly more stakeholders who think it has improved, in relation to those who think it has gone worse, according to the survey responses.

Regardless of the overall evolution, this evaluation concludes that EFCA has made a positive contribution on compliance, mainly through:

- The planning, implementation, and evaluation of JDPs. Risk assessments have contributed to identify high risk fleet segments where inspection resources should be focused. The JDPs have allowed Member States and EFCA to coordinate resources for the control and inspection of the fishing activity. Without the JDPs, Member States would have found it more difficult to coordinate their resources, and as a result, they would have been less effective.
- The training for Union inspectors and the exchange of inspectors have significantly contributed to harmonise inspection and control procedures, which in turn levels the playing field and contributes to improved compliance.
- EFCA has started to work with Member States to support them to implement REM to control the landing obligation. The results of this support have not been realised yet, but it is likely to contribute significantly to improve compliance with the landing obligation in the future, once REM becomes more widely used by national authorities.
- Overall, EFCA activities have contributed a little to establish a culture of compliance in the EU and with third countries.

4.1.3 Appropriateness of the activities conducted by EFCA to meeting its objectives (EQ3)

Current activities implemented by EFCA are considered adequate and fit for purpose. By and large, all the activities are considered very appropriate: The JDPs and the chartered vessels contribute to coordinate fisheries monitoring, control, and surveillance activities in the EU; the training programme and the exchange of Union inspectors are effective and adequate to harmonise the application of Union inspections procedures; and the activities conducted in the field of coast guard operations were also

considered very appropriate as they maximise the value for money of European means to control maritime activities.

The second independent evaluation of EFCA, conducted in 2017, identified that there were some stakeholders who considered international activities not as necessary as operations in EU waters, and that they might be less effective in terms of promoting compliance (e.g., in relation to IUU fishing). This third independent evaluation has not found such views across any type of stakeholder. On the contrary, activities within the international dimension were considered very appropriate and effective by all groups of stakeholders, and this finding is aligned with the recent mid-term evaluation of PESCAO, which was also very positive about EFCA's contribution to training and coordination of patrol means.

The activity that this evaluation has identified as more contentious, or where there is less agreement on whether it is appropriate, is EFCA's involvement in Member States' regional Control Expert Groups (CEGs). EFCA's involvement in CEGs is not explicitly provided for under EU law; nevertheless, EFCA considers this as part of its strategy to support regionalisation⁴⁶ in accordance with Article 7 and Article 16 of the Founding Regulation.^{47,48} In the period covered by this evaluation (2017-2021), EFCA provided assistance to the BALTFISH (Baltic Sea), Scheveningen (North Sea), North-western waters, and South-western waters CEGs. EFCA coordinates CEG meetings and conducts other activities for them in relation to the landing obligation (e.g. compliance evaluations) and REM regional pilot projects.

Interviewees and survey respondents from the European Commission believed that EFCA's involvement in CEGs was not fully in line with its mandate, and that EFCA should scale back its involvement in CEGs or stop being involved altogether. On the other hand, during the course of interviews, CEG participants expressed their appreciation for EFCA's role in CEGs, particularly because these meetings aimed to make progress on relevant activities such as the landing obligation and REM, and considered that CEG meetings would be less effective without EFCA. The evaluation team, however, has not been able to analyse this activity in-depth in order to assess its effectiveness and whether it creates regional disparities, given that only some sea basins are supported.

Despite the divergent views on EFCA's involvement in CEGs, EFCA's activities as a whole are appropriate to meet the needs of both the European Commission and Member States' national authorities, or at least one of these stakeholders, depending on the nature of the activities.

The evaluation has also assessed whether current needs in the EU in the field of fisheries control are being met by EFCA, or whether there are any gaps or needs that may need to be addressed. In this respect, some interviewees shared the view that EFCA could be more involved in the coordination of **fisheries control on land**. Specific activities where Member States and the Commission would like EFCA to do more include general control during landing, weighing, and traceability, as well as training courses on on-land inspections. Nevertheless, interviewees recognised that on-shore activities often require more time and resources than control activities at sea; and while EFCA has recently increased resources to control fishing activity at sea, resources for control activities on land have remained unchanged. In addition, some interviewees also noted that different Member States might have different

⁴⁶ EFCA, 2022. Cooperation with regional bodies, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/cooperation-regional-bodies> (last accessed: 27 September 2022).

⁴⁷ Regulation (EU) 2019/473 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 on the European Fisheries Control Agency.

⁴⁸ Decision No 21-II-03 of the Administrative Board of the European Fisheries Control Agency of 4 June 2021 amending AB Decision No 20-II-07 Of 14 October 2020 Concerning the Adoption Of The Single Programming Document Containing the Multiannual Work Programme 2021-2025 and Annual Work Programme for 2021 and Budget, page 15, available at: https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/AB%20Decision%2021-II-03%20Amendment%20SPD%202021-2025%20and%20AWP%202021%20and%20Budget_0.pdf (last accessed: 27 September 2022).

bodies or agencies in charge of controls from the moment catches are landed, which would therefore mean that not all Member States might require EFCA's support on-land.

Other interviewees mentioned that EFCA should dedicate more resources to **exploring new technologies and conducting pilots**, especially to improve the application of the landing obligation. As mentioned in chapter 4.1.2, interviewees from national authorities and DG MARE were very positive about the working groups, especially the groups exploring the use of REM, and would like to see more working groups and pilot projects on other new technologies that Member States could use to improve the effectiveness of their control and surveillance activity. Interviewees did not indicate which specific technologies they would like to cover in these working groups and/or pilots.

"Working groups make good basis for standards across Member States. Working groups contribute to levelling the playing field and help to solve problems for fisheries controls when the legislation is slow to change and adapt. EFCA can thus give a framework on how to do things at Member State level. This is something that EFCA should do more of in future." (Administrative Board member)

4.2 Efficiency

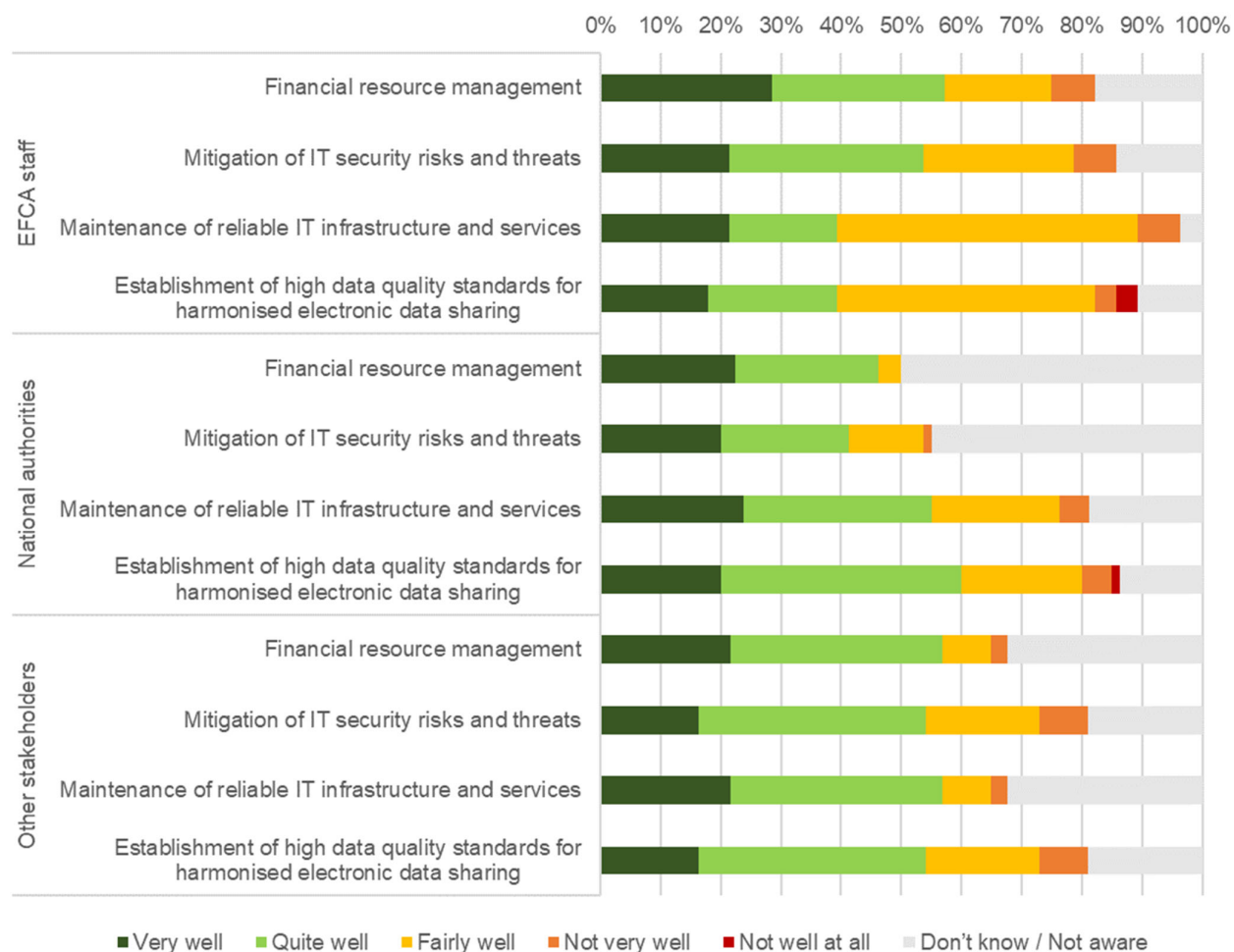
The ensuing sections discuss findings on EFCA's cost-effectiveness, and the efficiency of its internal organisation as well as its monitoring and reporting mechanisms. By and large, EFCA appears to operate efficiently, despite the budgetary constraints faced in some areas, such as IT. Slightly more mixed results were achieved as regards internal organisation and practices.

4.2.1 Cost-effectiveness (EQ4)

Overall, internal and external stakeholders appeared to have a generally positive view of the way EFCA's resourcing and IT aspects worked, as shown by survey responses presented in Figure 16. **Error! Reference source not found..**

EFCA was considered to have done 'very well' or 'quite well' across a variety of domains related to its operations, including financial resource management, mitigation of IT security risks and threats, maintenance of IT infrastructure and services, and the establishment of high data quality standards for data sharing. As these are aspects that pertain to the internal management of EFCA, external stakeholders (national authorities' representatives and other stakeholders) were generally less likely to have an opinion on these topics.

Whilst feedback was largely positive across all topics, EFCA staff appeared to be more critical on aspects related to IT infrastructure and data standards compared to external stakeholders.

Figure 16: How well do you think the following aspects of EFCA's operations work?

Base: 145

Resourcing

By and large, stakeholders agreed that EFCA was well-equipped to carry out its activities, as shown by the survey results (Figure 16) and interviews with stakeholders. Administrative Board members underlined that the conspicuous budget increase in 2017 (Table 2 **Error! Reference source not found.**) had been made necessary primarily by the challenges for fisheries control faced by EFCA and the Member States in the context of Brexit.

Table 2: EFCA's budget

	EU transfers	Grants	Staff (internal, actual)
2016*	€9.217 m	€750,000	51
2017	€17.113 m	N/A	59
2018	€16.813 m	€595,489	60
2019	€16.748 m	€500,000	61
2020	€16.900 m	€680,000	60
2021**	€17.000 m	€621,000	65

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Single Programming Documents 2017-2021. Note: * Year out of scope, for illustrative purposes only. ** Expected.

Administrative Board members explained that the additional budget made it possible for EFCA, *inter alia*, to increase its staff numbers and lease one OPV in 2018 (the *Lundy Sentinel*) and another one in 2021 (the *Aegis*⁴⁹), with a third fisheries inspection vessel expected to be leased in or after 2022. Overall, the impression among stakeholders (primarily Administrative Board members) was that the budget had grown proportionally to the expansion of activities implemented by EFCA, and that the transition had been smooth.

As regards the budget increase, an Administrative Board member reflected on the fact that the Agency was currently well resourced, but if activities were to remain unchanged and the budget was cut or staff was dismissed, fisheries control activities would be severely disrupted.

According to a national official, following the 2016 budget increase, EFCA benefitted from relatively large amounts of resources, while national authorities had to operate under much stricter budgetary constraints, and nevertheless managed to deliver similar activities, potentially due to inefficiencies. However, one interviewee noted how the budget increase that EFCA had obtained was important because it helped to offset cuts in national administrations' budgets, at least to a certain extent.

Several interviewees also highlighted that EFCA has consistently upheld the requirements of the Financial Regulation.⁵⁰ At the same time, they also noted that EFCA has been able to respond flexibly to unforeseen external challenges, such as COVID-19. In fact, EFCA's budget execution was near 100% throughout the period 2017-2021, and even in 2020, when the pandemic started, it achieved a budget execution rate of 97%.⁵¹ As shown in Table 3 **Error! Reference source not found.**, in 2020 and 2021 resources were been re-allocated across operational activities, whilst reaching an overall execution rate above 97% in both years.

Table 3: Estimation of budget allocation by operational activity and execution rate

	2020			2021		
	AWP	AR	% execution vs plan	AWP	AR	% execution vs plan
JDPs, Operational Plans, and Pilot Projects	5,429,883	4,251,156	78%	5,790,358	4,475,451	77%
Risk assessment and data analysis	3,361,060	3,370,271	100%	3,404,389	2,939,898	86%

⁴⁹ This vessel was chartered as a result of the cooperation with EMSA. Further information is available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/chartered-means> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁵⁰ AB Decision 19-W-5 of the Administrative Board of the European Fisheries Control Agency of 29/08/2019 concerning the Financial Regulation of the European Fisheries Control Agency.

⁵¹ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2020. Annual Report 2020 (Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2020), page 8.

	2020			2021		
	AWP	AR	% execution vs plan	AWP	AR	% execution vs plan
International dimension: compliance with international provisions	1,867,552	1,362,199	73%	1,876,142	1,275,729	68%
Coast Guard and Capacity Building	6,241,505	7,455,509	119%	9,929,111	12,113,650	122%
Total	16,900,000	16,439,135	97%	21,000,000	20,804,728	99%

Source: Authors' elaboration based on European Fisheries Control Agency Annual Reports 2020 and 2021.

Note: Only the 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports share the same operational activities. Data is estimated based on project components. For further details on the estimation methodology, see: European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Annual Report 2021, page 110, available at:

https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EFCA%20Annual%20Report%20%28AR%29%20for%20year%202021-%20correction%2025.5.22_0.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

EFCA's ability to make an effective use of the budget is summarised by the words of a staff member:

"We don't have a problem spending the budget: there is so much to do. Travel expenditure has almost disappeared [due to COVID-19], but this means that we are now able to spend more on things such as surveillance by plane, some communications actions... we are always trying to compensate." (EFCA staff member)

Nevertheless, some internal stakeholders highlighted that, in recent years, it has been challenging to maintain high levels of budget execution.

In addition, interviewees familiar with EFCA indicated that in recent years the Agency had struggled to recruit staff for specific IT roles. Interviewees believed that this was due to EFCA's low salaries in the context of a competitive labour market; a similar problem affected also contractors working for EFCA, which were bound by relatively low framework contract day rates.

In fact, EFCA's reliance on external contractors could potentially exacerbate some of the difficulties faced with regards to IT systems. The Annual Report 2021 indicated that "outsourcing of activities may be more cost-effective in particular when certain skills are not available" in-house, but the risk linked to outsourcing is that it can cause "(over)dependence on external contractors, which may lead to potential loss of knowledge, lack of continuity and/or systems malfunction when contractors change", especially in the IT sphere.⁵² In order to mitigate these risks, EFCA is expected to place emphasis on quality criteria in calls for tenders, whilst establishing a knowledge transfer policy to ensure business continuity⁵³.

⁵² European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Single Programming Document (SPD) 2021-2025, 2021-2025 Multiannual Work programme 2021 Annual Work Programme, page 68, available at: https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/SPD%202021-2025_14.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁵³ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Single Programming Document (SPD) 2021-2025, 2021-2025 Multiannual Work programme 2021 Annual Work Programme, page 68, available at: https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/SPD%202021-2025_14.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

Lastly, during the course of an interview, it was also pointed out that, from 2018 onwards, EFCA received grant funding for specific projects, as reported in Table 2. **Error! Reference source not found..** This was seen as a potential resourcing challenge, because grant-funded projects require staff-time, but overhead cost can only account for 7% of the grant value at most.

“Projects via grant funding are a big concern. EFCA are requested to participate because they are the experts, but the disproportionate growth of such ad hoc projects is a challenge from a resourcing perspective. Grants only allow for 7% of the total value to pay for overhead costs.” (EFCA staff member)

IT systems for exchange of data

Several stakeholders were of the opinion that efficient data exchange is essential for the effective implementation of fisheries control activities. EFCA's role is to ensure that quality data is available for the activities related to JDPs. Furthermore, EFCA facilitates data exchanges with Member States and RFMOs by coordinating the collection and analysis of data, including by developing reporting tools, compliance indicators, and quality monitoring instruments⁵⁴. EFCA also collaborates with the European Commission's DG MARE in order to define and implement standards for the exchange of data related to fisheries control.⁵⁵ Overall, external stakeholders consulted through the survey believed that EFCA had delivered good results in relation to IT systems and data exchange, whilst EFCA staff appeared to be more critical (Figure 16).

In 2017-2021, the main types of data shared by Member States with EFCA included:

- Vessel position (via VMS);
- Electronic logbooks (via ERS);
- Summary of inspection and surveillance reports (Activity Reports, via Fishnet);
- Target vessels (list of high-risk vessels)⁵⁶.

In an effort to improve the quality of its services, EFCA prepared a System Governance Framework, which aims to define rules and policies for all EFCA systems. The framework includes five components: access and authorisations, user support and incident management, demand management, and training and communication on demand management.⁵⁷ As reported by an interviewee, the implementation of the framework began in 2021, and progressed at a slower-than-expected pace, but this is mainly due to lack of resources. In parallel, EFCA developed a Data Governance Framework, which is meant to provide a holistic view of the current data flows and usage, in order to improve the quality of the data and of the service provided to end-users.⁵⁸ As explained by an interviewee, the introduction of these frameworks was made necessary by the expansion of the Agency and the increased complexity of data exchanges between the Member States and EFCA.

As regards IT infrastructure, during 2017-2021, EFCA continued to ensure the maintenance and upgrading of its IT systems, whilst developing partnerships with other Agencies (e.g. EUIPO, EMSA) to

⁵⁴ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2022. Data and Systems on Fisheries Activities, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/data-and-systems-fisheries-activities> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Annual Report 2021 (Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021), page 66.

⁵⁷ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Annual Report 2021 (Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021), page 68.

⁵⁸ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2022. Data and Systems on Fisheries Activities, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/data-and-systems-fisheries-activities> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

improve the efficiency of its operations, generate cost-savings, and enhance business continuity.⁵⁹ However, despite these efforts, challenges around software development and application maintenance remained due to the costs associated with this type of investments⁶⁰ and recruitment challenges in the IT sector⁶¹.

Many stakeholders, especially from national authorities, recognised the importance of the coordination work undertaken by EFCA to ensure that Member States can exchange data to improve the targeting of control measures. Overall, user satisfaction based on surveys conducted by EFCA is generally high, although it fell short of the 90% target in 2017, in 2018 (for ERS), and in 2020, as illustrated in Table 4. **Error! Reference source not found..** These results are consistent with the relatively high satisfaction levels with EFCA's work on IT systems and data exchange expressed by external stakeholders in the survey carried out for this Evaluation (Figure 16).

Table 4: User satisfaction

	2017	2018 ⁶²	2019	2020	2021
Types of systems evaluated	VMS, ERS, EIR, Fishnet, Marsurv ⁶³	VMS, ERS, Fishnet, EFCA IMS	N/A	ERS, Fishnet, IMS	ERS, Fishnet, IMS
User satisfaction (target: >90%)	87%	VMS 100% ERS 82% Fishnet 92% EFCA IMS 93%	N/A	89%	94%

Source: Authors' elaboration based on European Fisheries Control Agency Annual Reports 2017-2021.

However, some criticism was expressed by end-users in relation to the functionality of the IT systems used by EFCA, and the data processing. Interviewees complained that the data extraction and analysis process tends to be time-intensive. According to a national official, performance issues are mainly due to the fact that EFCA relies on legacy in-house applications, and has not moved towards the use of data warehouses or data lakes, which would speed up data sharing, analysis, and visualisation. In particular, the interviewee underlined that some functionalities, such as data extraction in JADE, could be more efficiently carried out if EFCA was to use off-the-shelf applications. The interviewee explained that commercial products, such as IBM Cognos, are already in use in some Member States, and could be easily adapted to EFCA's needs and replace legacy applications. Similar suggestions were made in relation to electronic logbooks, where EFCA could draw from best practices, by adopting similar software to that already deployed in some Member States. The interviewee also recalled that EFCA had previously visited various Member States to understand the structure and functioning of their IT systems for fisheries control; they suggested that this exercise could be repeated in order to identify best practices to improve EFCA's IT systems.

Issues around data sharing and data quality were also raised by internal and external stakeholders. Whilst some interviewees were of the opinion that sometimes the data provided by the Member States is

⁵⁹ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2019. EFCA Programming Document Multiannual work programme 2019-2020 and Annual Work Programme 2019, page 20, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Multiannual%20work%20programme%202019%20-%202020%20and%20Annual%20work%20programme%202019.pdf> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁶⁰ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Single Programming Document (SPD) 2021-2025, 2021-2025 Multiannual Work programme 2021 Annual Work Programme, page 32, available at: https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/SPD%202021-2025_14.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁶¹ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Single Programming Document (SPD) 2021-2025, 2021-2025 Multiannual Work programme 2021 Annual Work Programme, page 68, available at: https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/SPD%202021-2025_14.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁶² The Annual Report 2018 indicates 'user non-satisfaction rate'. For consistency, the figures for 2018 were obtained by subtracting the 'non-satisfaction rate' from the total (100%).

⁶³ Now called EFCA IMS.

of low quality, other interviewees believed that manual data sharing procedures were creating unnecessary administrative burden. As an example, an interviewee mentioned the list of high-risk vessels that Member States need to provide to EFCA: according to the interviewee, by the time the list is uploaded to JADE and risk reports are generated, the analysis is already outdated.

In addition, some stakeholders noted that there were problems around the use of the new UN-FLUX data standard for data sharing. Interview feedback suggests that there might be different reasons behind the delays in the adoption of UN-FLUX. However, the adoption of FLUX standards was deemed important to ensure full interoperability of data in the context of JDPs.

Despite this, some interviewees were under the impression that EFCA was making progress towards the implementation of a more efficient approach to data collection and processing. In particular, the Data Governance Framework was seen as an important step to ensure that data gathering and analysis could be integrated and streamlined. As explained by an interviewee, system integration will enhance the capacity of EFCA and the Member States to conduct multi-domain analysis. The implementation of new system integration features is expected to contribute to a reduction in direct costs and costs associated with the time spent by EFCA staff on carrying out analytical tasks, thus allowing resources to be allocated to other activities.

Lastly, according to a national coast guard official, EFCA had also been crucial in ensuring a smooth data exchange process in the context of the Tripartite Agreement with EMSA and Frontex. In fact, according to the interviewee, EFCA ensured that data collected by Frontex during patrol operations was shared with the appropriate national authorities in a timely manner, in line with the standard operating procedures laying down the data exchange protocols and channels of communication.

IT system for information exchange (Fishnet)

Fishnet is a web-based collaboration tool for Member States and EFCA that provides a virtual office-like environment that enables users to share files, make video calls, and send emails and instant messages. In addition, it includes tools for collaborative document writing, as well as a calendar and a mission planner. Users are given access to specific areas based on their role, and access requests are managed centrally through a standard process involving JDP Steering Group members.⁶⁴

In 2018, the platform was upgraded to ensure that it could be integrated with Microsoft SharePoint⁶⁵, and the migration to the new host platform was completed in November 2019⁶⁶.

Overall, stakeholders familiar with Fishnet were satisfied with it, as it also appears from the aggregate data presented in Table 4. Feedback gathered by EFCA confirms that users found that the platform facilitated regular exchanges among stakeholders, thus enhancing close collaboration among Member States and between Member States and EFCA⁶⁷. Officials involved in JDPs were particularly appreciative of the fact that documents, such as infringement reports, can be easily consulted on the platform, although some indicated that it might take a while to understand how the platform is structured

⁶⁴ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2022. EFCA Fisheries Information System, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/efca-fisheries-information-system> (last accessed: 20 July 2022)

⁶⁵ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2018. Annual Report 2018, page 72, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EFCA%20Annual%20Report%20for%20year%202018.pdf> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁶⁶ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2019. EFCA Programming Document Multiannual work programme 2019-2020 and Annual Work Programme 2019, page 75, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Multiannual%20work%20programme%202019%20-%202020%20and%20Annual%20work%20programme%202019.pdf> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁶⁷ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2019. Annual Report 2019, page 26, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EFCA%20Annual%20Report%20for%20year%202019.pdf> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

and where to locate different types of information. Only few stakeholders reported encountering technical issues, such as being unable to log into the platform.

New technologies for control of fisheries

In line with its Founding Regulation⁶⁸, during 2017-2021 EFCA sought to actively promote the use of new technologies for fisheries control, particularly through collaboration with other EU Agencies.

EFCA's Integrated Maritime Services (IMS, formerly Marsurv) is an example of the investment in new technologies and collaborations made by EFCA. IMS was developed in order to support the operational coordination of fisheries inspection and surveillance activity, and is the result of the cooperation between EFCA and EMSA, regulated by a Service Level Agreement. IMS integrates real-time vessel information (VMS, provided by EFCA), terrestrial and satellite automatic identification systems (AIS, via Copernicus), and long-range identity and tracking (LRIT) position reports. As reported by some stakeholders, the collaboration with EMSA resulted in tangible benefits for EFCA, particularly because it allows to gather, merge, and process a large amount of data that EFCA on its own would not be able deal with due to the technical limitations of its IT infrastructure.

However, one stakeholder pointed out that, in their view, the collaboration between the two Agencies is somewhat unbalanced, with EFCA being the main beneficiary of the agreement, while EMSA (as the bigger Agency) has born the lion's share of the costs. The interviewee argued that, following the budget increase, EFCA should be able to contribute more to the partnership.

Furthermore, in the context of the Coast Guard initiative, EFCA began to use drones for maritime surveillance. This was indicated by some interviewees as an additional positive aspect of the collaboration between EFCA and other EU Agencies. Nevertheless, the use of drones is not always viable. For example, an interviewee explained that satellite images obtained from Copernicus were used to replace drone footage, thus showing how the new technologies adopted by EFCA can be complementary.

In addition to this, EFCA invested in research on new technologies. Its research primarily focused on REM, including CCTV as a tool to support efficient control measures as regards the enforcement of the landing obligation. Research coordinated by EFCA in a dedicated Technical Working Group resulted in the Technical Guidelines and minimal requirements for implementing REM fisheries in the EU⁶⁹, published in 2019. Stakeholders familiar with the research conducted by EFCA expressed their satisfaction with the quality of the work, and some stakeholders underlined how they would hope to see EFCA carry out more research into topics such as REM and on-shore fisheries controls.

However, as mentioned by internal stakeholders, budget constraints limit EFCA's ability to invest in research into new technologies.

"We would love to explore modern systems, virtual reality and such... but in the current challenging situation, we have to focus on maintaining business as usual." (EFCA staff member)

⁶⁸ Regulation (EU) 2019/473 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 on the European Fisheries Control Agency, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32019R0473> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁶⁹ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2019. Technical Guidelines and minimal requirements for implementing REM fisheries in the EU, available at:

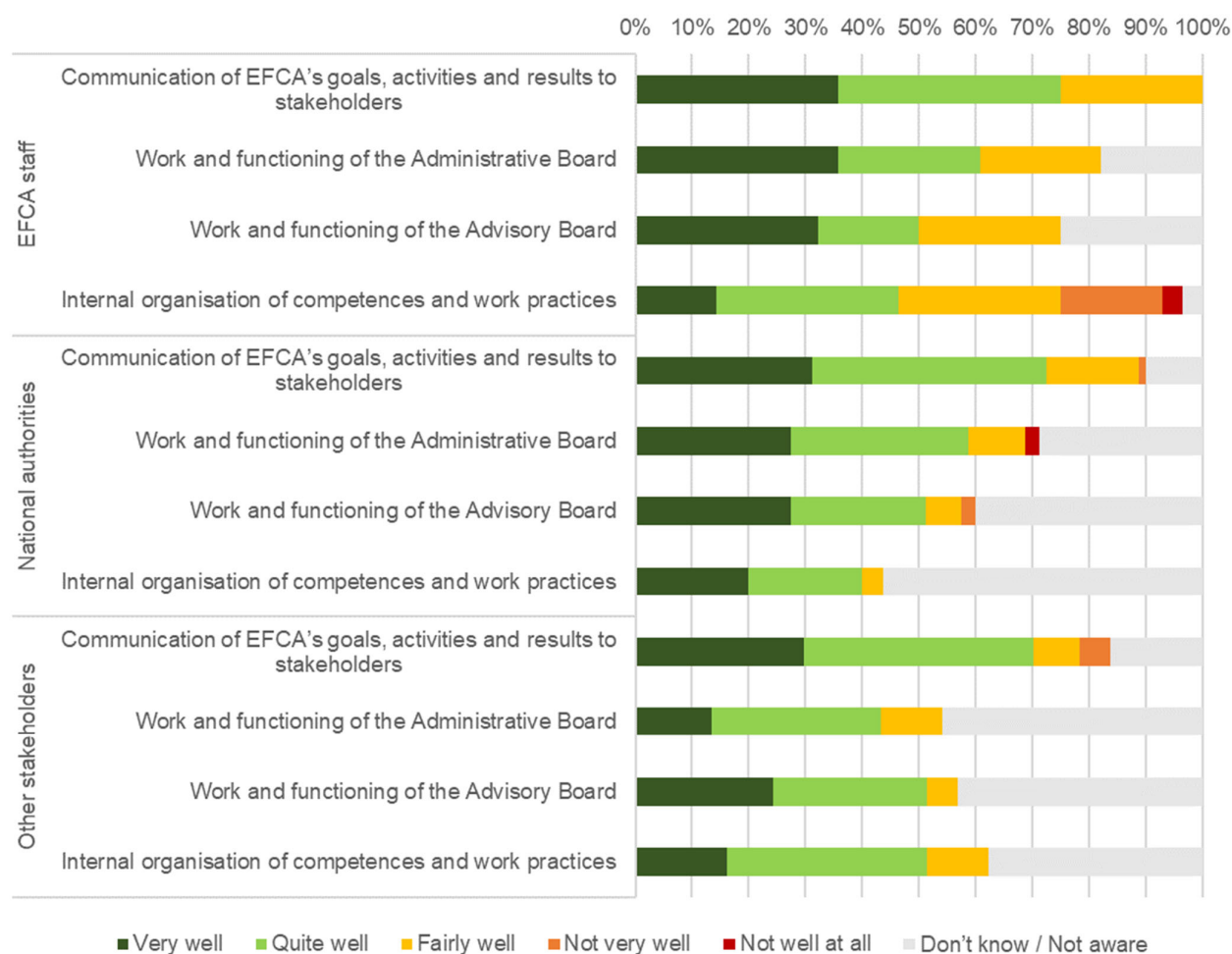
<https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Technical%20guidelines%20and%20specifications%20for%20the%20implementation%20of%20Remote%20Electronic%20Monitoring%20REM%29%20in%20EU%20fisheries.pdf> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

4.2.2 Efficiency of EFCA's internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, and of EFCA's administrative and horizontal working practices (EQ5, EQ6)

Results from the survey and in-depth consultations with stakeholders indicate high levels of approval of EFCA's working practices and internal organisation.

The survey results are presented in Figure 17. The survey findings broadly chime with feedback from interviews. In particular, many external stakeholders mentioned that they perceived EFCA as a well-organised and responsive Agency. However, a large share of external stakeholders were also unable to comment on aspects related to the internal functioning of the Agency and its governing and advisory bodies.

Figure 17: How well do you think the following aspects of EFCA's operations work?



Base: 145

Whilst external stakeholders generally held positive views of the Agency, around half of internal staff indicated in the survey that the internal organisation of competences and work practices is not optimal (i.e. only works fairly, not very, or not well at all), as shown in Figure 17.

This is an aspect that was criticised also by an external stakeholder during an interview. They argued that the distribution of resources within the Agency might appear unbalanced, because it reflects the internal structure of the Agency. They added that the current structure results in a counter-intuitive distribution of portfolios, with some activities (such as the development of risk assessment

methodologies) that would benefit from being cross-cutting, rather than being nested under a geographical Unit.

However, it has to be noted that only 30 EFCA staff members (around one-third of the whole Agency) replied to this survey. A larger internal survey conducted in 2020 found that staff were of the opinion that internal control principles were well implemented.⁷⁰ As the survey results show, a majority of respondents held positive views of the operational structure of their Unit, but a number of them also felt that at least some changes were needed.⁷¹

Moreover, some external stakeholders interviewed considered that the Agency had become more accessible in the last few years. For example, a few interviewees mentioned examples of cases in which they requested specific training or other forms of support from EFCA, and EFCA responded quickly and effectively. The possibility for national officials to spend periods of time working at EFCA, and the responsiveness of EFCA staff to queries from national authorities have contributed to improving this image.

"A few years ago (around 2016-2017), the relationship with EFCA was quite rigid. With a very hierarchical structure, it was very difficult to have one-to-one meetings, informal meetings. Maybe there were good reasons for that. There was very limited level of interaction. For the benefit of everybody, this has improved, interaction is now a lot more fluid." (Administrative Board member)

Further to this, some stakeholders felt that, especially in relation to the international dimension, there was a lack of clarity over the division of roles between EFCA and the European Commission.

"[A clearer] division of labour [between EFCA and the European Commission] would help to understand where to find assistance and [who can respond to] questions. I am not sure how much IUU is coordinated, and it is the responsibility of Member States. EFCA could do more in IUU, but there should be a clearer role for EFCA, and an exact division of labour between the European Commission and EFCA." (Administrative Board member)

As regards reporting requirements, members of the Administrative Board were generally satisfied with the information provided at meetings and the reporting procedures, which were deemed comprehensive and transparent. However, a number of members of the Administrative Board were of the opinion that some of the reporting can be redundant. At the same time, they agreed that the quality of reporting had improved over time, as stakeholders recognised that EFCA was trying to reduce the amount of administrative documentation discussed during meetings, in order to allow for more time for strategic discussions.

Lastly, a critical point that was raised by some interviewees related to the type of indicators used to measure progress. In 2016-2017, the Administrative Board decided to revise and streamline EFCA's overarching objectives and KPIs. In particular, the overhaul sought to include among the Agency's KPIs additional outcome measures. Nevertheless, an Administrative Board member stated that "the goals set by EFCA measure processes, not effects, which is a concern", and this was echoed by another

⁷⁰ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2020. Annual Report 2020, page 109, available at: https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/AR2020_20210601%20ECA%20observations%20included_1.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁷¹ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2020. Internal Control Survey 2020.

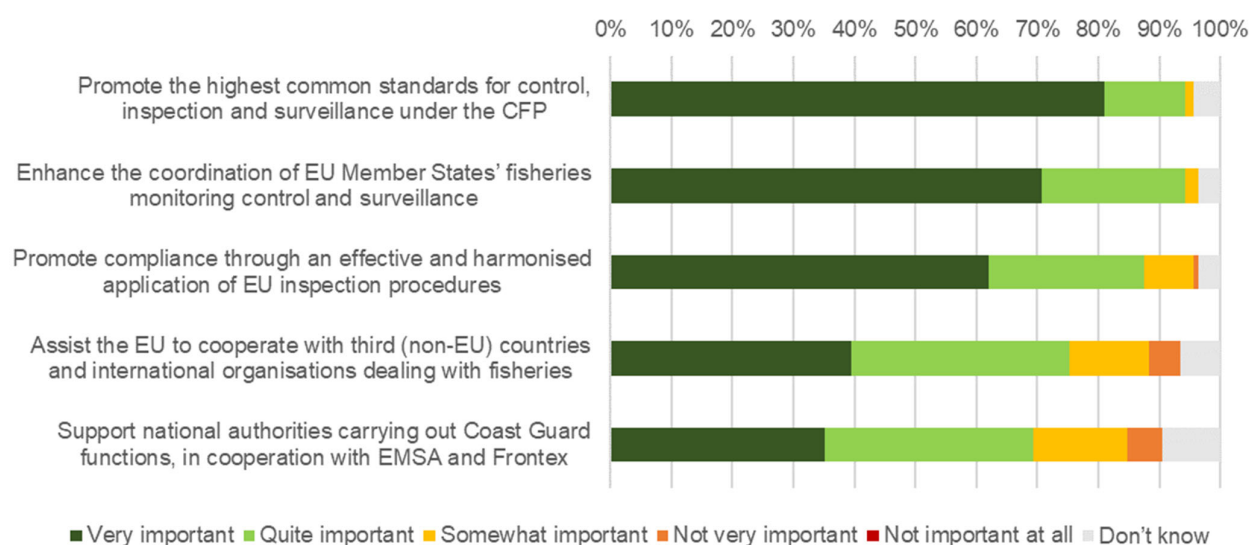
stakeholder, which however noted that the nature of the KPIs had improved compared to the period prior to 2017.

4.3 Relevance

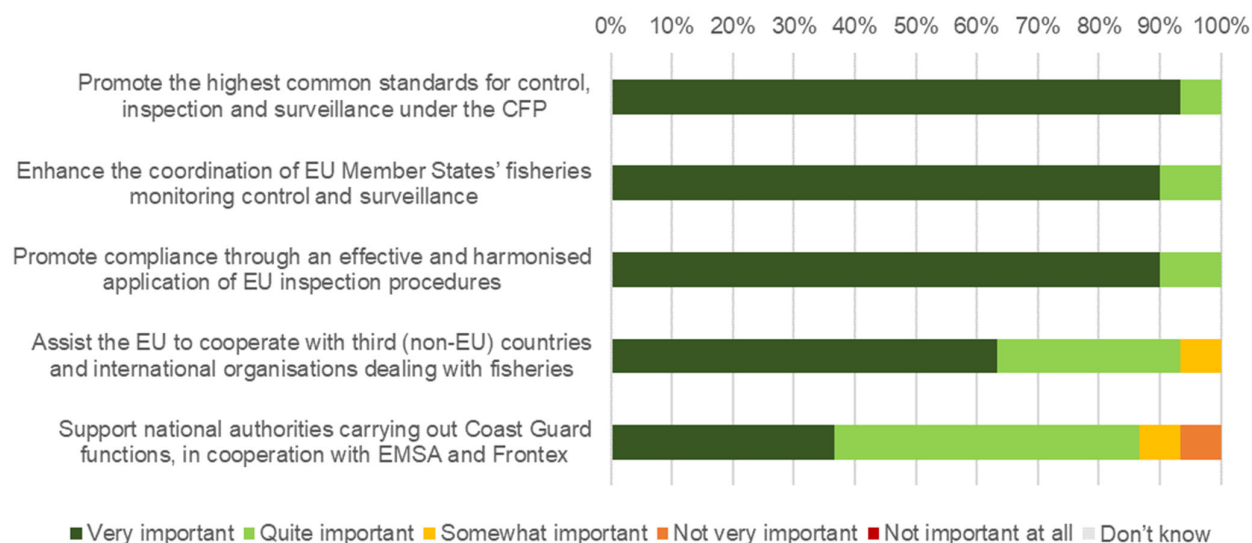
4.3.1 Relevance of the objectives set in the Founding Regulation (EQ7)

This evaluation has found that the objectives set in EFCA's Founding Regulation continue to be highly relevant to the needs of fisheries control authorities within the EU. Figure 18 and Figure 19 show that both external stakeholders and EFCA staff rank EFCA's mission and objectives in the same order, although external stakeholders tended to express more varied views on the importance of each objective. Even so, over 80% felt that "promoting the highest common standards for control, inspections and surveillance" was very important; over 70% thought that "enhancing coordination between Member States" was very important; and over 60% rated "promoting compliance through effective and harmonised application of EU procedures" as very important, confirming that all three of these objectives are very well aligned with the needs of EFCA's key stakeholders.

Figure 18: In your view, how important are EFCA's mission and objectives? (External stakeholders)



Base: 137

Figure 19: In your view, how important are EFCA's mission and objectives? (EFCA staff)

Base: 30

In general, stakeholders consider that EFCA has performed well within its **somewhat limited role** in fisheries control. There is a general perception that its role in fisheries control is limited by the current control regulation, and interviewees from the Commission thought that more could be done with expanded powers. Stakeholders also noted that EFCA has coped well with the new tasks assigned to it in the last few years (coast guard activities, new activities in the external dimension), and that other activities have not been neglected or deprioritised as a consequence of its increased role.

In addition to the above, another factor that influenced stakeholders' perception of the relevance of EFCA's objectives is the ongoing **negotiation of the new control regulation**, which may result in a revised mandate for EFCA. If implemented, the new proposal would, *inter alia*, replace the current paper-based IUU catch certification scheme with a digital information management system and provide EFCA with power to inspect not only international waters, but also national waters within the EU. On the one hand, the proposed control regulation raises expectations among stakeholders of what EFCA will do (i.e. stakeholders start demanding actions on the new activities the Agency will need to perform, such as more control on land); but on the other hand, the Agency cannot react until the regulation is approved.

This somehow demonstrates that, although the current objectives continue to be relevant, current needs in the EU demand a larger role for EFCA, either as new objectives, for instance, in the field of data sharing and landing obligation, or as additional activities in pursuit of existing objectives.

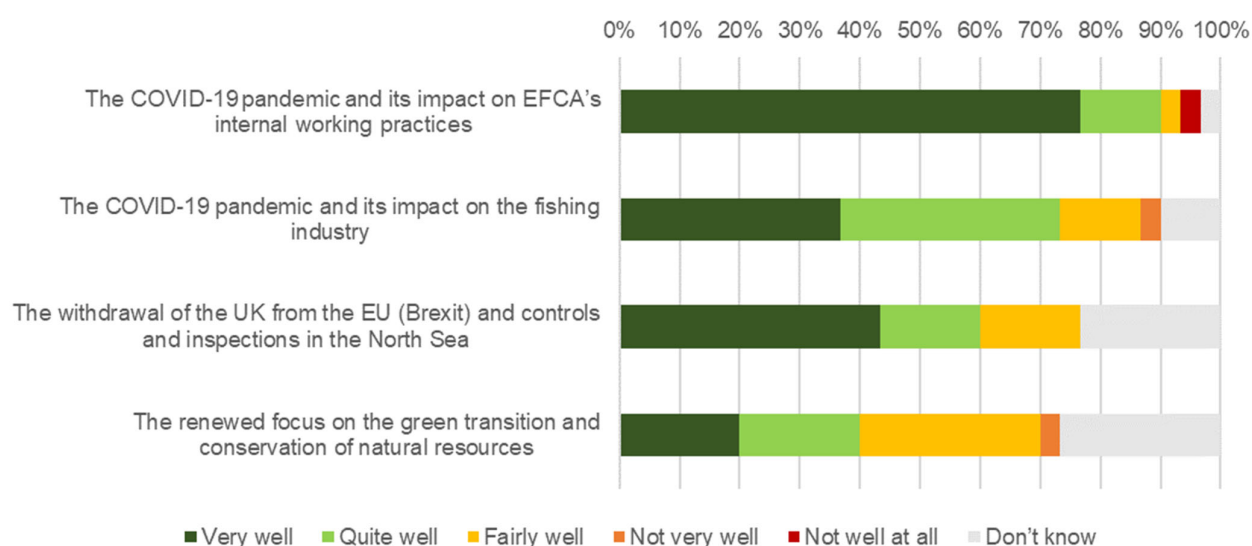
4.3.2 EFCA's reaction to technological, scientific and socio-economic changes (EQ8)

In the period 2017-2021, EFCA has had to deal with a significant amount of technological, scientific, and socio-economic changes. The main contextual changes are the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU, and the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, travelling was restricted, social distancing measures were implemented, as well as other public health measures were put into place. This had an impact for EFCA's operations in two main ways: (a) EFCA's staff had to adapt to working remotely and meetings with its governance bodies had to be conducted online, and (b) EFCA and national authorities had to change the way inspections were conducted in order to comply with social distancing measures (e.g. inspectors could not board fishing vessels during inspections). There has also been technological and

scientific progress in the way inspection, control and surveillance are conducted, for instance in the use of satellite imagery, REM, or drones.

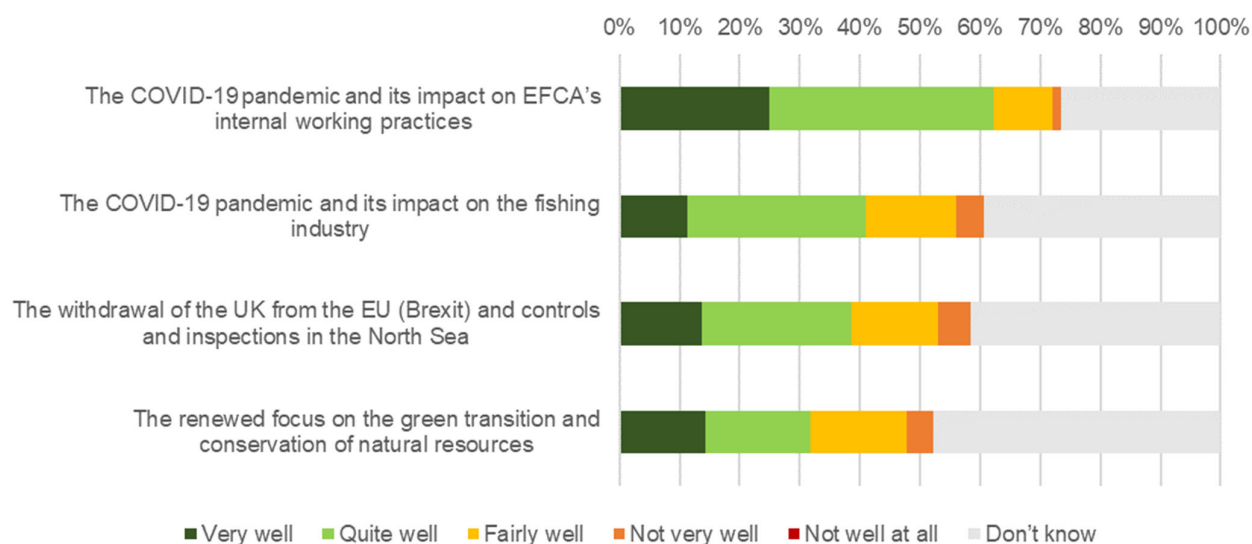
Survey respondents with at least basic knowledge of EFCA were asked about EFCA's ability to deal with these challenges. External stakeholders (Figure 21) were less likely to have an opinion on how EFCA dealt with these challenges compared to EFCA staff (Figure 20). However, overall responses suggest that EFCA has operated well in challenging circumstances. In particular, staff were overwhelmingly positive in their assessment of how EFCA adapted its internal working practices to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 20: How well did EFCA deal with the following challenges that affected its areas of activity in 2017-2021? (EFCA staff)



Base: 30

Figure 21: How well did EFCA deal with the following challenges that affected its areas of activity in 2017-2021? (External stakeholders)



Base: 132

Interviewees provided more nuanced responses on how EFCA reacted to these changes. In relation to Brexit, interviewees were very positive about EFCA's quick response and their ability to define different options and plans based on a wide range of scenarios (e.g., whether an agreement would be achieved between the EU and the UK in the field of fisheries). Interviewees from EFCA and the Administrative Board also thought that EFCA reacted well and quickly to the pandemic, moving meetings to online platforms. The COVID-19 pandemic also affected training and capacity building activities. It forced a sudden shift from in-person training to online training, and thus practical exercises were suspended. There was consensus among interviewees that EFCA made considerable efforts to render the training interactive despite being online (for example, by including case studies and audience interaction tools).

One interviewee from the Administrative Board manifested that, once the pandemic is over, they would like to have in-person meetings again, as they are more effective at creating personal relationships across national agencies, and with EFCA staff.

4.4 Coherence (EQ9, EQ10)

EFCA's role and responsibilities are established in the Agency's Founding Regulation⁷², which also provides for EFCA to cooperate with Frontex and EMSA on coast guard activities. Alongside the codified Founding Regulation, there are a number of EU policies that are related to EFCA's areas of activity and competence.

Only few interviewees were able to comment on the overall coherence between EFCA's activities and broader EU policies. Nevertheless, some stressed that the fruitful cooperation with EMSA and Frontex could suggest that EFCA's activities are complementary to other EU policies. In fact, the cooperation with EMSA and Frontex cooperation was believed to have improved synergies between maritime policy and space policy.⁷³

EFCA's activities also make a clear contribution to the Green Deal, one of the key European Commission's policy priorities for 2019-2024. By promoting a consistent application of the CFP, EFCA's activities support the efforts to halt biodiversity loss and preserve and restore marine ecosystems.⁷⁴ In fact, as explained in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, marine resources "must be harvested sustainably and there must be zero-tolerance for illegal practices".⁷⁵ According to the Strategy, the EU is committed to limiting "the use of fishing gear most harmful to biodiversity, including on the seabed" and it calls for the elimination or reduction of the by-catch of species threatened with extinction.⁷⁶ In order to achieve this, the Strategy identifies the need to improve data collection on by-catch and to establish fisheries management measures – areas in which EFCA plays a role with its activity on JDPs, IUU fishing, and data gathering and analysis.

⁷² Regulation (EU) 2019/473 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 on the European Fisheries Control Agency (codification), available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019R0473&from=en> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁷³ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. Annual Report 2021 (Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021), page 30.

⁷⁴ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021. DECISION NO 21-II-03 OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN FISHERIES CONTROL AGENCY of 4 June 2021 amending AB Decision No 20-II-07 of 14 October 2020 concerning the adoption of the Single Programming Document containing the Multiannual work programme 2021-2025 and Annual work programme for 2021 and budget, page 4, available at: https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/AB%20Decision%2021-II-03%20Amendment%20SPD%202021-2025%20and%20AWP%202021%20and%20Budget_0.pdf (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁷⁵ COM(2020) 380 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee Of The Regions, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁷⁶ COM(2020) 380 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee Of The Regions, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

Data and digitalisation are additional aspects that EFCA deals with and that resonate with the EU's goal of building a 'Europe fit for the digital age'. As illustrated previously, during 2017-2021 EFCA made progress on the deployment of IT tools and infrastructure. It also actively promoted collaboration between Member States via digital channels, with the view of streamlining information exchange on control measures.

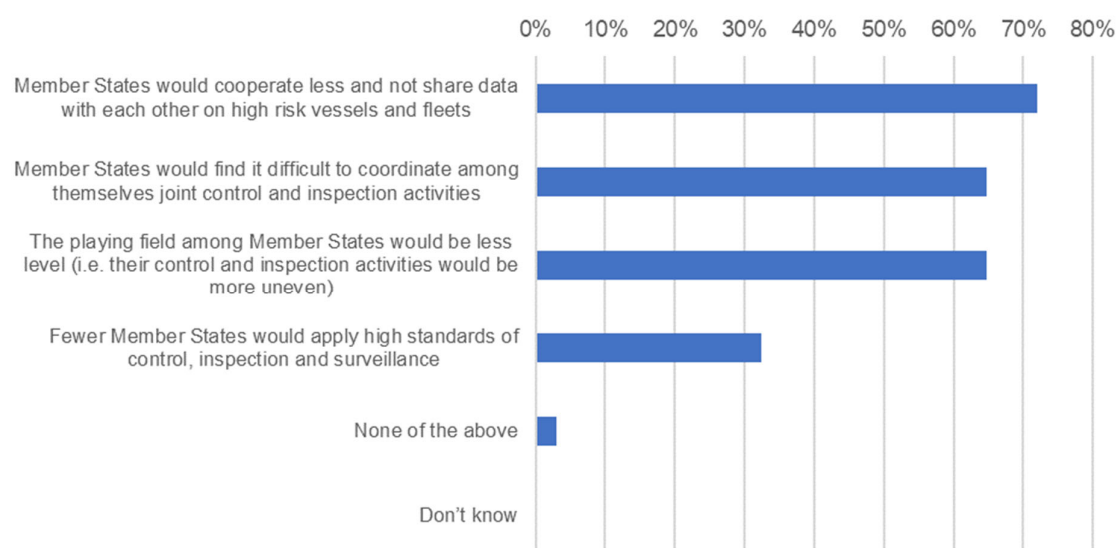
Lastly, EFCA activities support the European Union's health and food safety policy (particularly food authenticity and prevention of fraud), by ensuring that fish products are sustainably sourced and safe to eat. In fact, EFCA supports Member States by providing training on the implementation of the IUU Regulation and it supports the European Commission and the Member States in the international dimension of the CFP. In addition, by assisting Member States to carry out controls throughout the whole supply chain, EFCA contributes to ensuring the traceability of fishery products in the Single Market.

4.5 EU added value (EQ11, EQ12)

There was broad consensus among stakeholders on the high added value of EFCA in coordinating fisheries control resources, harmonising procedures, generating trust among Member States' fisheries control authorities and, more generally, levelling the playing field. In many ways, the core principles behind many of EFCA's activities – including the levelling of the playing field for control, inspection and surveillance, the sharing of good practices, and efficiency gains via coordination and pooling of resources – epitomise ways in which the EU can add value. Further to this, the fact that the conservation of marine biological resources under the CFP is one of the few exclusive competences of the EU underlines the importance of cooperation between the EU and the Member States to ensure the effective and harmonised application of the EU legislation.

Survey respondents were in agreement about the fact that the level playing field would have been negatively affected if EFCA had not implemented JDPs, as illustrated in Figure 22. Over 70% of respondents believed that Member States would not be able to cooperate as effectively as they currently do, and they would not share data with each other on high-risk vessels. Around two thirds of respondents also believed that, without EFCA's JDPs, Member States would have struggled to coordinate joint inspection and control activities, and that control and inspection activities would be less harmonised across Member States. Furthermore, around one-third of respondents believed that fewer Member States would apply high standards of control, inspection, and surveillance.

Figure 22: If EFCA had not established JDPs, which of these situations do you think would be the most likely? Please select up to three statements. (All respondents)



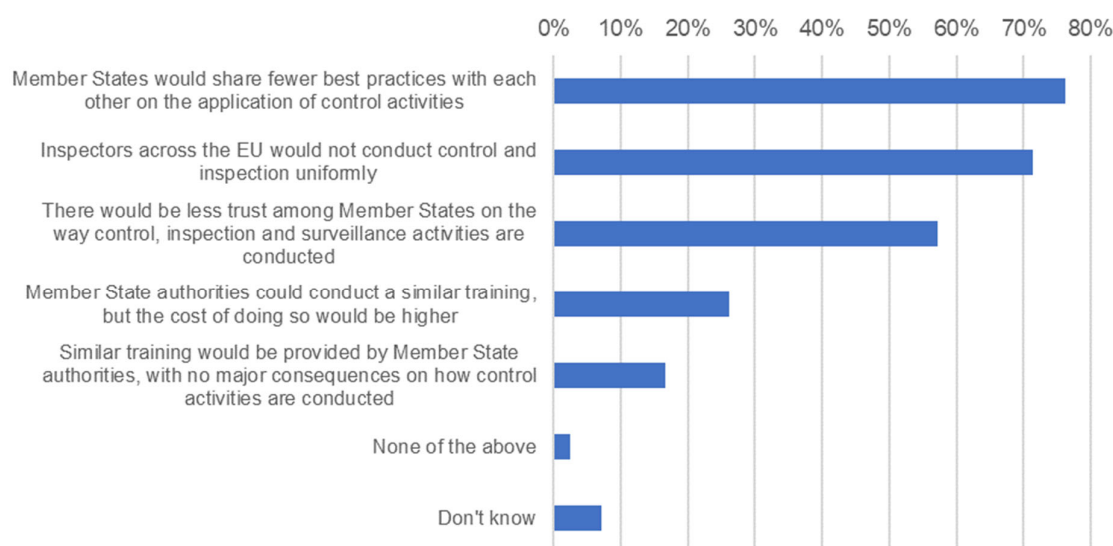
Base: 68

Interviews confirmed the survey results. Interviewees agreed that, in the absence of EFCA, Member States would still carry out control and inspection activities, but they would face coordination problems, and they would gradually diverge in their approach to fisheries control and inspection.

"In terms of added value, the added value that EFCA brings with the JDP, I think it has [been] achieved and I think we continue seeing those effects on a daily basis, because we see that Member States have a big interest to learn from EFCA or to exchange views. They see the added value." (European Commission staff)

The survey also asked respondents to provide their views on a hypothetical scenario in which EFCA did not conduct any training or capacity building activities. The results are presented in Figure 23. Also in this case, it appears that stakeholders believe that the impact on controls and inspection activities would be negative. A large percentage of respondents (76%) were of the opinion that Member States would not share best practices as easily as they do now. The absence of training and capacity-building activities would also impinge on the uniformity of control and inspection procedures, according to 71% of respondents. Similarly, trust among Member States as regards inspections and controls would be affected (57% of respondents thought so). Some respondents (26%) believed that Member States would be able to conduct the training themselves, but the cost of doing so would be higher. Only 17% were of the opinion that similar training could be organised by Member States, with no major differences.

Figure 23: If EFCA did not conduct any training or capacity building activities at all, which of these situations do you think would be the most likely? Please select up to three statements. (All stakeholders)



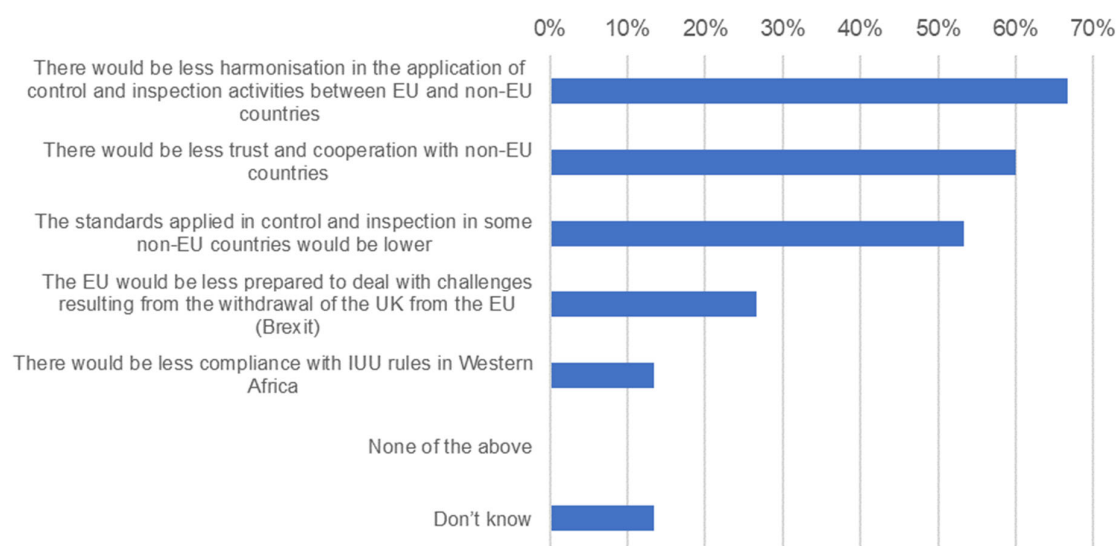
Base: 42

Interview feedback chimes with the survey findings. Stakeholders generally agreed that the lack of a common training programme on CFP interpretation and enforcement would hinder harmonisation across the EU. Some interviewees were of the view that, without EFCA, Member States would find a way of training their own inspectors, and potentially inspectors from neighbouring Member States, but that this would be a sub-optimal solution. In particular, one training participant pointed out that, if EFCA ceased to exist, the wealth of experience and expertise that its staff have developed over the years would be lost.

"If EFCA wasn't there, there would be some other authority in charge [of the training programme]. Things have a way of working themselves out. However, all of EFCA's know-how and experience would be lost."
(National authority official and training participant)

As regards international operations with third countries, survey respondents seemed to agree that, without EFCA, there would be negative consequences across a range of aspects. For 67% of respondents, harmonisation in the application of control and inspection procedures between the EU and third countries would be negatively affected, and for 60% of respondents there would be negative effects on trust and cooperation with third countries. Over half of respondents (53%) believed that, without EFCA's support, inspection and control standards in third countries would deteriorate. Less than a third of respondents (27%) was of the opinion that, in the absence of EFCA, the EU would be less prepared to deal with Brexit, and only 13% deemed that compliance with IUU rules in Western Africa would be lower without EFCA (perhaps suggesting that the EU added value of EFCA in this field is limited).

Figure 24: If EFCA did not conduct any international activity at all, which of these situations do you think would be the most likely? Please select up to three statements.



Base: 15

Furthermore, feedback from interviews suggests that EFCA had a particularly positive role in the context of the Tripartite Working Arrangement with EMSA and Frontex. As explained by national officials, EFCA contributed to creating a culture of collaboration: by collaborating with other EU Agencies, EFCA has fostered collaboration also among different agencies at national level by showing the benefits of a joint approach to coast guard functions.

"In 2016 the Agency was granted additional funding for its mandate on Coast Guard. It chartered the Lundy Sentinel. This made huge difference to how Member States perceive the added value of EFCA, and how it can help them in practice with [fisheries inspection and control] means." (European Commission official)

"[My Member State] is used to multipurpose operations. [...] Nevertheless, the cooperation among Agencies has given a push to Member States to improve their work: thanks to the Tripartite Agreement, there is more collaboration among national institutions." (Administrative Board member)

Interviewees also discussed the impact that a hypothetical closure of the Agency could have more broadly. Stakeholders, particularly from national authorities, held the view that terminating EFCA's mandate would lead to considerable difficulties in ensuring a proper and coherent implementation of the CFP.

"[If EFCA ceased to exist] the Member States would be missing a head. There would be 27 bodies moving their hands but without having a head. If we [as Member States] were to address each and every service of EFCA (control, data collection, etc) it would be a disaster. It is the pillar that is constant [...] I can't imagine what would happen [without EFCA]." (Administrative Board member)

A Member State representative expected that, in the event of the closure of EFCA, problems related to the implementation of the CFP rules would gradually become apparent, as the legacy of EFCA's work is lost.

"EFCA has been around for a while – some form of cooperation would remain, especially around the Baltic Sea. But if EFCA vanished, cooperation would remain, at least for a while. Year after year, challenges would become bigger and bigger." (National authority official)

Stakeholders were also sceptical of the fact that the European Commission could take on some of EFCA's responsibilities: they argued that the European Commission would lack the resources to carry out the activities that EFCA is currently responsible for.

5 Conclusions

Overall, the evidence collected and analysed as part of this evaluation confirms that, throughout the period 2017-2021, EFCA has performed well. The Agency's most valuable asset, which is widely recognised and appreciated among all stakeholder groups, is its technical knowledge and expertise. EFCA's role is well-defined and suitably narrow to allow it to focus on the kinds of activities and services that make use of this expertise and provide clear added value to its main target audiences, namely competent national authorities and the European Commission. Its objectives – in particular the three 'core' objectives of (1) promoting the highest common standards for control, inspection and surveillance under the CFP; (2) enhancing the coordination of EU Member States' fisheries control; and (3) promoting compliance through an effective and harmonised application of EU inspection procedures – remain highly relevant in view of the needs of CFP stakeholders.

The majority (between 60 and 70%) of stakeholders who responded to the survey (not including EFCA staff, whose assessment was even more positive) felt that EFCA has achieved all three of these objectives "very well" or "quite well". The most important activities in this respect were the Joint Deployment Plans – which effectively fostered coordination and exchange of good practices between Member States, and helped to focus scarce resources on the most high-risk fleet segments and vessels – and the training and capacity building activities – which were highly valued by participants and wider stakeholders alike, and contributed to both 'levelling the playing field' and 'raising the floor' as regards control, inspection and surveillance practices across the EU.

Other activities were also found to be effective – including EFCA's work on new technologies, which has the potential to help address key challenges (such as the pilot project on REM, which is expected to help prepare the ground for the effective control of the landing obligation). As regards EFCA's international operations and coast guard activities, although feedback was scarcer as fewer stakeholders are familiar with these activities, EFCA was also judged to have fulfilled its role effectively, as evidenced, for example, by the positive assessment of its role in PESCAO, or the successful (albeit still limited in scope) cooperation with EMSA and Frontex on highly useful initiatives such as the IMS. An area where improvement was deemed necessary by some stakeholders related to IT infrastructure and data sharing. Although it was recognised that EFCA had made progress in these areas, some stakeholders noted the need to upgrade some IT systems (such as JADE) and to complete the transition to the UN-FLUX standard for data sharing. Diverging views were also expressed by stakeholders in relation to the appropriateness and added value of EFCA's involvement in CEGs.

In view of this, the evaluation concludes that EFCA has made a positive and significant contribution to creating the conditions for achieving a high level of compliance with CFP rules. It is important to acknowledge that, in the absence of reliable data, we cannot be certain how overall compliance levels have evolved over the last five years, and therefore cannot measure EFCA's impact. Nonetheless, the evaluation has found strong evidence that EFCA's activities (in particular JDPs and training) have helped to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of Member States' inspection, control and surveillance efforts. This increases the likelihood that infringements are detected, and thereby acts as a deterrent to non-compliant behaviours. Based on a systematic and transparent qualitative analytical approach, the evaluation concludes that EFCA's contribution to efforts to achieving a high level of compliance with CFP rules is significant. This conclusion is supported *inter alia* by the survey results, where stakeholders across all respondent groups consistently rated EFCA's JDPs and training activities as having a greater positive effect on compliance levels than any other factors (such as changes made by Member States to their inspection practices or resources, or changes in the fishing industry).

By and large, EFCA is a well-functioning organisation. The evaluation identified no major shortcomings or weaknesses in its organisational performance, horizontal and administrative functions and procedures, or structure. EFCA disposes of an adequate level of resources, and of the right mix of skills and capabilities – including, since 2017, its own chartered vessel(s) – to get its job done effectively. It has also shown an ability to adapt remarkably well to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is a sign of a sufficiently flexible, well-run organisation with a solid work ethic. That said, the challenging labour market environment for IT services means EFCA has struggled to keep up with IT and data related aspects of its work plan due to the reduced access to both internal and external human resources, which poses risks if the situation persists. Furthermore, there are some indications that the current organisational structure, which is the result of the gradual evolution of EFCA's tasks, and is not necessarily intuitive, leads to some overlaps and grey areas between the responsibilities of the two main operational units that should eventually be revisited and potentially clarified.

However, since EFCA is still in the process of adapting to its new role (including its coast guard functions, the increase in grant-funded projects, and the chartering of additional vessels), and its role and remit will change further if and when the proposed future control regulation is adopted, now is not the right time to make any fundamental changes to the way EFCA works. Instead, EFCA should focus on thinking through and preparing for the likely consequences of the proposed future control regulation, which is already leading to additional demands from stakeholders that EFCA cannot realistically meet yet, but will likely have to address in the near future. Furthermore, in spite of the positive overall assessment, there are specific elements of EFCA's activities whose effectiveness and/or efficiency could potentially be improved (see below).

6 Recommendations

This chapter outlines the recommendations from the evaluation to EFCA and, where relevant, to the European Commission and the Administrative Board. Recommendations are organised around the following themes: (a) organisational aspects, (b) appropriateness of the Agency activities and role, and (c) specific activities. Within the latter, specific recommendations are suggested for the two activities covered in depth in the evaluation through case studies: the training of Union inspectors, and the risk assessment.

Recommendations on organisational aspects of the Agency

As indicated above in the conclusions, EFCA will need to deal with an increasing number of new/extended activities in the near future: the chartering of new vessels, the implementation of the tripartite agreement with EMSA and FRONTEX to support coast guard operations, and any new roles or activities stemming from the proposed future control regulation, if and when it is adopted. Therefore, this evaluation does not recommend that EFCA makes significant changes to its structure or tasks until its new role is made clearer. Nevertheless, the evaluation has revealed that some stakeholders from DG MARE would like EFCA to better streamline some of its activities across sea basins, i.e. having horizontal teams performing some cross-cutting JDP activities (e.g. the risk assessment). The evaluation team would not necessarily recommend taking this action, as risk assessments require in-depth knowledge of the fishing fleet and of the most common infringements committed in each sea basin, and therefore having dedicated teams within the regional units may be a better approach. However, there may be other activities that would benefit from a common approach (such as, potentially, the JDP assessment reports).

Recommendation 1: Analyse the internal organisation of JDP activities.

The evaluation team recommends that EFCA should conduct an analysis of how JDP activities are structured internally, and assess whether certain activities could become horizontal. A potential solution might be to have a *quality assurance* process or team that oversees all planning and evaluation activities within JDPs. For example, Member States' risk assessment experts (who were already involved in the definition of a common risk assessment methodology) could lead on the quality assurance of the planning and evaluation of JDP activities.

The Agency is overall well-structured and well-functioning. The main challenge that this evaluation has found in terms of EFCA's resources to perform its role is the existing staff shortages in IT. Several members of staff have left in the last couple of years and the Agency has found it very difficult to fill the vacant positions. This is notably due to the labour market context, with skills shortage in the IT sector and other employers offering higher salaries. Their IT contractors are experiencing similar challenges, and day rates are fixed by framework contracts, which limits their negotiation capacity to recruit people. The evaluators note that the Agency has made all possible efforts to resource these profiles, e.g., by using other EU Agencies' staff reserve lists, with not many other routes to explore to overcome this challenge.

In addition to this, some stakeholders consulted during the evaluation commented that EFCA is not always abreast of the best practices followed by Member States' national authorities in the field of IT (e.g. the potential of different types of software, processes for data analysis, etc.).

Recommendation 2: Explore the use of secondments from EU national agencies in IT, and the revision of the existing framework contract on IT services.

Staff from national authorities are often seconded to EFCA. Normally, it is mostly inspectors who are seconded; however, EFCA could also explore whether IT and data analytics staff could be seconded and, if so, how to attract talent. The benefit of bringing in IT and data analytics national experts is twofold: (a) on the one hand, it would help to solve or alleviate EFCA's staff shortage in IT; (b) on the other hand, it would bring expertise and knowledge of best practices applied by their national authority.

Attracting secondees from other Member States can also be a challenge, more broadly, due to the need to relocate to another country (potentially also bringing family members). If at all possible, EFCA could explore the potential of bringing in "virtual IT secondees" who continue being based in their country, working remotely full- or part-time for EFCA.

EFCA could also explore the possibility of renegotiating the fees fixed by the framework contract on IT services, so as to better align them with current market rates.

Recommendations to ensure the role and activities of the Agency continue to be appropriate to meet the objectives set in the Founding Regulation

The evaluation has found that the activities performed by the Agency are very appropriate to meet its objectives. Nevertheless, there are diverging views on whether EFCA should be involved in supporting regional CEGs.

On the one hand, the European Commission considers that EFCA's role in the CEGs does not have a firm legal basis and exceeds EFCA's mandate. In addition, there are not CEGs for all sea basins (hence EFCA is supporting some of them, but not all), which may create further disparities across sea basins. Therefore, according to some of the European Commission stakeholders interviewed, EFCA should stop supporting CEGs and dedicate instead these resources to other activities. On the other hand, Member States national authorities interviewed who were part of CEGs, on the other hand, were very appreciative of EFCA's support in coordination, noting that the CEGs are an important element of the push for greater regionalisation under the CFP, and affirmed it was helping them to progress on aspects such as the use of REM to control the landing obligation.

The evaluation team has not observed any of these meetings, and therefore it is not possible to judge whether EFCA is maintaining a neutral position, whether the meetings are effective at progressing key aspects (such as control of the landing obligation), or whether regional disparities are exacerbated.

Recommendation 3: Consider EFCA's role in CEGs in the context of the existing legal basis and EFCA's mandate.

It is recommended that the Administrative Board should review the type of support and level of involvement of EFCA in CEGs, whilst taking into account the existing provisions of the CFP and EFCA's Founding Regulation, and make a decision in relation to EFCA's continued / future involvement in CEGs.

Stakeholders from both national authorities and the Commission also expressed a desire for EFCA to take on new roles. As explained above, EFCA's role will eventually be guided by the proposed future control regulation (if approved), and therefore no significant changes or increase in activities is recommended at this point in time. Nevertheless, when and if the new regulation is adopted, EFCA will have to be ready to take on those new tasks and adapt its activities to the new monitoring, control and surveillance activities that Member State will need to perform.

Recommendation 4: Maintain a proactive approach and continue preparing for potential new tasks under the proposed future control regulation.

EFCA should maintain a proactive approach and explore the potential expansion of its remit and activities to other types of control activities (e.g., weighing, transport, traceability). This expansion in remit is already demanded by the European Commission and Member States as a way of further improving and harmonising controls in the EU.

Any new activities undertaken will need resources. Since 2017, EFCA has received additional resources to deal with the UK exit from the European Union and potential scenarios for an agreement on fisheries control between the UK and the EU. As this becomes less of a priority, those resources could instead be dedicated to new activities that are likely to be mandated by the proposed future control regulation, or to other needs expressed by the European Commission and Member States national authorities.

It was noted by some stakeholders that some of the IT capabilities of the agency should be improved in order to ensure an effective delivery of JDPs, which largely depends on the timely and accurate exchange of data and other fisheries-related information. EFCA has a central role in data exchange coordination, and thus it is particularly important that EFCA continues to promote the harmonisation of data exchange protocols.

Recommendation 5: Continue to promote digitalisation and the harmonisation of common standards for data sharing.

Building on best practices of Member State (as per Recommendation 2), EFCA should continue to improve its digital applications, whilst leading the way in promoting data interoperability among Member States, in particular by ensuring the full adoption of FLUX data standards across all its activities.

Recommendations on specific activities of the Agency: Training of Union inspectors

There is broad consensus that the training of Union inspectors is one of the key activities organised by EFCA. However, it also appears that the way the training is promoted in each Member State varies considerably.

Recommendation 6: Create guidelines for Member States on how to promote training among Union inspectors.

EFCA could produce some guidelines for Member States with recommendations on the most effective ways to promote the training programme.

EFCA demonstrated great adaptability and flexibility to the uncertainty brought about by the pandemic, and it was able to quickly move from in-person training sessions to online courses. Online sessions are less costly, because there is no travel involved, but can be less interactive.

Recommendation 7: Continue using a hybrid format for training sessions.

Going forward, EFCA could continue using the best of both approaches: more general courses, appealing to larger audiences, could be held online, whilst more targeted sessions could take place in person, with practical exercises and opportunities for exchanges among participants.

Over the years, EFCA has perfected and consolidated the content and delivery methods of its training programme. However, feedback suggests that there are areas of the CFP and other legislation that could be covered by EFCA.

Recommendation 8: Expand the breadth of training courses.

In future, EFCA could organise training sessions on additional technical topics, such as the landing obligation, or inspections on land.

Recommendations on specific activities of the Agency: Risk Assessment

The evaluation has found that the risk assessment, overall, is effective at identifying high risk fleet segments where Member State and EFCA should focus their inspection, control and surveillance resources, and that this makes JDP implementation more effective. A few national authorities in the Med JDP, however, would like to have a regional risk assessment that is better suited to the realities of their fishing fleet.

Recommendation 9: Further tailor the risk assessment methodology to the Mediterranean Sea.

EFCA should conduct an assessment on the adequacy of the risk assessment methodology to each sea basin, and whether any changes or tailoring needs to be made to the Med (and, potentially, to other sea basins not analysed in depth as part of this evaluation). This could be a topic for discussion, for instance, at the next Member State risk assessment experts meeting, where the inter-regional perspective is discussed.

Specific items that should be considered for improvement are: the definition of the fleet segments, and the potential use of alternative/additional indicators to cover the gaps on catch data from e-logbooks.

Any changes or adaptation of the methodology to the Med needs to be considered carefully, so as to avoid creating disparities across sea basins.

The evaluation has also revealed that, overall, stakeholders consider that the workshops with experts on the regional risk assessment could be improved. There was overall some consensus that the relevant experts are not always in the room, and that when they are, they do not always actively participate and engage in the discussion. It has also been brought to our attention that the workshops are relatively long (they usually run over three to five days), and that not all the experts are interested or knowledgeable about all the workshop sessions. According to some stakeholders interviewed, their lack of engagement is reflected in the risk treatment measures adopted, which may not always be the most adequate.

Recommendation 10: Ensure better and more inputs from the relevant experts in the risk treatment measures.

EFCA should conduct a high-level analysis of barriers for participation in the workshops (e.g., barriers to travel, lack of capacity to attend a three- or five-day workshop, lack of availability when the workshop is organised, etc.). This would help to assess the best approach to take to ensure that relevant experts are consulted. Just to name a few examples, potential options could entail: Moving the workshops to a hybrid format, or combining workshops with individual or group interviews/meetings, or with written feedback.

If participation and engagement during workshops is a problem, EFCA could explore the possibility of organising reduce sessions, parallel sessions, or breakout groups, where specific aspects that only affect a reduced number of Member State or experts are discussed (e.g., having breakout groups by sub-region). EFCA could also hire external facilitators who may bring new ideas and exercises for the workshops.

Annexes

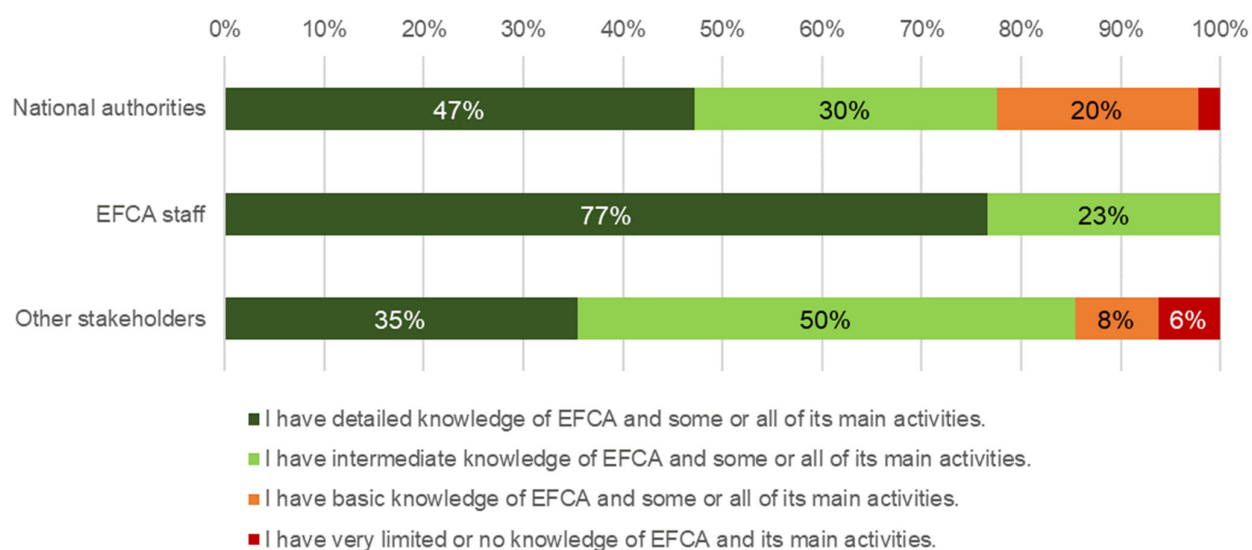
The bottom right corner of the page features a decorative graphic consisting of several parallel diagonal stripes. These stripes originate from the bottom left and extend towards the top right, creating a sense of movement and depth. The stripes are in varying shades of blue, with some being a lighter, more muted blue and others being a darker, more saturated blue, all set against the primary dark blue background.

7 Annex 1: Detailed survey results

This Annex presents the findings from the stakeholder survey conducted via EU Survey to explore stakeholders' views on EFCA's performance between 2017 and 2021. The survey was launched on 6 April 2022 and remained open until 9 May 2022. The survey was disseminated by EFCA directly via email, and it was also advertised by EFCA on their website and social media. A total of 167 stakeholders participated in the survey.

7.1.1 Are you familiar with the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and what it does?

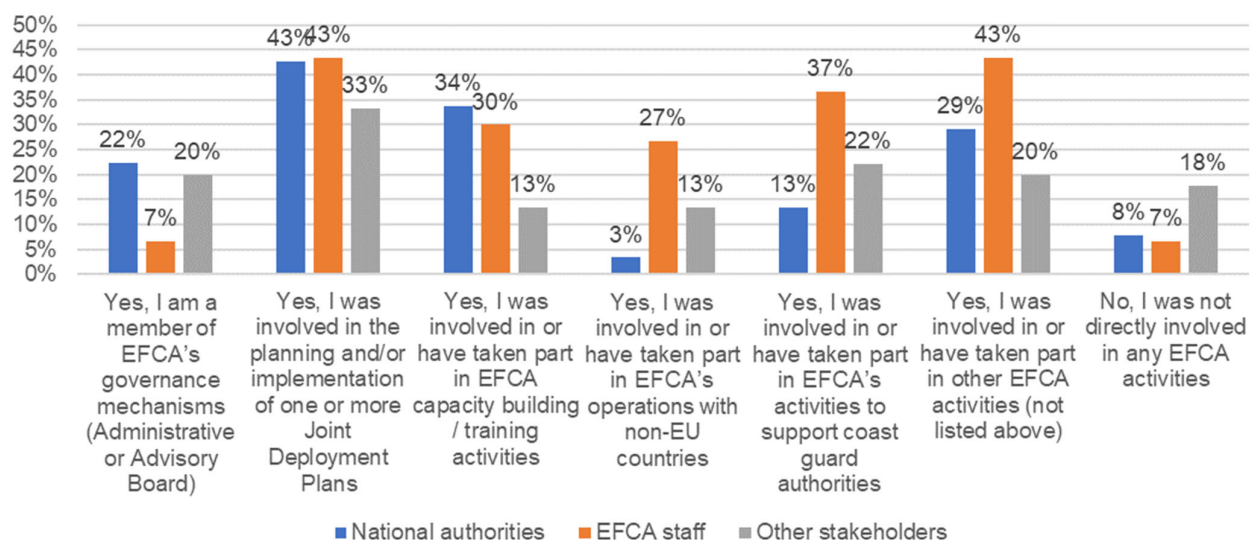
Figure 25: All respondents



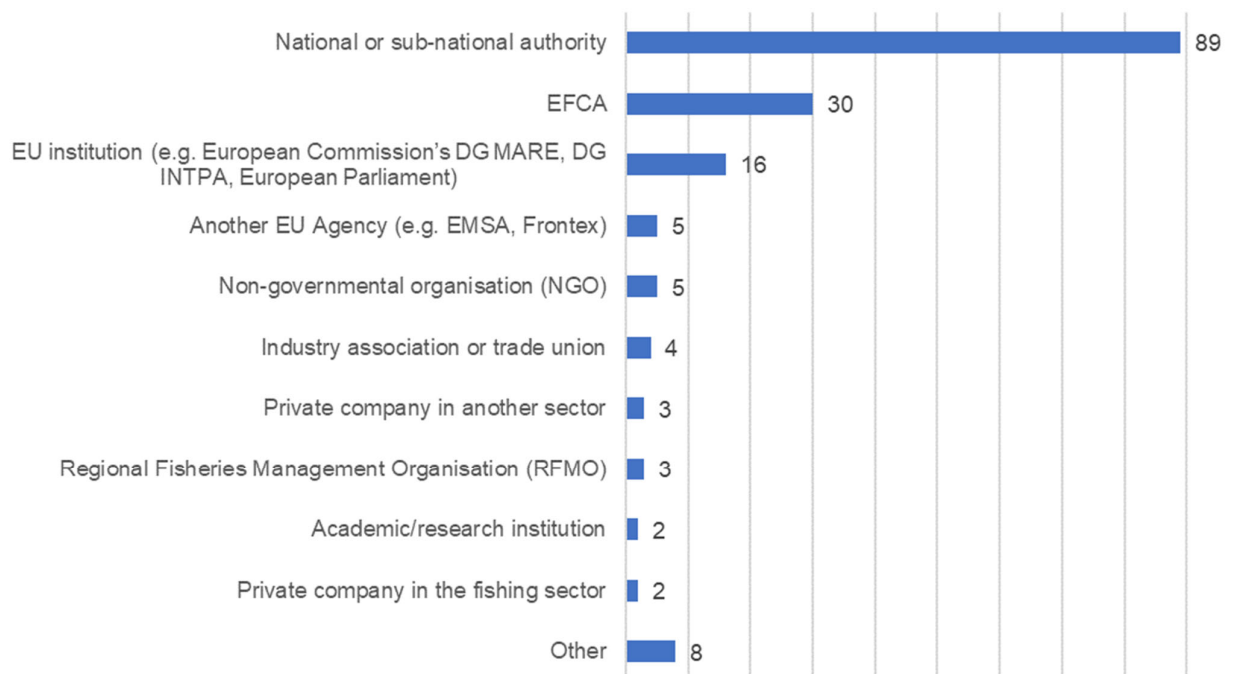
Base: 167

7.1.2 In the last five years (2017-2021), have you been involved in EFCA's activities, either directly or indirectly? Please select all the options that apply to you.

Figure 26: All respondents



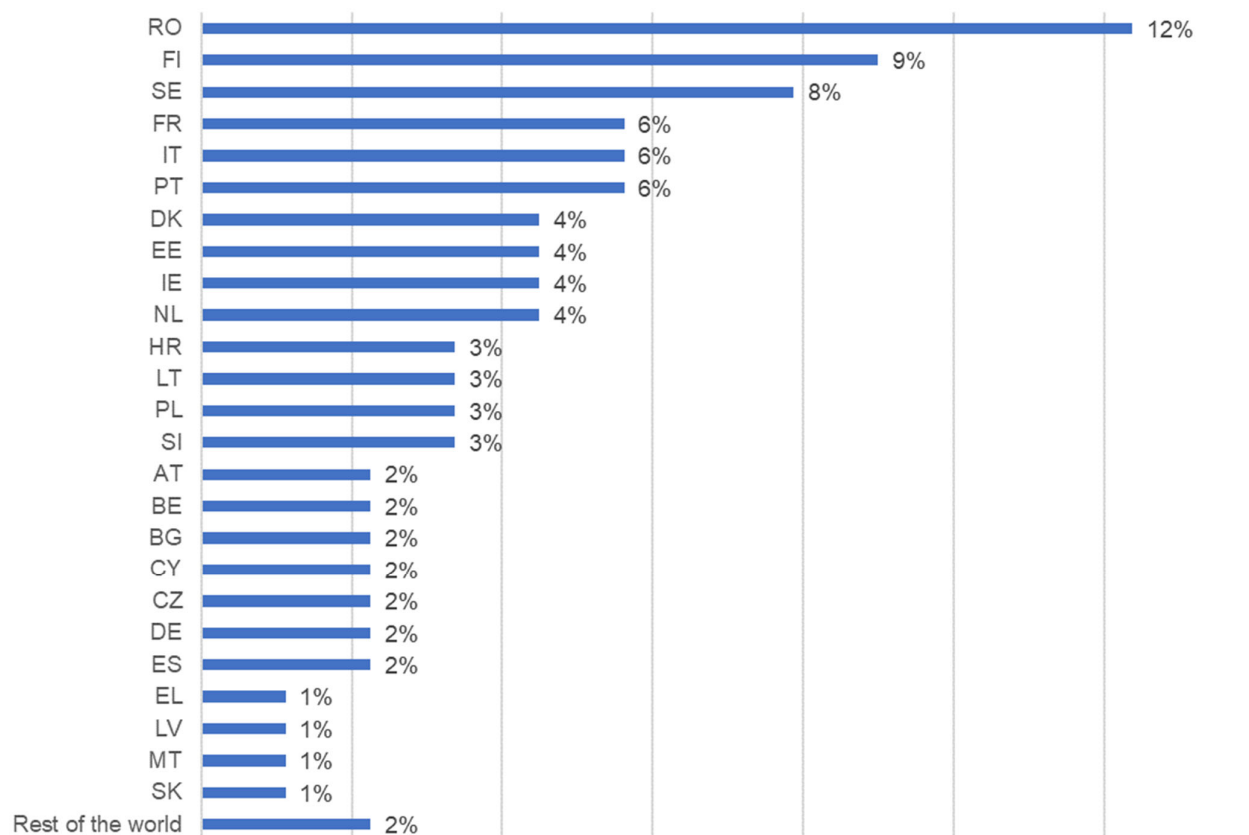
Base: 167

7.1.3 Please indicate the option that best describes the organisation you belong to.**Figure 27: All stakeholders**

Base: 167

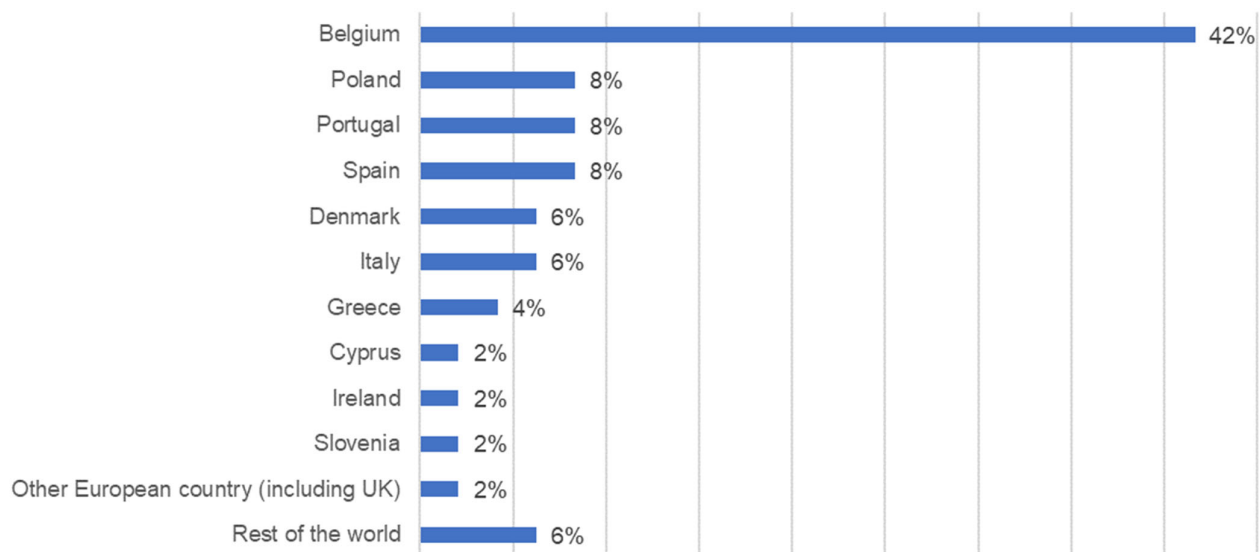
7.1.4 Where are you based?

Figure 28: National authorities



Base: 89

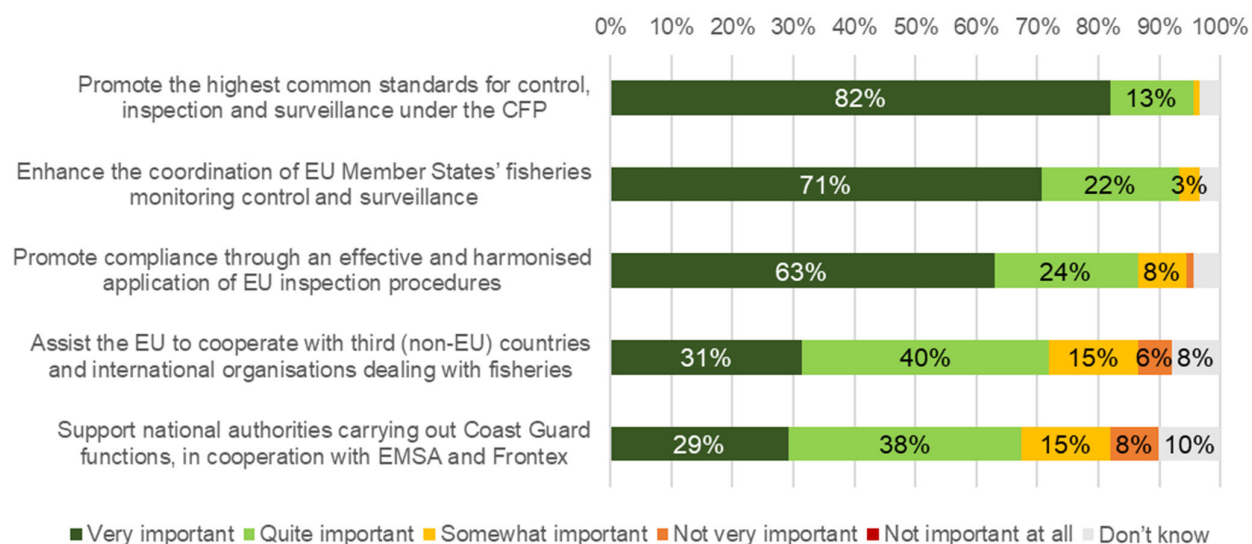
Figure 29: Other stakeholders



Base: 48

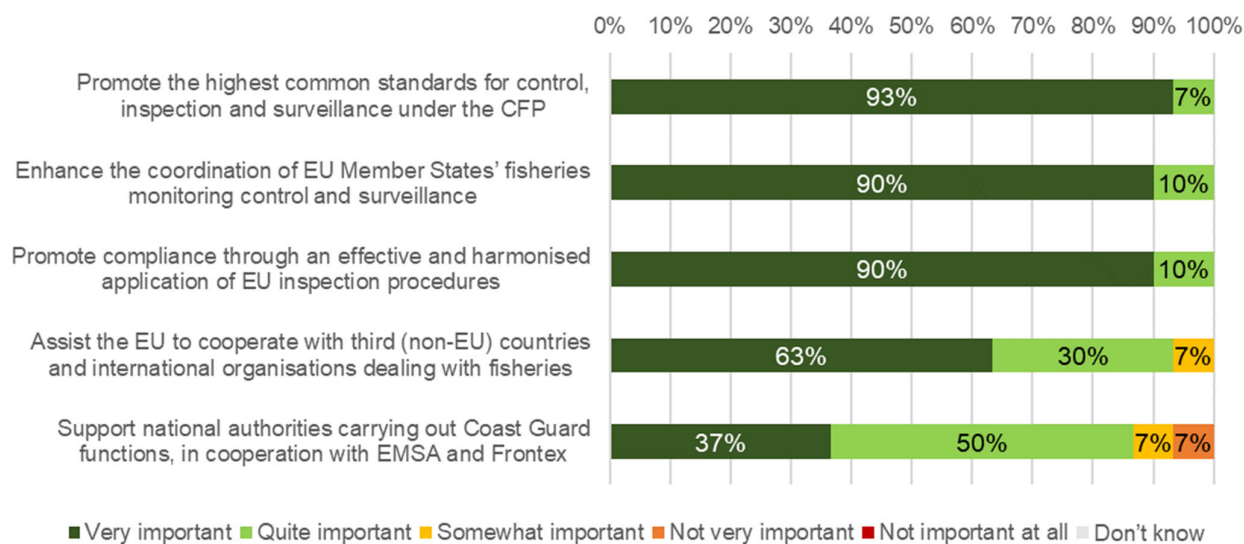
7.1.5 In your view, how important are EFCA's mission and objectives?

Figure 30: National authorities

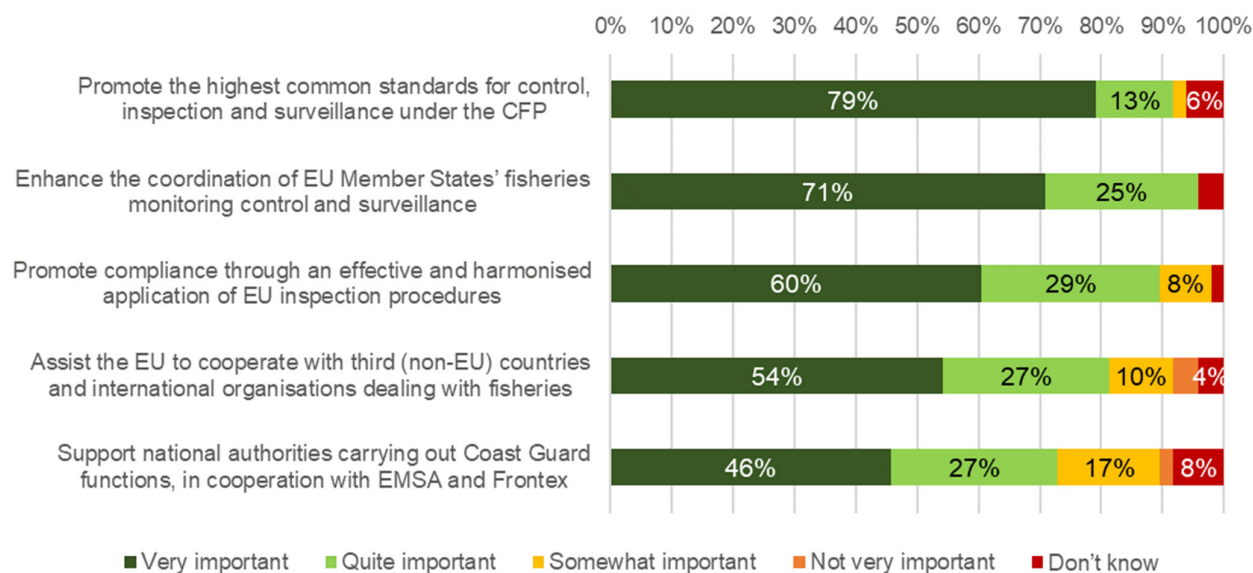


Base: 89

Figure 31: EFCA staff

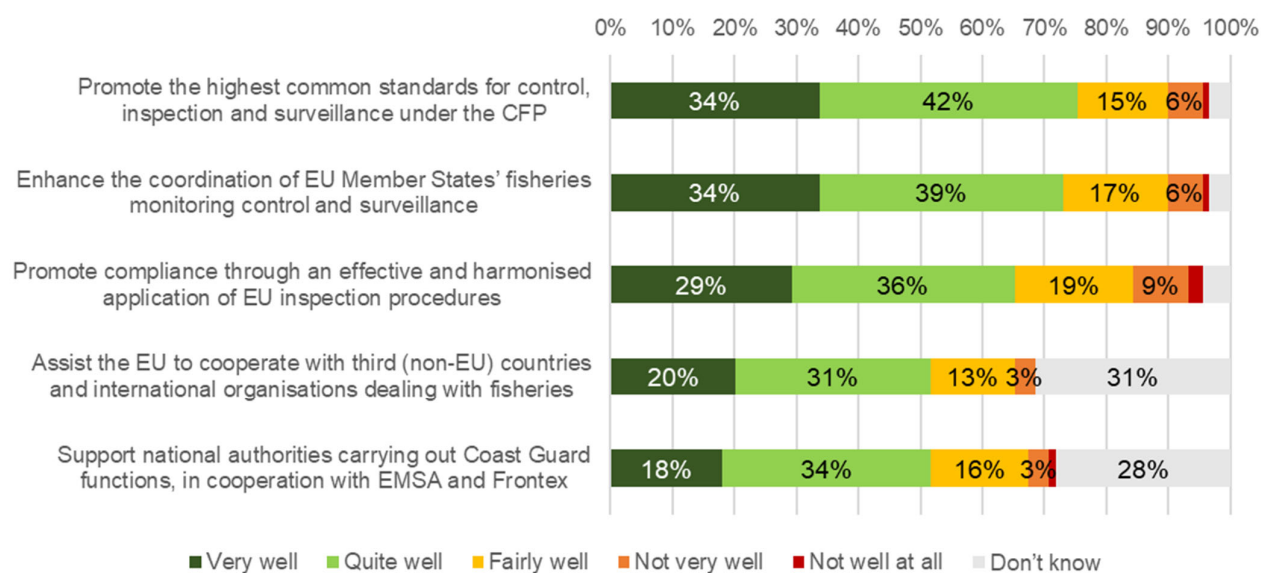


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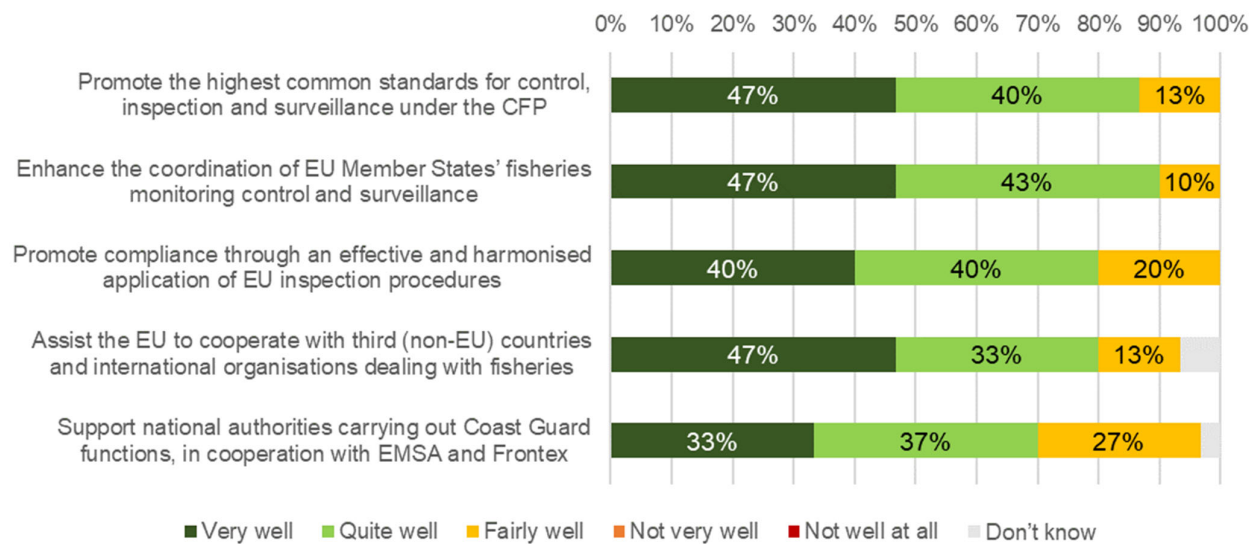
Figure 32: Other stakeholders

Base: 48

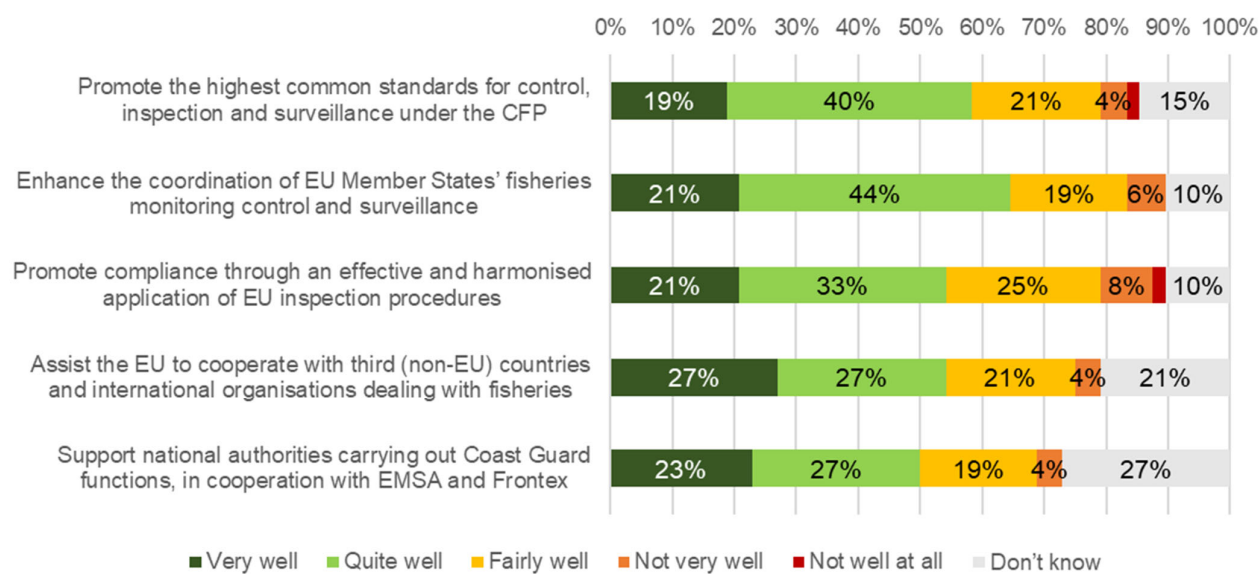
7.1.6 In your view, how well does EFCA meet these objectives?

Figure 33: National authorities

Base: 89

Figure 34: EFCA staff

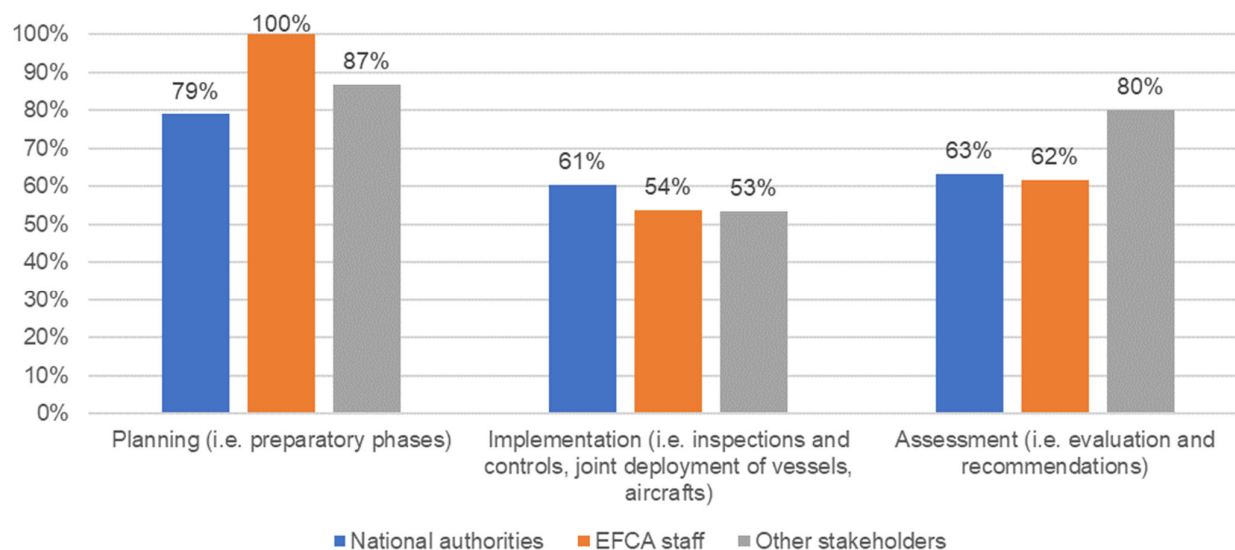
Base: 30

Figure 35: Other stakeholders

Base: 48

7.1.7 You said you have been involved in one or more JDPs. What was your role in this? Please select all the options that apply to you.

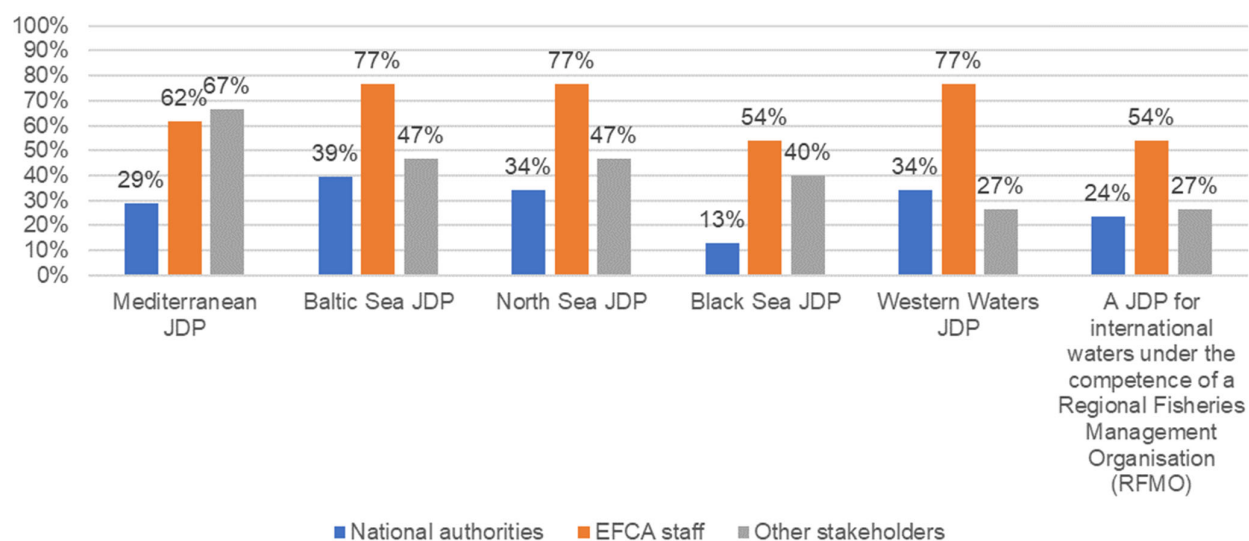
Figure 36: All stakeholders



Base: 66

7.1.8 Which JDP(s) have you been involved in? Please select all that apply.

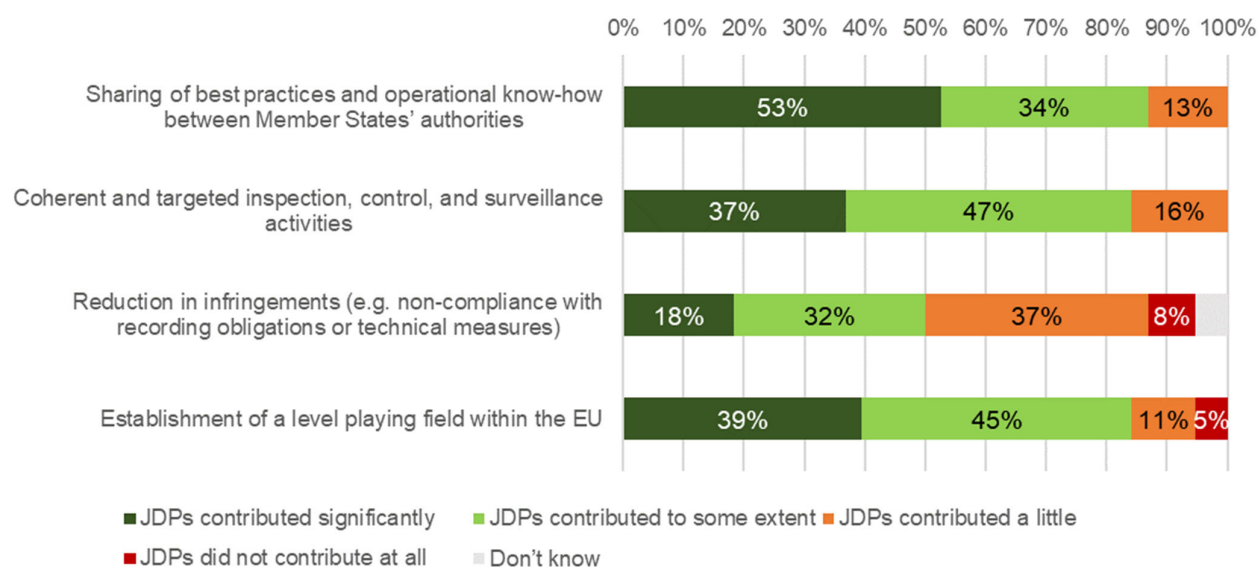
Figure 37: All stakeholders



Base: 66

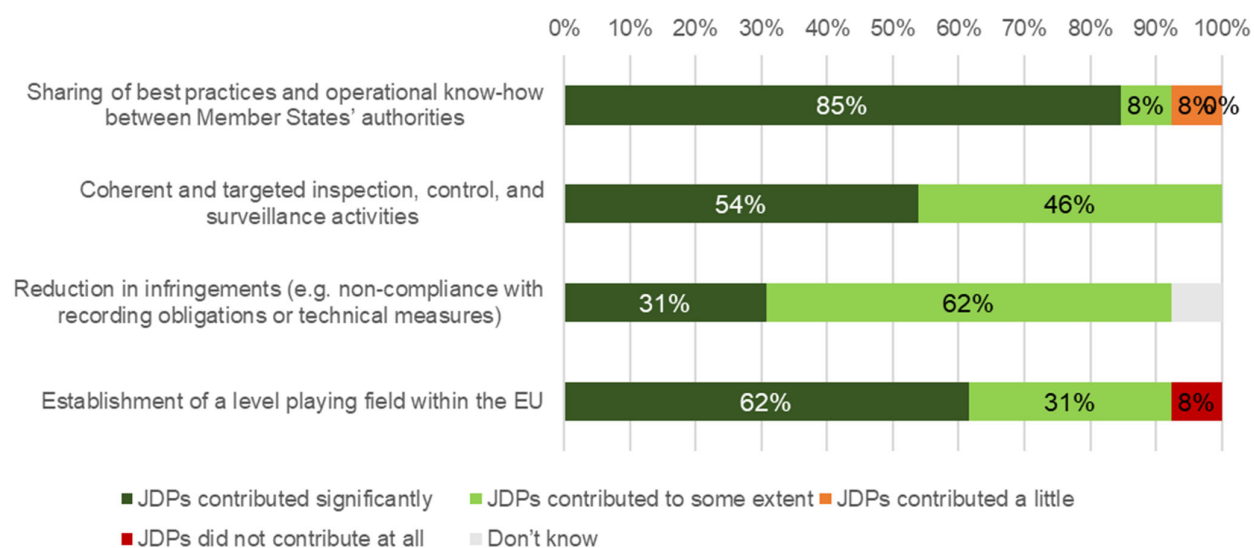
7.1.9 Based on your experience, to what extent do JDPs contribute to the following?

Figure 38: National authorities

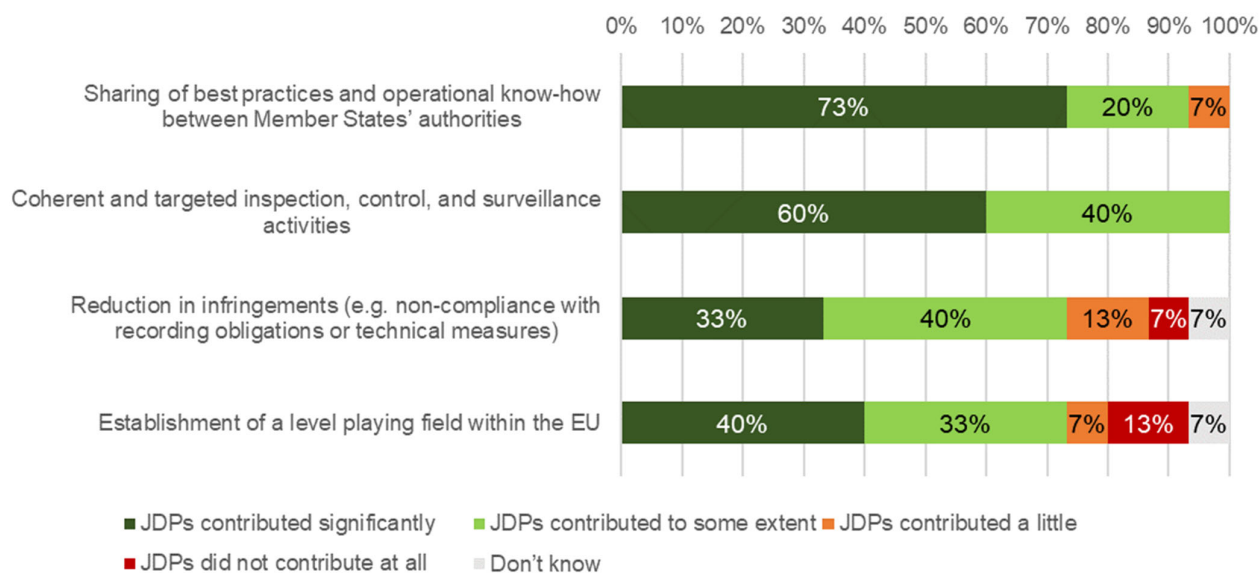


Base: 38

Figure 39: EFCA staff

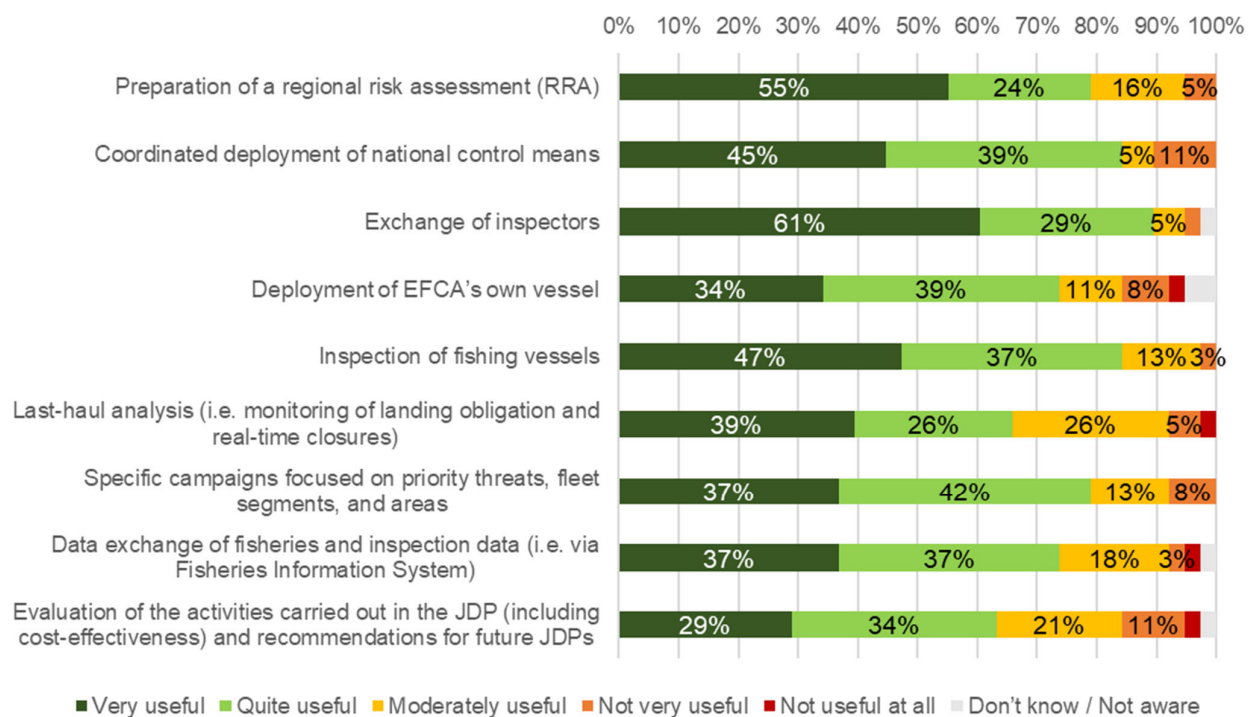


Base: 13

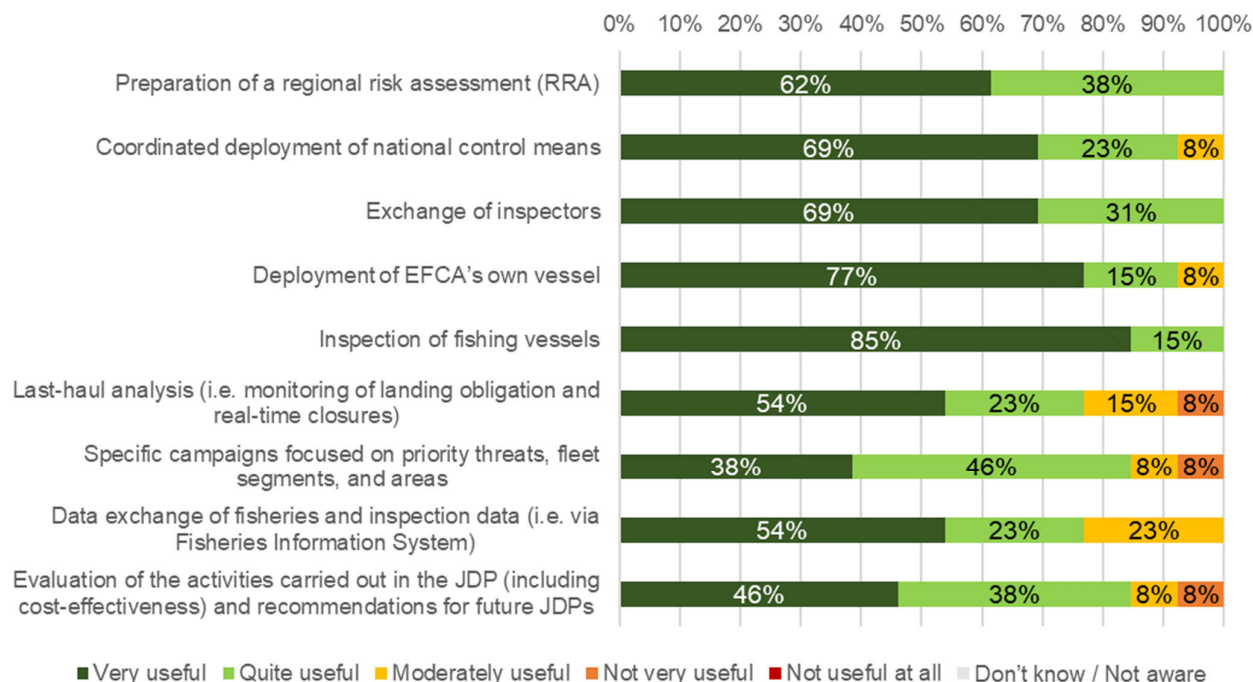
Figure 40: Other stakeholders

Base: 15

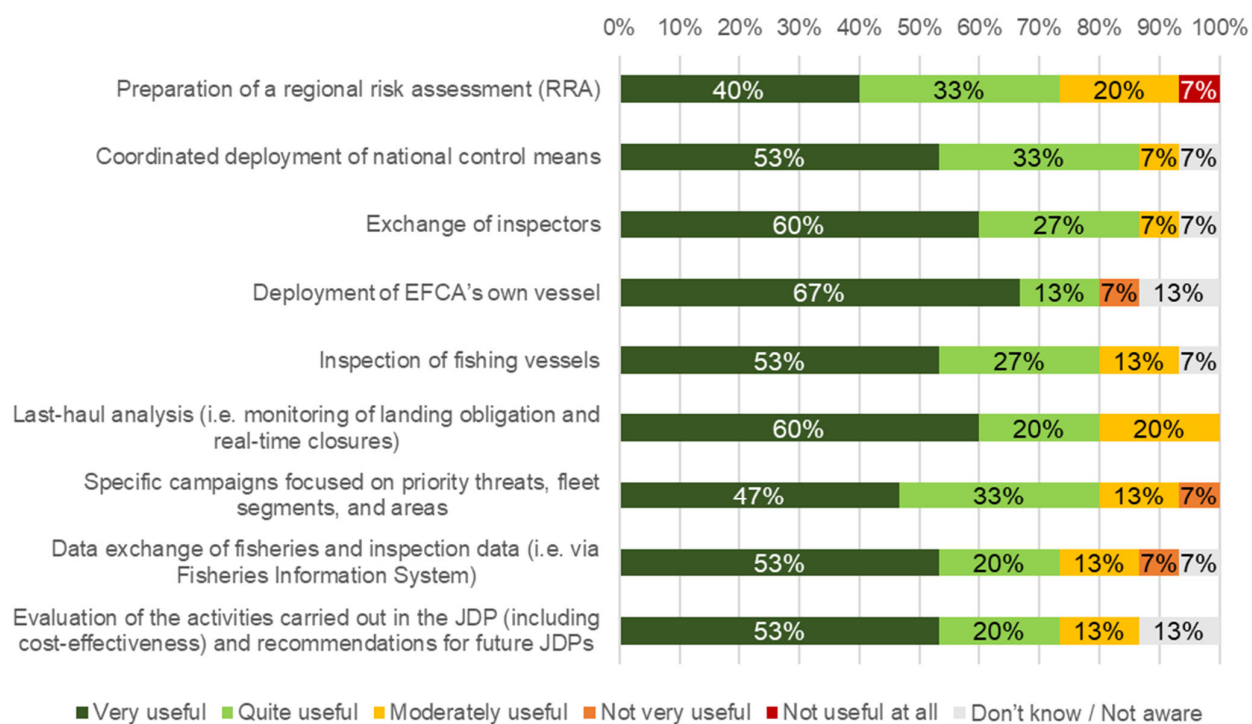
7.1.10 How useful did you find the following aspects of JDPs preparation, implementation, and assessment?

Figure 41: National authorities

Base: 38

Figure 42: EFCA staff

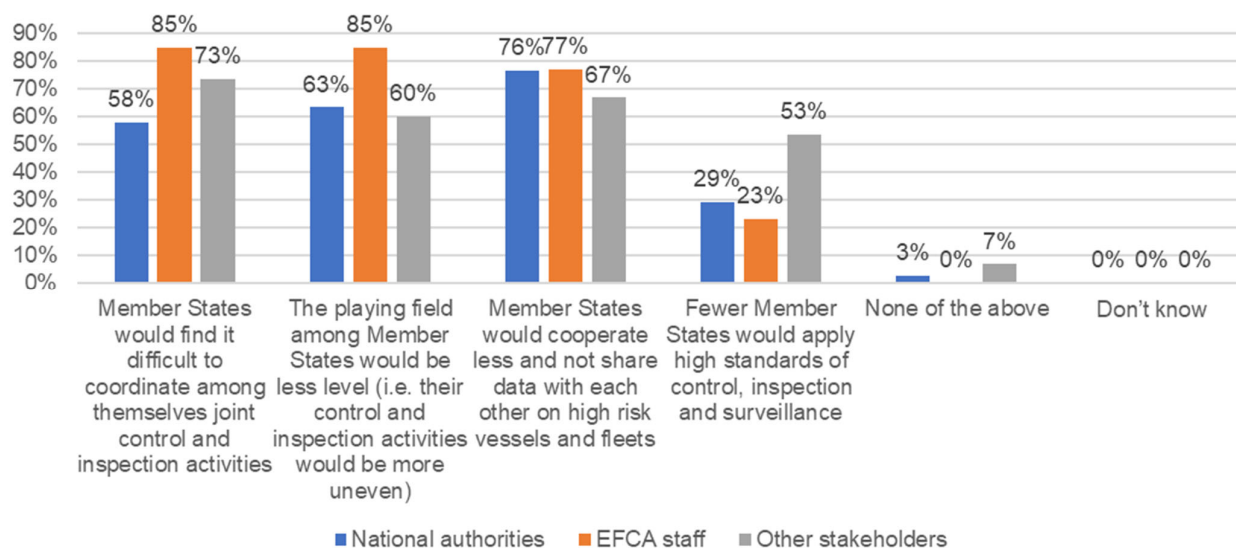
Base: 13

Figure 43: Other stakeholders

Base: 15

7.1.11 If EFCA had not established JDPs, which of these situations do you think would be the most likely? Please select up to three statements.

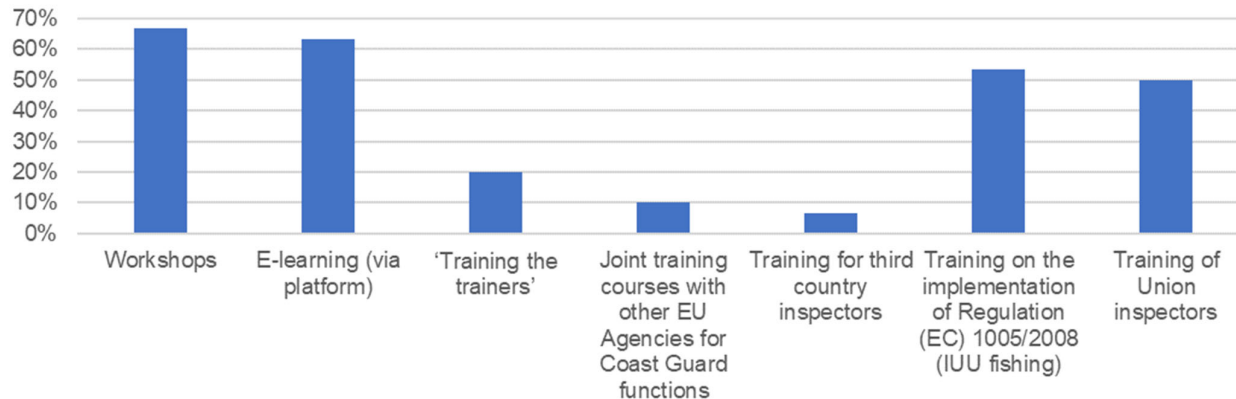
Figure 44: National authorities



Base: 66

7.1.12 You said you have been involved in capacity building and training activities. Which type of activities have you been involved in? Please select all the options that apply to you.

Figure 45: National authorities



Base: 30

Figure 46: EFCA staff

	Responses
Workshops	9
E-learning (via platform)	3
'Training the trainers'	3
Joint training courses with other EU Agencies for Coast Guard functions	3
Training for third country inspectors	2
Training on the implementation of Regulation (EC) 1005/2008 (IUU fishing)	2
Training of Union inspectors	7

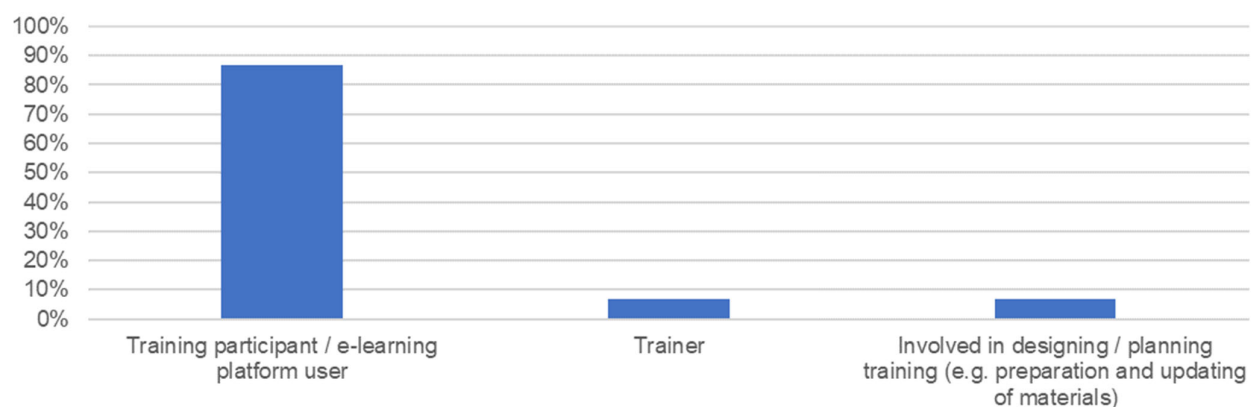
Base: 9

Figure 47: Other stakeholders

	Responses
Workshops	4
E-learning (via platform)	2
'Training the trainers'	1
Joint training courses with other EU Agencies for Coast Guard functions	1
Training for third country inspectors	1
Training on the implementation of Regulation (EC) 1005/2008 (IUU fishing)	0
Training of Union inspectors	2

Base: 4

7.1.13 What was your role in the training sessions?

Figure 48: National authorities

Base: 30

Figure 49: EFCA staff

	Responses
Training participant / e-learning platform user	1
Trainer	3
Involved in designing / planning training (e.g. preparation and updating of materials)	5

Base: 9

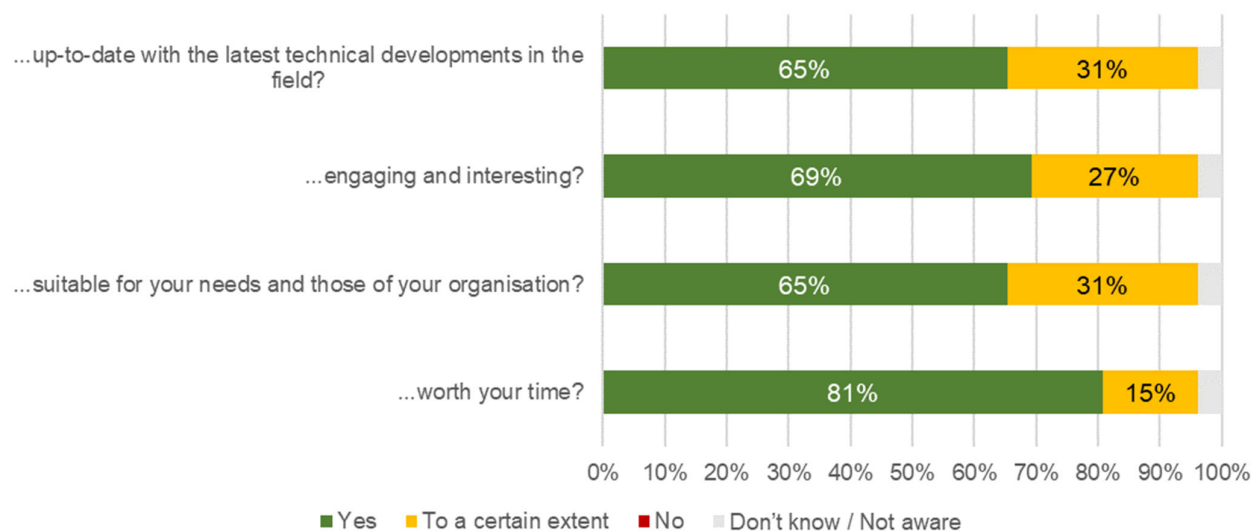
Figure 50: Other stakeholders

	Responses
Training participant / e-learning platform user	4
Trainer	0
Involved in designing / planning training (e.g. preparation and updating of materials)	2

Base: 6

7.1.14 Thinking about the training you participated in, do you think it was...

Figure 51: National authorities



Base: 26

Figure 52: EFCA staff

	...worth your time?	...suitable for your needs and those of your organisation?	...engaging and interesting?	...up-to-date with the latest technical developments in the field?
Yes	1	1	1	1
To a certain extent	0	0	0	0
No	0	0	0	0
Don't know / Not aware	0	0	0	0

Base: 1

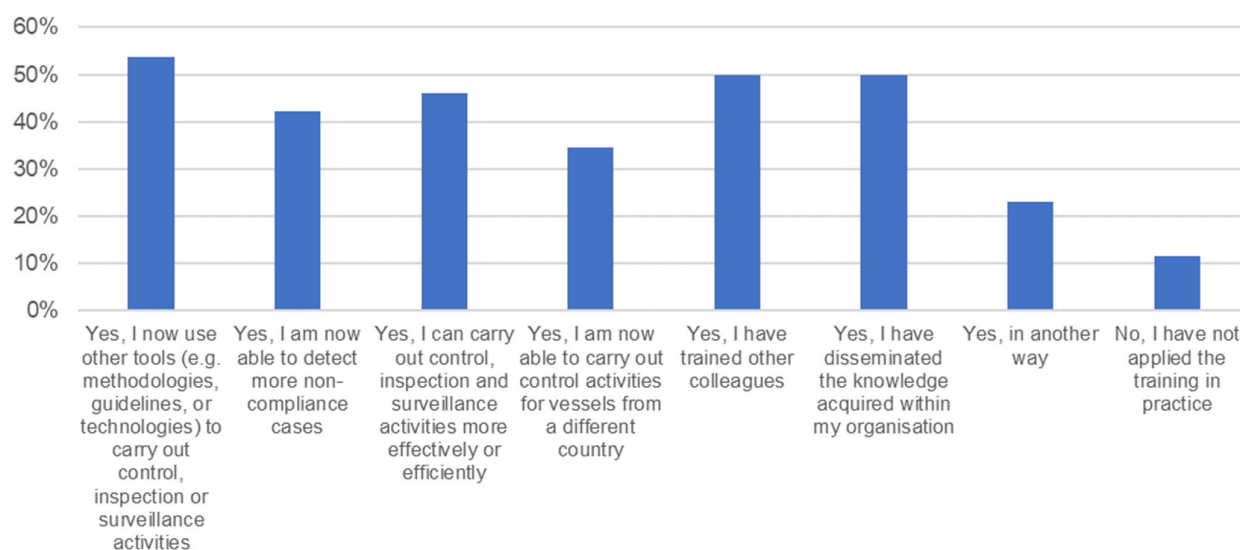
Figure 53: Other stakeholders

	...worth your time?	...suitable for your needs and those of your organisation?	...engaging and interesting?	...up-to-date with the latest technical developments in the field?
Yes	4	3	2	3
To a certain extent	0	1	2	1
No	0	0	0	0
Don't know / Not aware	0	0	0	0

Base: 4

7.1.15 Have you applied what you learnt in the EFCA training(s) in your work at all? Please select all that apply.

Figure 54: National authorities



Base: 26

Figure 55: EFCA staff

	Responses
Yes, I now use other tools (e.g. methodologies, guidelines, or technologies) to carry out control, inspection or surveillance activities	0
Yes, I am now able to detect more non-compliance cases	0
Yes, I can carry out control, inspection and surveillance activities more effectively or efficiently	0
Yes, I am now able to carry out control activities for vessels from a different country	0
Yes, I have trained other colleagues	0
Yes, I have disseminated the knowledge acquired within my organisation	0
Yes, in another way	0
No, I have not applied the training in practice	1

Base: 1

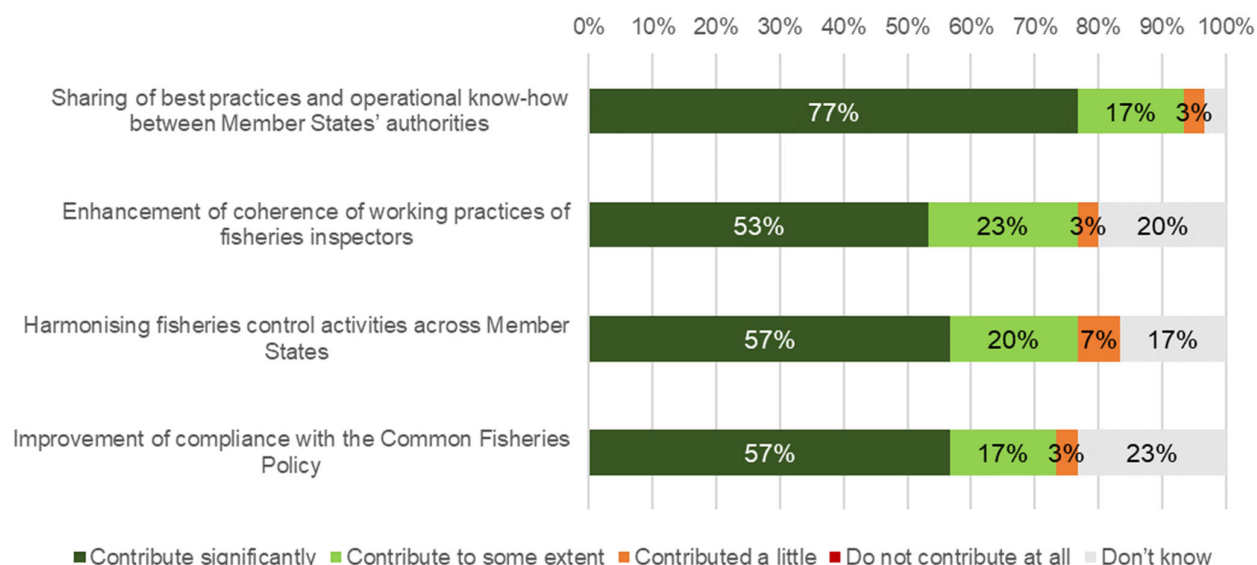
Figure 56: Other stakeholders

	Responses
Yes, I now use other tools (e.g. methodologies, guidelines, or technologies) to carry out control, inspection or surveillance activities	3
Yes, I am now able to detect more non-compliance cases	0
Yes, I can carry out control, inspection and surveillance activities more effectively or efficiently	2
Yes, I am now able to carry out control activities for vessels from a different country	0
Yes, I have trained other colleagues	1
Yes, I have disseminated the knowledge acquired within my organisation	3
Yes, in another way	0
No, I have not applied the training in practice	0

Base: 4

7.1.16 Based on your experience, to what extent do EFCA's training courses contribute to the following?

Figure 57: National authorities



Base: 30

Figure 58: EFCA staff

	Sharing of best practices and operational know-how between Member States' authorities	Enhancement of coherence of working practices of fisheries inspectors	Harmonising fisheries control activities across Member States	Improvement of compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy
Contribute significantly	7	4	4	5
Contribute to some extent	2	4	4	3
Contributed a little	0	1	1	1
Do not contribute at all	0	0	0	0
Don't know	0	0	0	0

Base: 9

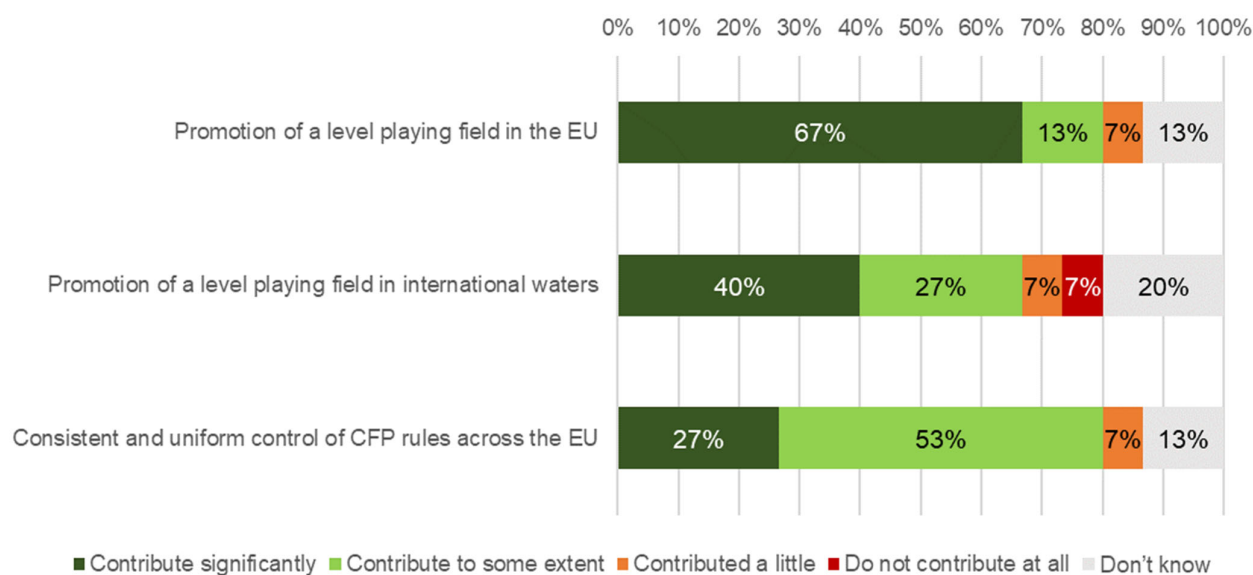
Figure 59: Other stakeholders

	Sharing of best practices and operational know-how between Member States' authorities	Enhancement of coherence of working practices of fisheries inspectors	Harmonising fisheries control activities across Member States	Improvement of compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy
Contribute significantly	4	5	4	2
Contribute to some extent	1	1	2	3
Contributed a little	0	0	0	0
Do not contribute at all	0	0	0	0
Don't know	1	0	0	1

Base: 6

7.1.17 Do you think the training of Union inspectors contributes to the following? Please note: by 'establishing a level playing field' in the EU and with third countries, we mean that fisheries control rules are interpreted and applied in a consistent way across the EU and third countries.

Figure 60: National authorities



Base: 15

Figure 61: EFCA staff

	Promotion of a level playing field in the EU	Promotion of a level playing field in international waters	Consistent and uniform control of CFP rules across the EU
Contribute significantly	4	3	4
Contribute to some extent	3	4	3
Contributed a little	0	0	0
Do not contribute at all	0	0	0
Don't know	0	0	0

Base: 7

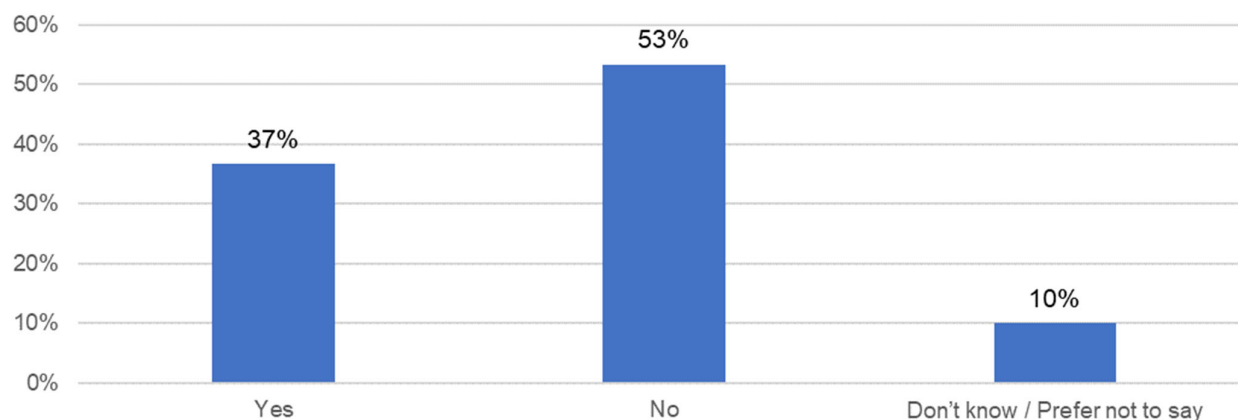
Figure 62: Other stakeholders

	Promotion of a level playing field in the EU	Promotion of a level playing field in international waters	Consistent and uniform control of CFP rules across the EU
Contribute significantly	2	1	1
Contribute to some extent	0	1	1
Contributed a little	0	0	0
Do not contribute at all	0	0	0
Don't know	0	0	0

Base: 2

7.1.18 In the last five years, have you participated in other training on control and inspection activities, not organised by EFCA?

Figure 63: National authorities



Base: 30

Figure 64: In the last five years, have you participated in other training on control and inspection activities, not organised by EFCA? (EFCA staff)

	Responses
Yes	1
No	8
Don't know / Prefer not to say	0

Base: 9

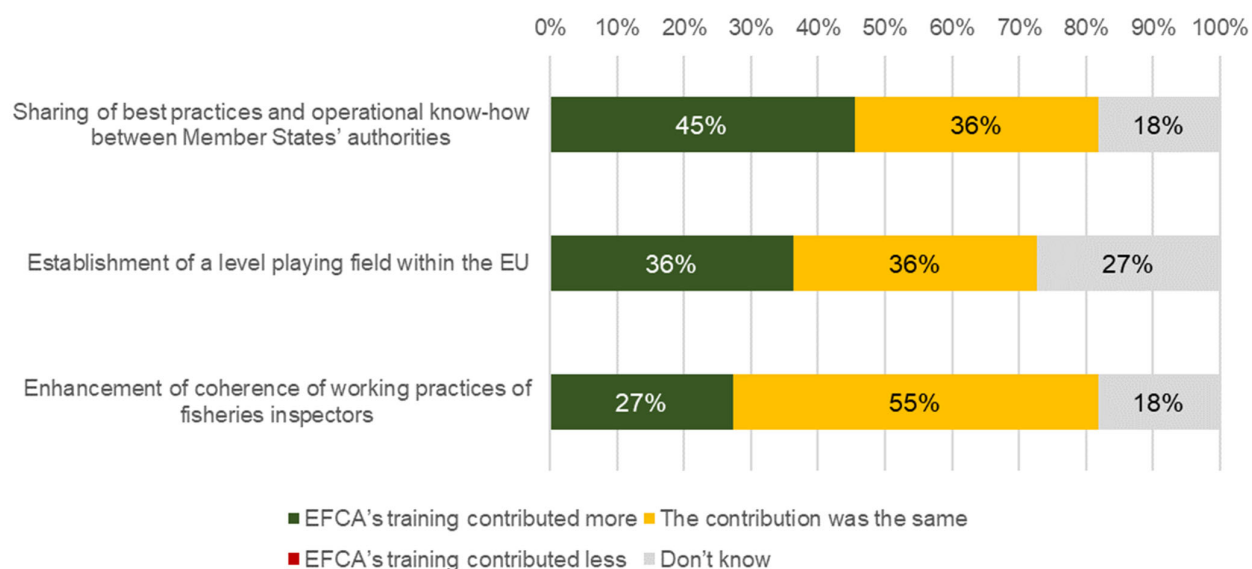
Figure 65: Other stakeholders

	Responses
Yes	1
No	5
Don't know / Prefer not to say	0

Base: 6

7.1.19 Comparing the training you received from EFCA to this other training, how much do you think EFCA's training contributed to these objectives?

Figure 66: National authorities



Base: 11

Figure 67: EFCA staff

	Sharing of best practices and operational know-how between Member States' authorities	Enhancement of coherence of working practices of fisheries inspectors	Establishment of a level playing field within the EU
EFCA's training contributed more	1	0	1
The contribution was the same	0	1	0
EFCA's training contributed less	0	0	0
Don't know	0	0	0

Base: 1

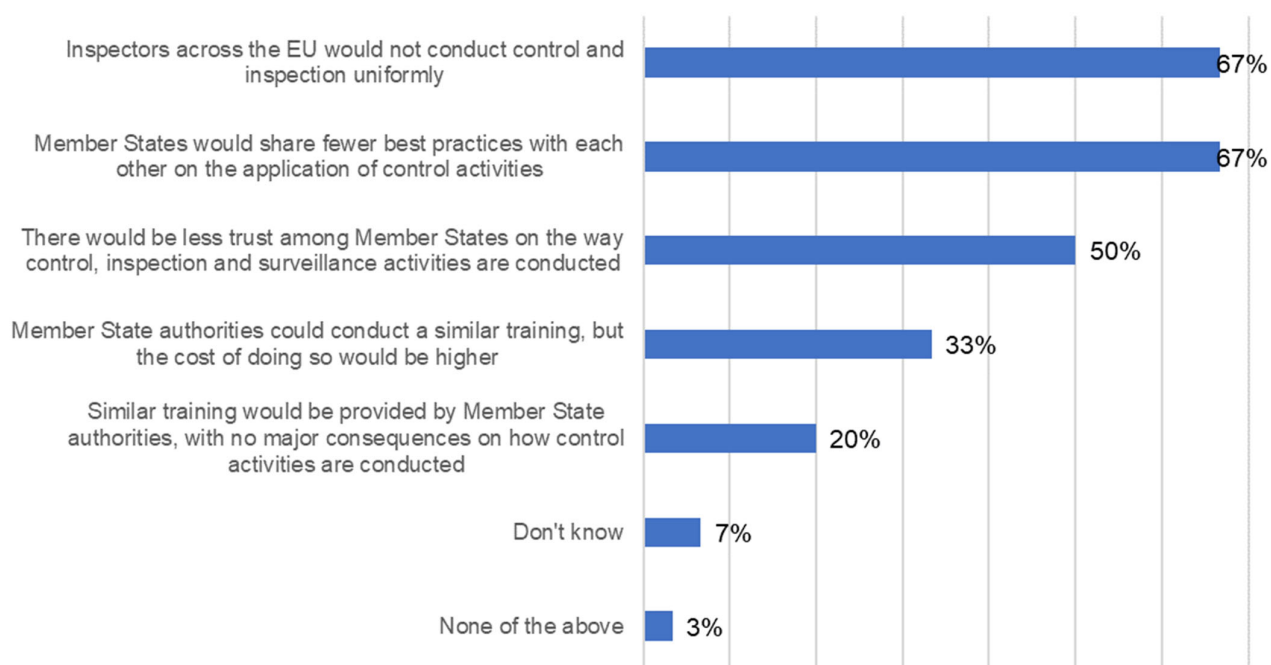
Figure 68: Other stakeholders

	Sharing of best practices and operational know-how between Member States' authorities	Enhancement of coherence of working practices of fisheries inspectors	Establishment of a level playing field within the EU
EFCA's training contributed more	1	0	1
The contribution was the same	0	1	0
EFCA's training contributed less	0	0	0
Don't know	0	0	0

Base: 1

7.1.20 If EFCA did not conduct any training or capacity building activities at all, which of these situations do you think would be the most likely? Please select up to three statements.

Figure 69: If EFCA did not conduct any training or capacity building activities at all, which of these situations do you think would be the most likely? Please select up to three statements (External stakeholders)



Base: 30

Figure 70: EFCA staff

	Responses
Inspectors across the EU would not conduct control and inspection uniformly	5
Similar training would be provided by Member State authorities, with no major consequences on how control activities are conducted	0
Member State authorities could conduct a similar training, but the cost of doing so would be higher	0
There would be less trust among Member States on the way control, inspection and surveillance activities are conducted	6
Member States would share fewer best practices with each other on the application of control activities	8
None of the above	0
Don't know	1

Base: 9

Figure 71: Other stakeholders

	Responses
Inspectors across the EU would not conduct control and inspection uniformly	5
Similar training would be provided by Member State authorities, with no major consequences on how control activities are conducted	1
Member State authorities could conduct a similar training, but the cost of doing so would be higher	1
There would be less trust among Member States on the way control, inspection and surveillance activities are conducted	3

Member States would share fewer best practices with each other on the application of control activities	4
None of the above	0
Don't know	0

Base: 6

7.1.21 You said you have been involved in international operations with non-EU countries. What was your role in this? Please select all the options that apply to you.

Figure 72: National authorities

	Responses
Implementation, planning, and/or assessment of Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs) in international waters	2
Technical expert in the EU Delegation in meetings of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) (e.g. working groups and committees)	1
Contribution to the implementation of projects to promote capacity building and the fight against Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in non-EU countries (e.g. PESCAO, monitoring, control, and surveillance)	1
Other	0

Base: 3

Figure 73: EFCA staff

	Responses
Implementation, planning, and/or assessment of Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs) in international waters	4
Technical expert in the EU Delegation in meetings of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) (e.g. working groups and committees)	2
Contribution to the implementation of projects to promote capacity building and the fight against Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in non-EU countries (e.g. PESCAO, monitoring, control, and surveillance)	3
Other	3

Base: 8

Figure 74: Other stakeholders

	Responses
Implementation, planning, and/or assessment of Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs) in international waters	2
Technical expert in the EU Delegation in meetings of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) (e.g. working groups and committees)	2
Contribution to the implementation of projects to promote capacity building and the fight against Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in non-EU countries (e.g. PESCAO, monitoring, control, and surveillance)	4
Other	3

Base: 6

7.1.22 Which international operations have you been involved in? Please select all that apply.

Figure 75: National authorities

	Responses
The North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)	1
The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO)	1

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)	0
The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)	1
Improved regional fisheries governance in western Africa (PESCAO)	0
Other	1
Don't know	0

Base: 3

Figure 76: EFCA staff

	Responses
The North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)	2
The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO)	2
The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)	4
The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)	4
Improved regional fisheries governance in western Africa (PESCAO)	4
Other	2
Don't know	0

Base: 8

Figure 77: Other stakeholders

	Responses
The North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)	1
The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO)	0
The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)	4
The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)	1
Improved regional fisheries governance in western Africa (PESCAO)	2
Other	0
Don't know	0

Base: 6

7.1.23 In your view, to what extent did the coordination activities in the context of international JDPs (in NAFO/NEAFC/Mediterranean) and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) contribute to the following?

Figure 78: National authorities

	Levelling up of the playing field in fisheries between EU and non-EU countries	Implementation of pilot projects to improve security and safety at sea	Application of EU standards at international level
Contributed significantly	0	0	0
Contributed to some extent	1	1	1
Contributed a little	0	0	0
Did not contribute at all	0	0	0
Don't know / Not aware	0	0	0
No Answer	2	2	2
Total	3	3	3

Base: 3

Figure 79: EFCA staff

	Levelling up of the playing field in fisheries between EU and non-EU countries	Implementation of pilot projects to improve security and safety at sea	Application of EU standards at international level
Contributed significantly	2	1	3
Contributed to some extent	2	0	1
Contributed a little	0	1	0
Did not contribute at all	0	0	0
Don't know / Not aware	0	2	0
No Answer	2	2	2
Total	6	6	6

Base: 6

Figure 80: Other stakeholders

	Levelling up of the playing field in fisheries between EU and non-EU countries	Implementation of pilot projects to improve security and safety at sea	Application of EU standards at international level
Contributed significantly	2	2	2
Contributed to some extent	1	1	1
Contributed a little	0	0	0
Did not contribute at all	0	0	0
Don't know / Not aware	0	0	0
No Answer	1	1	1
Total	4	4	4

Base: 4

7.1.24 In your view, to what extent did the activities in the context of capacity building projects with third countries and / or IUU evaluations contribute to the following?

Figure 81: National authorities

	Tackling IUU fishing	Building inspection and control capacity in third countries	Promotion of a culture of compliance with the CFP	Application of EU standards at international level
Contributed significantly	0	0	0	0
Contributed to some extent	1	0	1	1
Contributed a little	0	0	0	0
Did not contribute at all	0	0	0	0
Don't know / Not aware	0	1	0	0

Base:1

Figure 82: EFCA staff

	Tackling IUU fishing	Building inspection and control capacity in third countries	Promotion of a culture of compliance with the CFP	Application of EU standards at international level
Contributed significantly	2	2	2	2

Contributed to some extent	1	1	1	1
Contributed a little	0	0	0	0
Did not contribute at all	0	0	0	0
Don't know / Not aware	0	0	0	0
Total	3	3	3	3

Base: 3

Figure 83: Other stakeholders

	Tackling IUU fishing	Building inspection and control capacity in third countries	Promotion of a culture of compliance with the CFP	Application of EU standards at international level
Contributed significantly	1	3	2	1
Contributed to some extent	3	1	2	3
Contributed a little	0	0	0	0
Did not contribute at all	0	0	0	0
Don't know / Not aware	0	0	0	0
Total	4	4	4	4

Base: 4

7.1.25 If EFCA did not conduct any international activity at all, which of these situations do you think would be the most likely? Please select up to three statements.

Figure 84: National authorities

	Responses
There would be less compliance with IUU rules in Western Africa	0
The standards applied in control and inspection in some non-EU countries would be lower	1
There would be less trust and cooperation with non-EU countries	0
There would be less harmonisation in the application of control and inspection activities between EU and non-EU countries	2
The EU would be less prepared to deal with challenges resulting from the withdrawal of the UK from the EU (Brexit)	1
None of the above	0
Don't know	1

Base: 3

Figure 85: EFCA staff

	Responses
There would be less compliance with IUU rules in Western Africa	2
The standards applied in control and inspection in some non-EU countries would be lower	3
There would be less trust and cooperation with non-EU countries	5
There would be less harmonisation in the application of control and inspection activities between EU and non-EU countries	3

The EU would be less prepared to deal with challenges resulting from the withdrawal of the UK from the EU (Brexit)	1
None of the above	0
Don't know	1

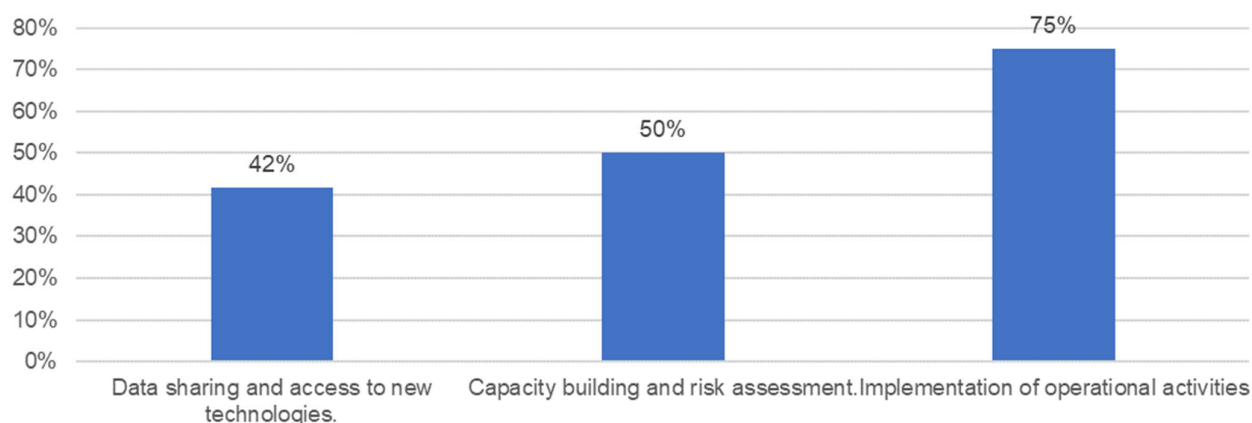
Base: 8

Figure 86: Other stakeholders

	Responses
There would be less compliance with IUU rules in Western Africa	0
The standards applied in control and inspection in some non-EU countries would be lower	4
There would be less trust and cooperation with non-EU countries	4
There would be less harmonisation in the application of control and inspection activities between EU and non-EU countries	5
The EU would be less prepared to deal with challenges resulting from the withdrawal of the UK from the EU (Brexit)	2
None of the above	0
Don't know	0

Base: 6

7.1.26 You said you have been involved in coast guard operations. Which activities were you involved in? Please select all the options that apply to you.

Figure 87: National authorities

Base: 12

Figure 88: You said you have been involved in coast guard operations. Which activities were you involved in? Please select all the options that apply to you. (EFCA staff)

	Responses	%
Data sharing and access to new technologies.	7	64%
Capacity building and risk assessment.	2	18%
Implementation of operational activities.	11	100%

Base: 11

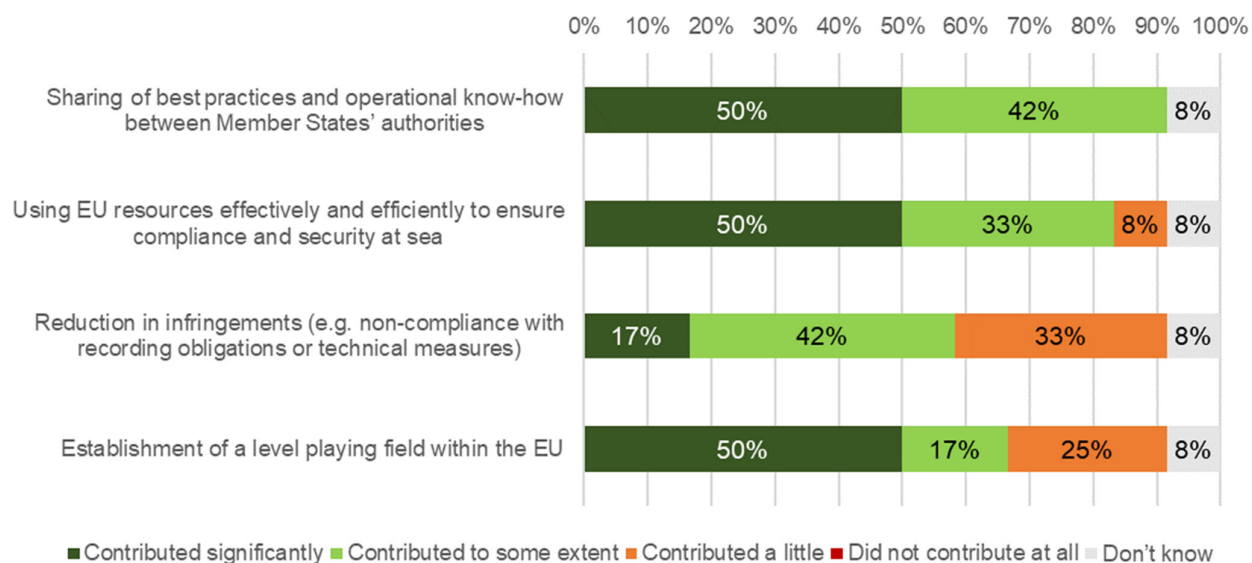
Figure 89: Other stakeholders

	Responses	%
Data sharing and access to new technologies.	7	70%
Capacity building and risk assessment.	5	50%
Implementation of operational activities.	7	70%

Base: 10

7.1.27 Based on your experience, to what extent EFCA's involvement in coast guard functions contribute to the following outcomes? Please note: by 'establishing a level playing field' in the EU, we mean that fisheries control rules are interpreted and applied in a consistent way across the EU.

Figure 90: National authorities



Base: 12

Figure 91: EFCA staff

	Sharing of best practices and operational know-how between Member States' authorities	Using EU resources effectively and efficiently to ensure compliance and security at sea	Reduction in infringements (e.g. non-compliance with recording obligations or technical measures)	Establishment of a level playing field within the EU	Sharing of best practices and operational know-how between Member States' authorities	Using EU resources effectively and efficiently to ensure compliance and security at sea	Reduction in infringements (e.g. non-compliance with recording obligations or technical measures)	Establishment of a level playing field within the EU
Contributed significantly	6	7	4	5	55%	64%	36%	45%
Contributed to some extent	4	3	4	4	36%	27%	36%	36%
Contributed a little	0	0	1	1	0%	0%	9%	9%
Did not contribute at all	1	1	2	1	9%	9%	18%	9%
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	11	11	11	11	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base: 11

Figure 92: Other stakeholders

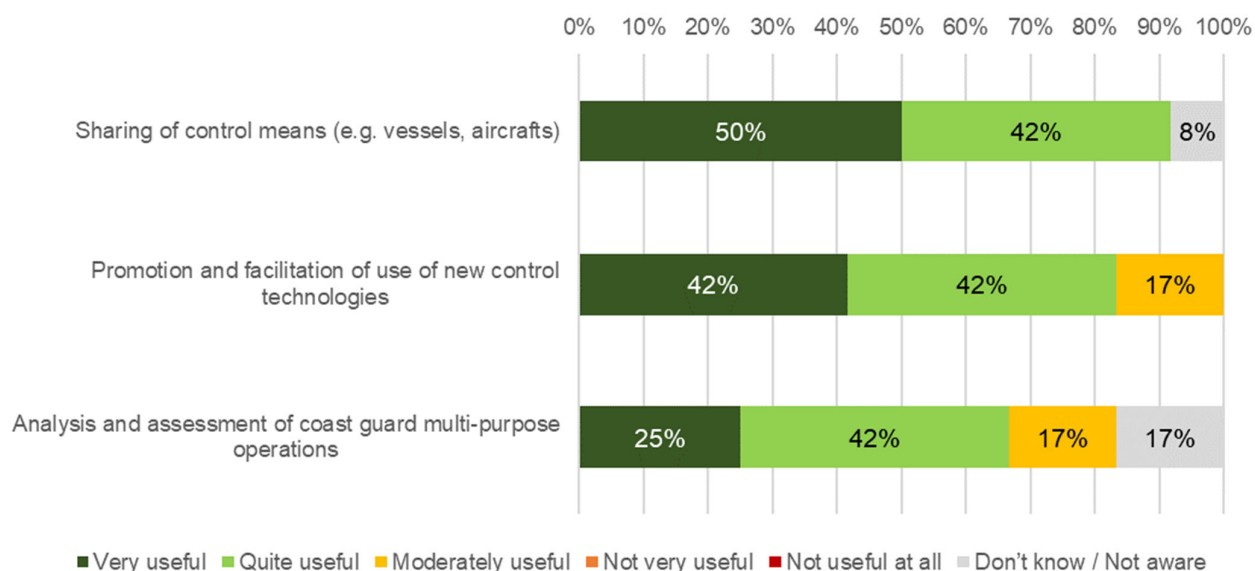
	Sharing of best practices and operational know-how	Using EU resources effectively and efficiently to ensure compliance	Reduction in infringements (e.g. non-compliance with	Establishment of a level playing field within the EU	Sharing of best practices and operational know-how	Using EU resources effectively and efficiently to ensure compliance	Reduction in infringements (e.g. non-compliance with	Establishment of a level playing field within the EU
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	between Member States' authorities	e and security at sea	recording obligations or technical measures)		between Member States' authorities	e and security at sea	recording obligations or technical measures)	
Contributed significantly	6	5	1	3	60%	50%	10%	30%
Contributed to some extent	3	2	5	4	30%	20%	50%	40%
Contributed a little	1	2	1	2	10%	20%	10%	20%
Did not contribute at all	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Don't know	0	1	3	1	0%	10%	30%	10%
Total	10	10	10	10	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base: 10

7.1.28 How useful did you find the following aspects of EFCA's activities for the achievement of the above outcomes?

Figure 93: National authorities



Base: 12

Figure 94: EFCA staff

	Sharing of control means (e.g. vessels, aircrafts)	Promotion and facilitation of use of new control technologies	Analysis and assessment of coast guard multi-purpose operations	Sharing of control means (e.g. vessels, aircrafts)	Promotion and facilitation of use of new control technologies	Analysis and assessment of coast guard multi-purpose operations
Very useful	7	6	4	64%	55%	36%
Quite useful	4	3	3	36%	27%	27%
Moderately useful	0	2	3	0%	18%	27%
Not very useful	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Not useful at all	0	0	1	0%	0%	9%
Don't know / Not aware	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%

Total	11	11	11	100%	100%	100%
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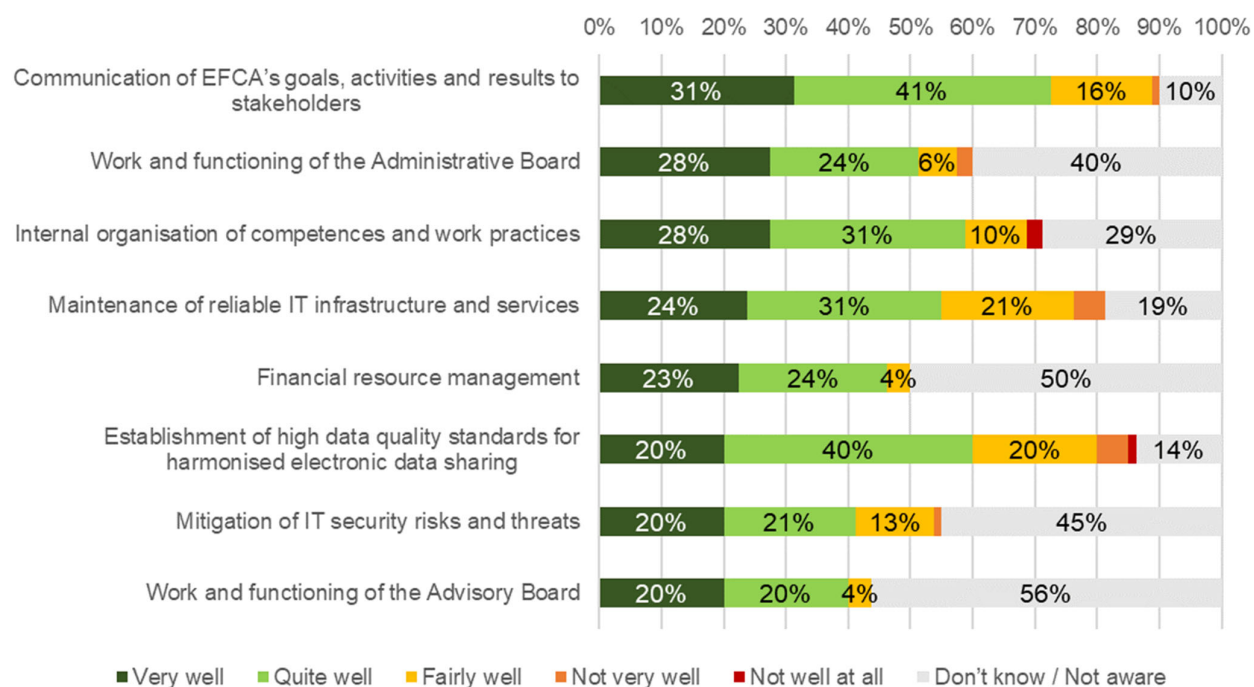
Base: 11

Figure 95: Other stakeholders

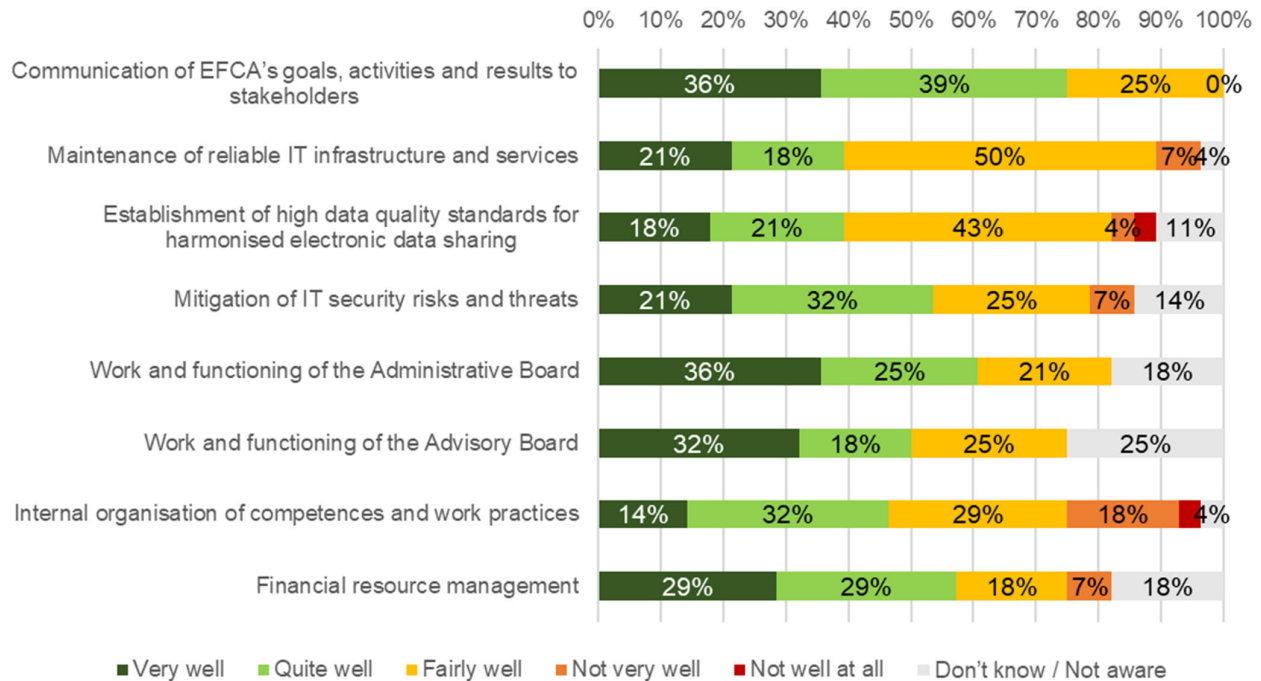
	Sharing of control means (e.g. vessels, aircrafts)	Promotion and facilitation of use of new control technologies	Analysis and assessment of coast guard multi-purpose operations	Sharing of control means (e.g. vessels, aircrafts)	Promotion and facilitation of use of new control technologies	Analysis and assessment of coast guard multi-purpose operations
Very useful	7	3	5	70%	30%	50%
Quite useful	2	3	4	20%	30%	40%
Moderately useful	1	3	0	10%	30%	0%
Not very useful	0	0	1	0%	0%	10%
Not useful at all	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Don't know / Not aware	0	1	0	0%	10%	0%
Total	10	10	10	100%	100%	100%

Base: 10

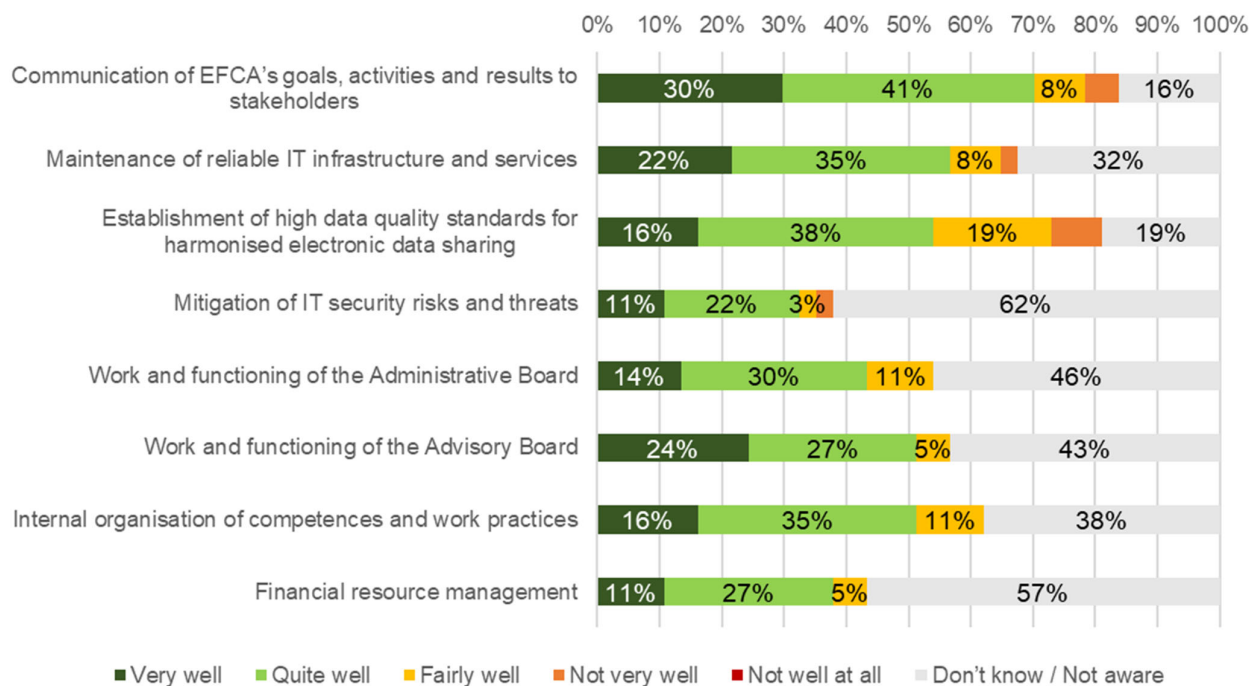
7.1.29 How well do you think the following aspects of EFCA's operations work?

Figure 96: National authorities

Base: 80

Figure 97: EFCA staff

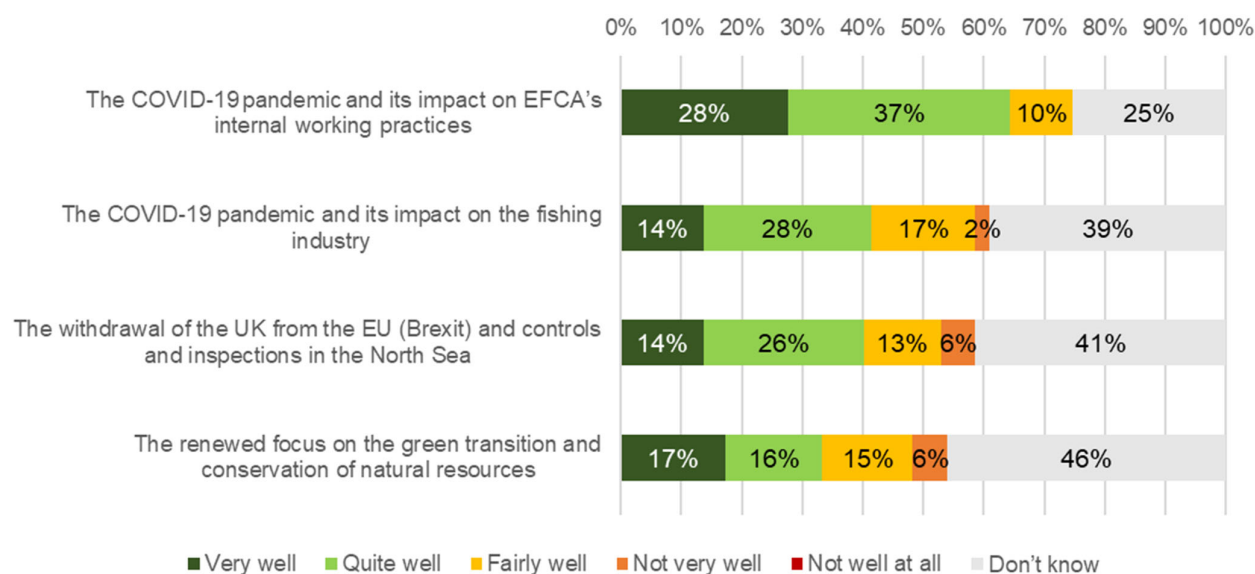
Base: 28

Figure 98: Other stakeholders

Base: 37

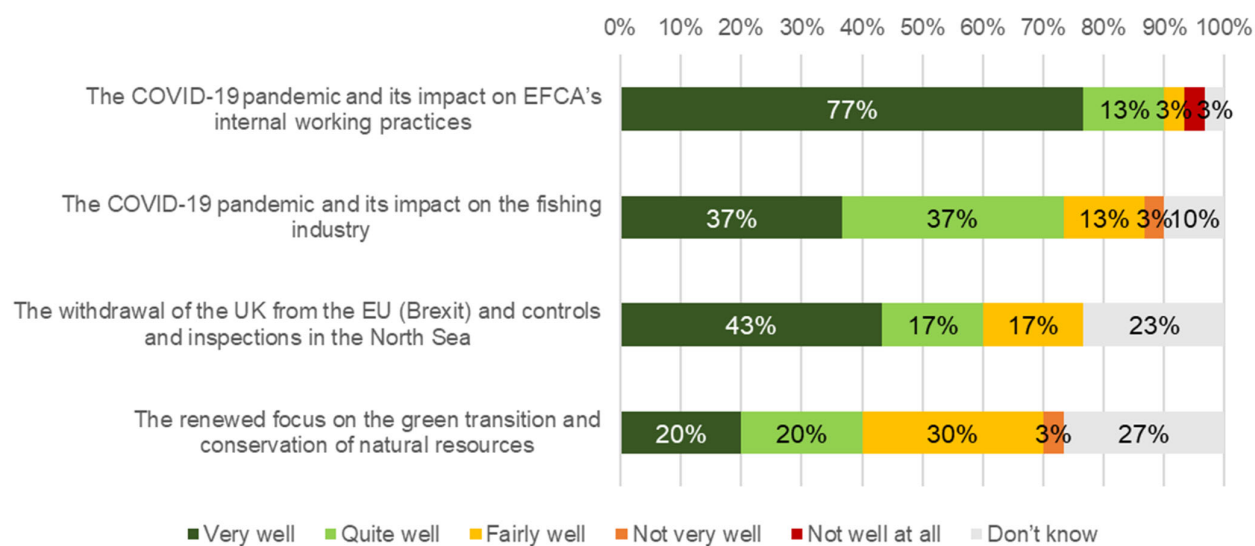
7.1.30 How well did EFCA deal with the following challenges that affected its areas of activity in 2017-2021?

Figure 99: National authorities

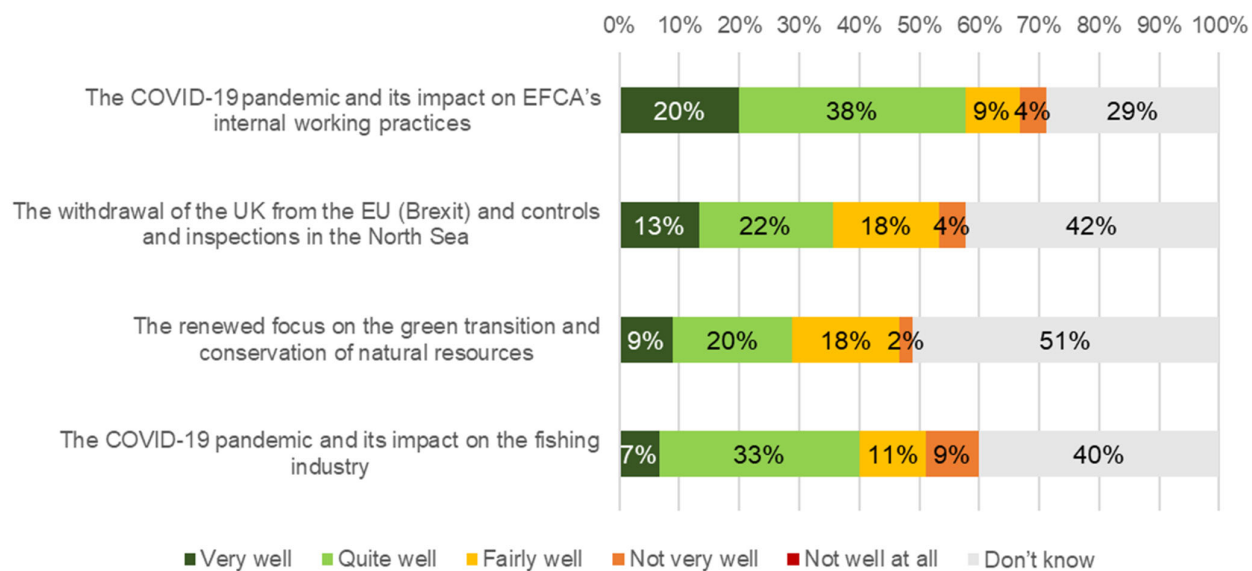


Base: 87

Figure 100: EFCA staff

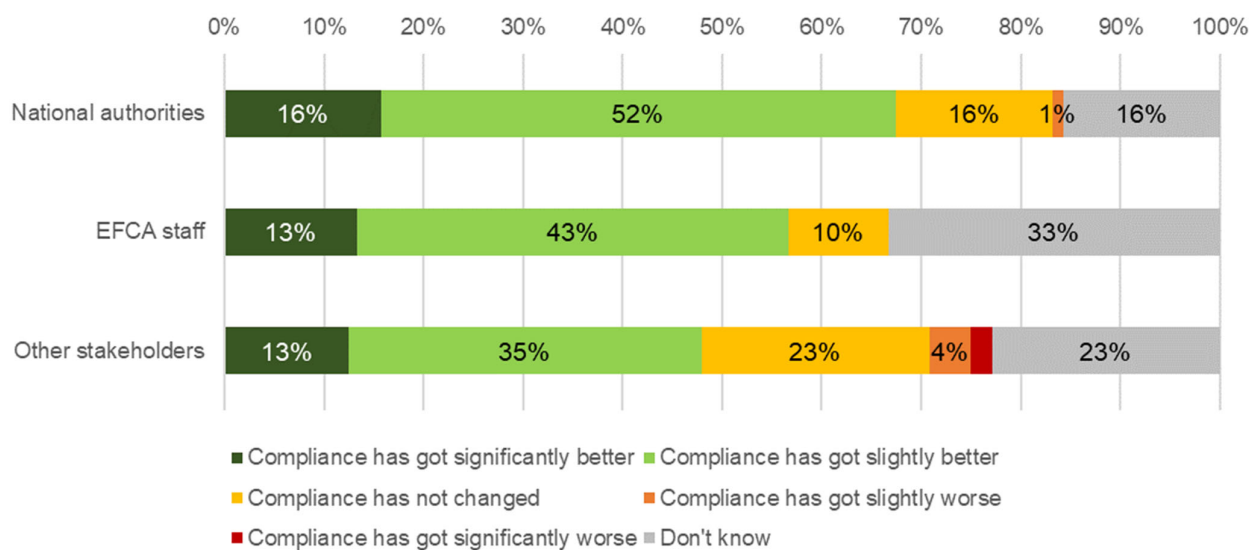


Base: 28

Figure 101: Other stakeholders

Base: 45

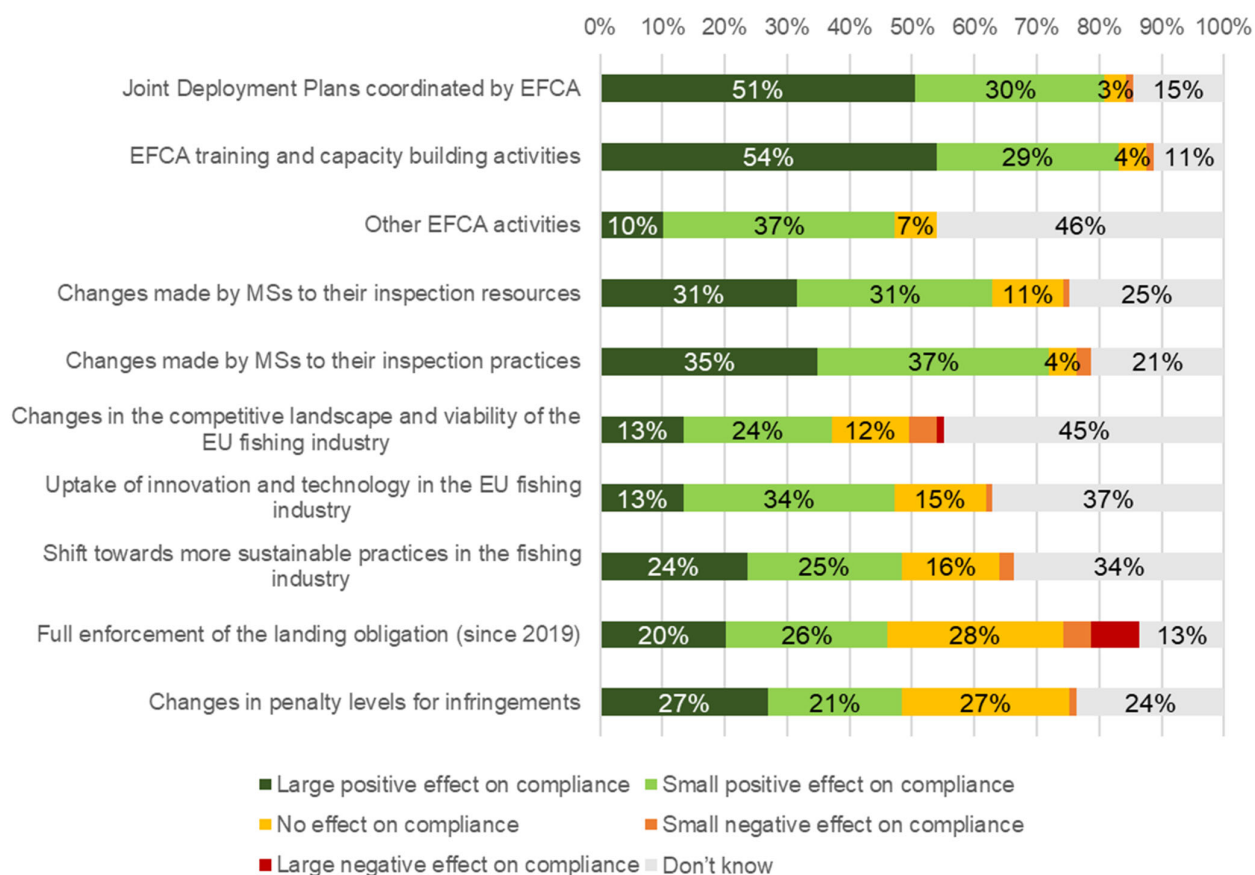
7.1.31 In your experience, has the overall level of compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) rules changed in the past five years?

Figure 102: All stakeholders

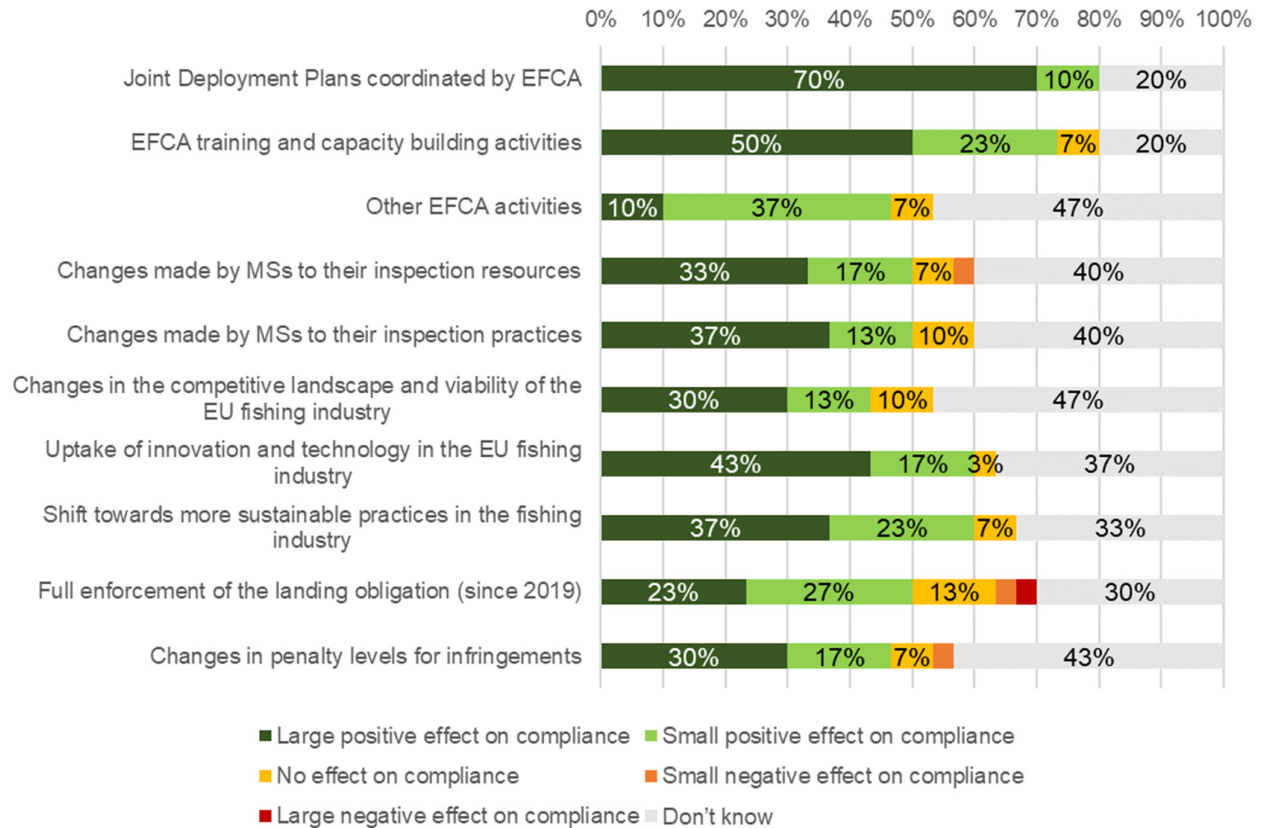
Base: 167

7.1.32 A number of factors (some but not all related to EFCA) may have had a positive or negative impact on the level of compliance with CFP rules in the last five years. In your opinion, what difference (if any) has each of the following factors made?

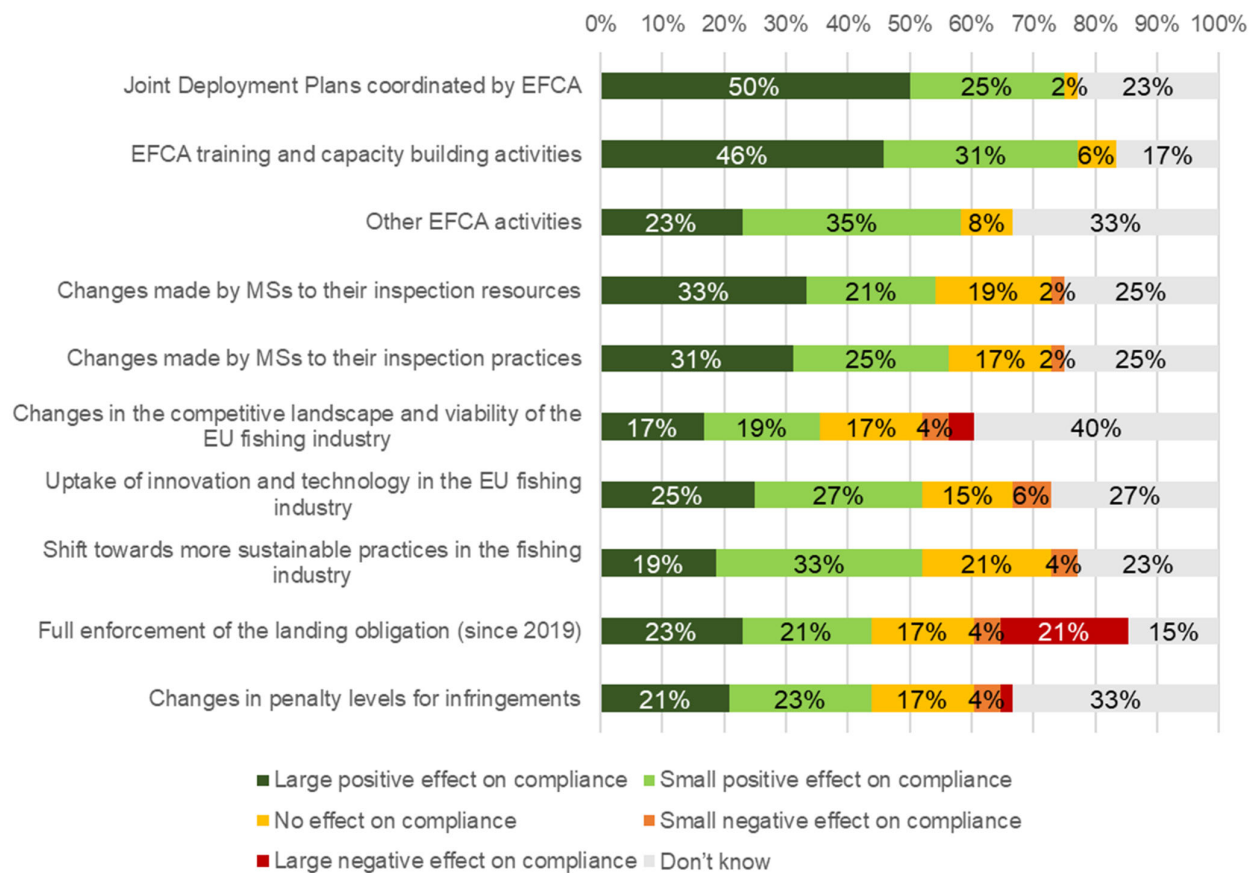
Figure 103: National authorities



Base: 137

Figure 104: EFCA staff

Base: 30

Figure 105: Other stakeholders

Base: 48

8 Annex 2: Case study on Risk Assessment

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Scope of the case study

The scope of this case study is the Risk Assessment conducted for two Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs) between 2017 and 2021:

- Mediterranean and Eastern Atlantic (Med) JDP: The Med JDP has been operative since 2008, covering essentially the Eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna until 2014, and onwards extended to other species.⁷⁷ This JDP has the active participation of Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain.
- North Sea (NS) JDP: The NS JDP has been operating since 2007 and covers certain demersal and pelagic fisheries.⁷⁸ The Member States participating in this JDP are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

8.1.2 Methodology

This case study is informed by review of documentation (JPD assessment reports for the NS and the Med in 2020, and the risk assessment methodology), the online survey of stakeholders conducted during the evaluation, and eight interviews with: EFCA staff (2), DG MARE staff (3) and staff from national authorities in fisheries control (3).

8.2 Overview of the activity

8.2.1 Risk Assessment in the context of the Joint Deployment Plans

The Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs) are regional platforms of coordination and cooperation between EFCA and Member States to conduct joint inspection and surveillance activities, exchange data and information, and standardise inspection practises and methodologies across Member States.

JDPs are established for fisheries/areas that are considered a priority by the European Commission and the Member States concerned. They can refer either to European Union waters for which a Specific Control and Inspection Programme (SCIP) has been adopted by the Commission in concert with the Member States, or to international waters under the competence of a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO), where EFCA is requested to coordinate the implementation of the European obligations under an International Control and Inspection Scheme. In 2020, there were five JDPs in EU waters (Mediterranean, Baltic Sea, North Sea, Black Sea, and Western Waters) and two JDPs in international waters (North/North-East Atlantic and Mediterranean).

⁷⁷ Relevant fisheries include bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, swordfish and albacore in the Mediterranean, sardine and anchovy in the Adriatic Sea, European hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily, deep-sea shrimps in the Levant and Ionian Sea, European eel of the species *Anguilla anguilla*, species under the landing obligation in the Mediterranean Sea.

⁷⁸ Fisheries within scope include cod, haddock, whiting, saithe, Norway lobster, sole, plaice, hake and northern prawn, mackerel, herring, horse mackerel, blue whiting, argentine (greater silver smelt), sprat; sand eel and Norway pout; European eel of the species *Anguilla anguilla*; species under the landing obligation pursuant to Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.

JDPs consist of three phases: Planning, implementation, and assessment. The Risk Assessment (RA) is part of the planning phase.

8.2.2 Risk Assessment

Risk assessment (RA) is the first step of the risk management process, which feeds into the annual planning of control activities agreed in JDPs. More specifically, RA is the process where the main risks of non-compliance are identified, analysed and evaluated, so that subsequently control resources can be targeted where the risks are highest. The assessment consists of estimating two factors: (a) impact or consequences of non-compliance threats to the Common Fishery Policy (CFP) objectives and (b) the likelihood that those threats will occur, based on intelligence or compliance indicators developed by EFCA with Member States and expert knowledge.

National and regional risk assessments are conducted following a common methodology. In 2018, the common methodology was documented and endorsed by Member States.⁷⁹ In addition to this, EFCA organises annual meetings with Member States' risk assessment experts to discuss the methodology and identify whether any changes are needed. At these meetings, the inter-regional perspective is also discussed, in order to standardise the RA across sea basins and increase the level playing field.

For each JDP, annual **regional risk assessments** (RRAs) are carried out, using data and national risk assessments (as required by the SCIP) submitted by the Member States concerned by the JDP.

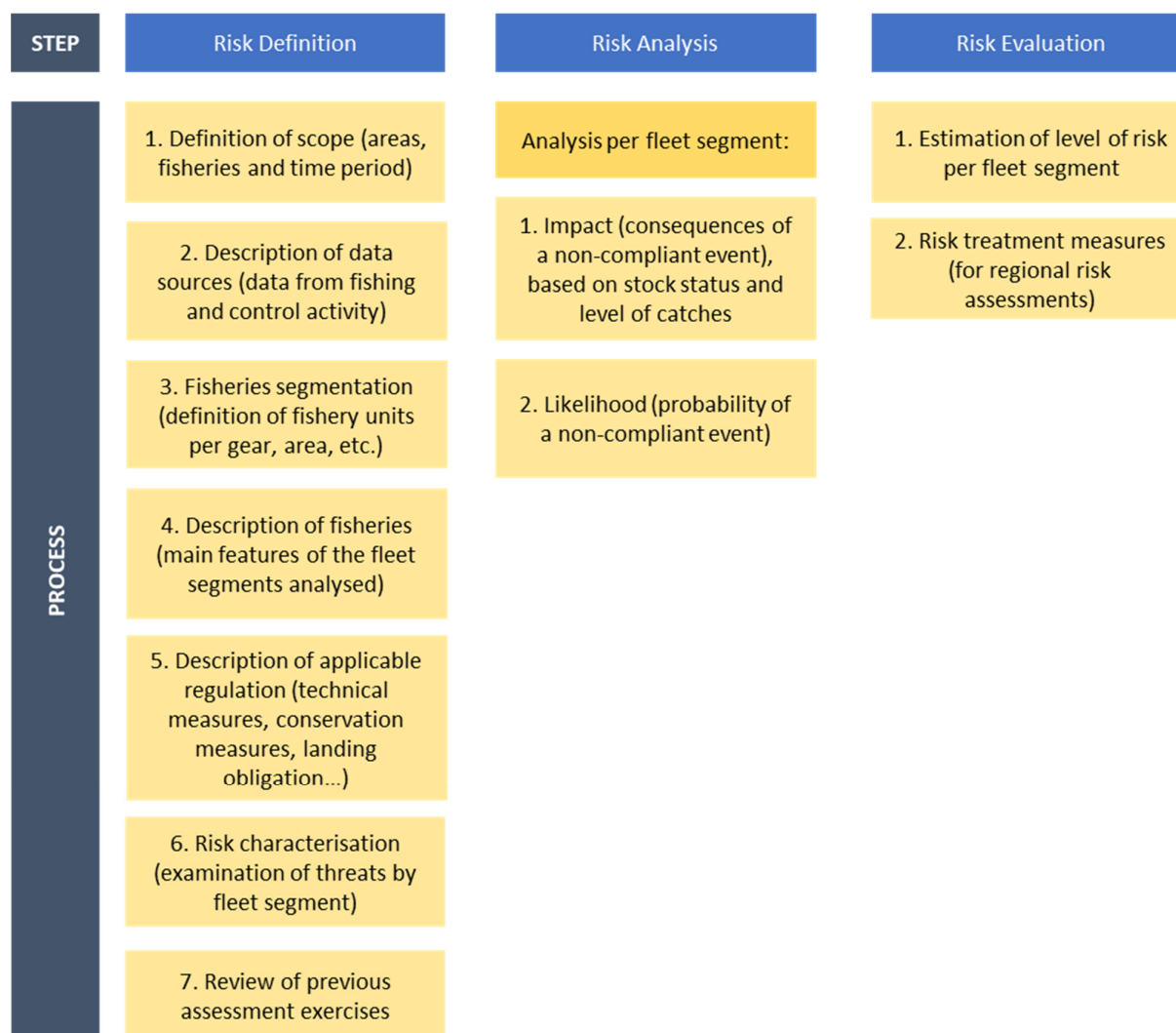
Member States communicate the national RA results to EFCA, and EFCA uses this in the context of the RRA. The RRA aims at cost efficient planning and deployment of inspection activities by providing medium to long-term strategic objectives and an indication of the best spatial and temporal coverage for control means and inspection activities. The RRA methodology operates at the level of fleet segments.

Fleet segments are homogeneous fishery units with similar fishing characteristics (e.g., gear, area, and target species) and subject to similar aspects of the regulations.

The RRA exercise consists of three main steps:

1. Risk Definition: Definition of priority threats at fisheries segment level
2. Risk Analysis: Estimation of the risk of priority threats, based on the likelihood of a non-compliance event to occur and the potential impact of such an event
3. Risk Evaluation: Recommendations for risk treatment measures, which are transferred into JDP priority activities, such as specific actions.

⁷⁹ EFCA (2018) Guidelines on Risk Assessment Methodology on Fisheries Compliance. Available at <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Risk%20Assessment%20Methodology.pdf>

Figure 106. Summary of the Risk Assessment methodology

Source: Ipsos, based on the Guidelines on Risk Assessment Methodology on Fisheries Compliance, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Risk%20Assessment%20Methodology.pdf>

As part of the second and third steps in the RRA process, EFCA also organises **workshops** each year with Member State experts, in order to evaluate risks and recommend risk treatment measures. In the NS JDP, two workshops are organised every year, one for demersal and one for pelagic species. In the Med JDP, EFCA normally organises one workshop per year (with the exception of 2020, as explained below). Additional workshops are also organised to deal with specific aspects, such as the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

For illustration purposes, in 2020, the following workshops were organised in the NS and the Med JDPs, respectively:

- In the framework of the NS JDP, two workshops were carried out in relation to Demersal and Pelagic RRAs in June 2020. In the first workshop, the priority threats considered included non-compliance with the landing obligation (LO), misrecording of catches, use of illegal gears, unlicensed vessels, and fishing during closed area/season. The main categories of threats assessed in the second workshop related to non-compliance with the LO and misrecording. In

addition, a RA related to an EU-UK no-agreement scenario was also conducted in 2019 and later updated in 2020 and 2021.

- In the context of the Med JDP, in 2020 EFCA organised two specific RRA workshops to assess risks related to fisheries/species in scope. Priority threats identified in the Med JDP included non-compliance with specific rules for bluefin tuna (BFT) and swordfish (SWO); misrecording and non-compliance with mandatory documentation; non-compliance with quota and bycatch limit; non-compliance with temporal or spatial closures; non-compliance with minimum size; non-compliance with general technical and management rules; and non-compliance with the LO.

Following the results of the RRA, Member States involved in **specific actions** jointly act to focus on a particular issue related to specific fleet segments, areas, periods, and main threats identified. To complement the RRA, Member States also share their lists of target vessels, in order to facilitate operational and tactic aspects in the implementation of JDPs.

The RRA, therefore, proposes risk treatment measures and specific actions to be implemented in the following campaign. A total of 10 specific actions were implemented in the NS JDP in 2020 as a result of the 2019 RRA in the NS. In these specific actions, 6,914 inspections were carried out (a sharp decrease in comparison to 2019 (13,659)), resulting in the detection of a total of 128 suspected infringements.⁸⁰ The risk treatment measures resulting from the RRA conducted in 2020 were introduced into the NS JDP Decision on the planning of the 2021 campaign.

In the Med in 2020, EFCA coordinated 4 specific campaigns, namely the BFT Purse Seine, Adriatic, Strait of Sicily and Levant Sea specific campaigns. The total number of inspections reported in 2020 in the frame of the Med JDP was 22,482 (a significant increase in comparison to the number of inspections reported in 2018 and 2019), resulting in the detection of 1,768 suspected infringements in the same year.⁸¹

8.3 Effectiveness

The analysis of effectiveness focuses on evaluating: The implementation of the RA methodology; the implementation of the specific actions as per the results of the RRA; the complementarity between the RRA and the lists of high-risk vessels; the contribution of the RRA to the level of compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP); and the appropriateness of the activities undertaken in the RA methodology to meet the objectives.

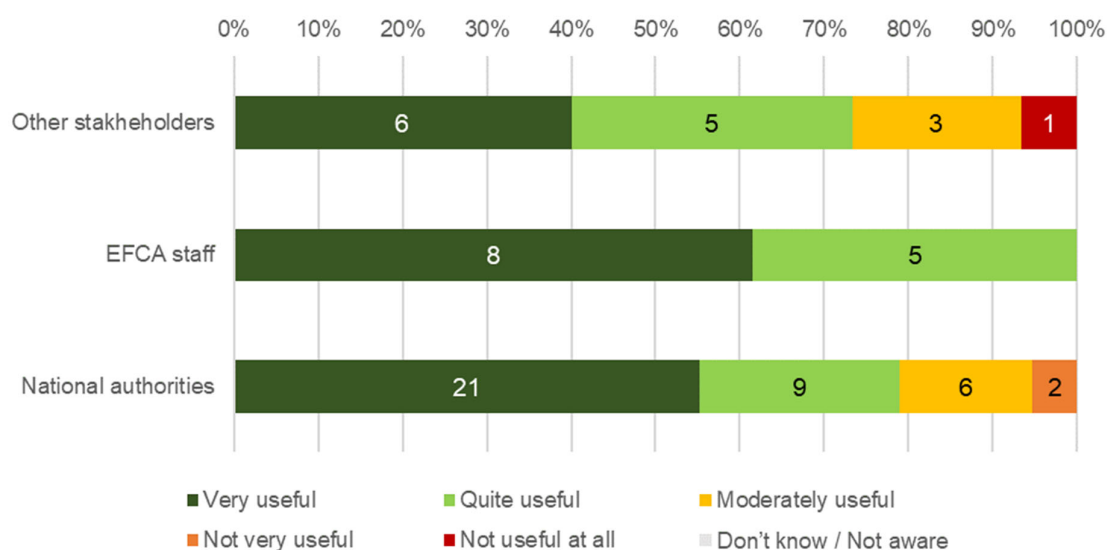
8.3.1 Implementation of the risk assessment methodology

In general, interviewees believed the RA methodology is an effective tool to identify and classify high-risk fleet segments. This finding is also confirmed by the online survey, where most respondents across all types of stakeholders indicated that the regional risk assessment is very useful, or quite useful.

⁸⁰ EFCA (2021) North Sea Joint Deployment Plan. 2020 Assessment Report

⁸¹ EFCA (2021) Mediterranean Sea and Eastern Atlantic Joint Deployment Plan. 2020 Assessment Report

**Figure 107: How useful did you find the following aspects of JDPs preparation, implementation, and assessment?
Preparation of a regional risk assessment (RRA)**



Base: 38 National Authorities, 13 EFCA staff, 15 Other stakeholders

The first step to implement the RRA, as explained above, is the **national risk assessment** that Member States conduct following EFCA's methodology. Findings from interviews suggest that, overall, countries follow the EFCA methodology in their national risk assessment, although some countries, particularly in the NS JDP and increasingly in the Med, may introduce additional elements related to individual vessels or other national particularities which are not considered at regional level (EFCA methodology).

Interviewees considered that, overall, the steps in the RA methodology are adequate to identify the high-risk fleet segments and were appreciative of the support offered by EFCA to conduct their own national risk assessments. Interviewees also offered some observations on how the activities conducted as part of the RRA could be further improved.

The RRA exercise relies to a great extent on the quality of data provided by Member States, and in some cases the result of the RRA is impacted by the lack of timely submission or insufficient / poor-quality data received from Member States.⁸² According to staff from national authorities interviewed, the main reason is lack of capacity at the national level to prepare and provide the data. EFCA regularly seeks feedback on the process and has improved the template (according to EFCA staff) to facilitate Member States providing inputs. The Agency also provides direct support to prepare the national RA to Member States that request it. Although the improvement of the quality of data is one of the main achievements of the last years, according to the information in the JDP assessment reports reviewed,⁸³ there is reportedly still work to do.

According to interviewees across all groups, the methodology to undertake the RA is better adapted to the realities of the fishing fleet in the NS than in the Med, particularly in relation to the definition of the fleet segments and the data sources used. One interviewee from a national authority in the Med reported that fleet segments in the Med are too broad. As a result, the RA methodology is not sufficiently tailored

⁸² For instance, in 2020 in the NS JDP, two Member States did not meet the deadline to send data on demersal fisheries, and data on the recording of the selectivity device in use in particular fleet segments was not reported by three Member States. For pelagic fisheries, only five Member States sent the data within the deadline.

⁸³ NS JDP assessment report 2020 and Med JDP assessment report 2021

and, when implementing specific actions, it is difficult to select the right vessels for inspection within a specific fleet segment. This opinion was also shared by one survey respondent from a national authority in another country in the Med.

The second problem of the RA methodology for the Med is that, according to one interviewee, it relies heavily on data from e-logbooks; however, most of the fleet in some countries in the Med does not have e-logbooks, hence creating significant gaps in the data available for analysis.

In the NS RRA, the main challenge mentioned by interviewees is the exit of the UK from the European Union, which means the RRA now only focuses on EU vessels operating in EU waters and provides only general guidelines for the risk posed by UK vessels fishing in EU waters, or EU vessels fishing in the UK.

In addition to these challenges specific to the NS and the Med sea basins, interviewees and survey respondents identified some general limitations in the methodology, mainly:

- The lack of indicators for some threats (e.g., in relation to the Landing Obligation, illegal and undocumented discarding).
- The fact that in the absence of data on the status of stocks, a high score on impact is applied by the RA methodology, following the Precautionary Approach. According to one interviewee, it would be useful if the RA offered more information on the reasons why certain fleet segments are assessed as high risk, i.e., whether because stocks are overexploited, because of high likelihood, or because of lack of data.
- The high degree of subjectivity in the 'likelihood' element when measuring compliance (e.g. it depends on each inspector, political influence, etc.).
- The fact that the methodology only includes data from inspections at sea and in port, and does not cover other activities from port to the consumption point.

As regards potential solutions to improve the methodology, some interviewees and survey respondents from DG MARE called for a more horizontal approach to the risk assessment across sea basins, whereas some national authorities, particularly in the Med, would like to have regional methodologies that are better tailored to the reality of their fishing fleet and that allow the RRA to identify more precisely the risks in specific areas of the Med (e.g. in the Adriatic Sea, instead of covering more broadly the eastern Mediterranean). For instance, this would entail using fewer indicators that need data from electronic logbooks (e-logbooks), as the length of a large part of the fleet in the Mediterranean is below 12 metres, and therefore they are not obliged to keep track of their catches in e-logbooks, and defining fleet segments and risks that are more specific to sub-regions with the Mediterranean (e.g., the Adriatic Sea).

To complete the risk analysis, as noted above, EFCA organises **workshops with experts** to seek their inputs on the likelihood of the threats identified and to define treatment measures. According to a survey respondent from DG MARE, there is not enough participation in these workshops of experts who have detailed knowledge of the risk assessment framework and the methodologies and who can provide an informed assessment of the likelihood element. This is somewhat confirmed in the JDP assessment report for the Med in 2020, which highlights that the second workshop organised suffered from the absence of some Member States therefore impacting the quality of the discussion.

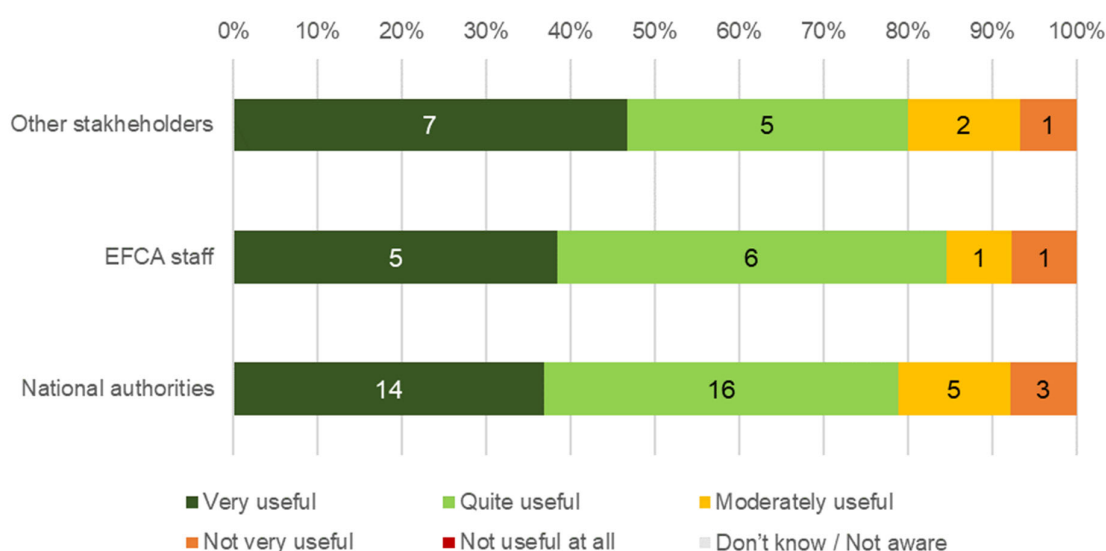
Interviewees also commented on the format and content of the workshops, and provided some suggestions to improve the quality of the outcomes and recommendations agreed during workshops:

- One interviewee from DG MARE recommended that more time should be dedicated to discussing recommendations, and less time to the risk assessment.
- One interviewee from a national authority participating in the Med recommended that the workshops are organised by sub-regions (e.g., for the Adriatic, instead of the eastern Mediterranean more broadly), where only concerned Member States participate. According to this interviewee, this format would deliver higher effectiveness and efficiency.

8.3.2 Identification of risk treatment measures and implementation of specific actions

The results of the RRA are treatment measures that are implemented, inter alia, through special campaigns / specific actions. These actions are generally viewed by interviewees as an effective and efficient tool to target areas where the risk is the highest. Most survey respondents also rated the specific campaigns as very useful or quite useful (see Figure 108), although a few national authorities rated them as moderately useful or not very useful, suggesting that there may be room for improvement.

Figure 108: How useful did you find the following aspects of JDPs preparation, implementation, and assessment? Specific campaigns focused on priority threats, fleet segments, and areas



Base: 38 National Authorities, 13 EFCA staff, 15 Other stakeholders

The recommended risk treatment measures and specific actions allow Member States to focus their limited resources in the fleet segments where the risk is the highest, using the inspection controls, measures and means that are the best suited to tackle those risks, and hence making inspections controls as effective and efficient as possible. In addition, by having measures that are common to all Member States within a specific sea basin, the RRA improves the harmonisation of controls and levels the playing field.

Interviewees and survey respondents, however, identified some limitations in the way that treatment measures and specific actions are identified. One message shared by two survey respondents and one interviewee (all staff from national authorities) is that they would like to have fewer, and more focused, specific actions.

"I would prefer to have fewer recommendations which I could focus my work on, rather than recommendations for every single existing risk. If they are not so focused, the question is whether we need the RA. We cannot put our resources on every single risk." – National authority staff

One survey respondent mentioned that, sometimes, the treatment measures are ineffective at mitigating the risks identified, which passes the wrong message to Member States that ineffective controls are acceptable. According to this respondent, acknowledging that traditional controls are inadequate would be preferable. The study team conducted a follow up interview with this survey respondent to gather further details on the types of measures they referred to. In the interview, they explained that they disagreed with recommending last haul inspections as a way of monitoring compliance with the landing obligation. In their view, the Agency should instead acknowledge that this measure is ineffective at monitoring the landing obligation and not recommend it, as it then provides Member States with arguments not to implement other more effective methods like REM.

Finally, another respondent from a national authority mentioned that sometimes specific actions do not target relevant fisheries or fleet segments and put an example of a specific action (acoustic deterrent devices in the Baltic Sea) where very few inspections were conducted due to low fishing activity in that specific fleet segment.

8.3.3 Complementarity between RA and list of high-risk vessels

The RA is complemented by the **lists of high-risk vessels** that Member States share with each other and with EFCA. Staff from national authorities interviewed were very positive about the list of high-risk vessels, as it complements the RRA well, it helps them to focus resources on high-risk vessels, and it helps them to evaluate their inspectors.

"Having a list is important and very helpful to set priorities. If I have two vessels and one of them is on the list, I would focus resources on that vessel. It is very important to have this list to also see if other inspectors are focusing on the right vessels, it is a tool to evaluate the work of inspectors. It is a way to change your mindset and focus not only on high-risk fisheries, but also high-risk vessels." – National authority staff

Staff from national authorities mentioned that they trust the lists of high-risk vessels shared by other Member States, and that despite not all Member States sharing it on Fishnet, or the lists not being updated regularly, they consult them on a regular basis and find them useful.

Interviewees from DG MARE were more critical of the list of high-risk vessels due to the lack of regular updates from Member States. One interviewee suggested that EFCA may have a potential role in harmonising the methodology for the list of high-risk vessels. However, since Member States seem to trust each other's lists, this may not be necessary.

8.3.4 Contribution of Risk Assessment to level of compliance with rules under the CFP

To assess the contribution of EFCA to increasing the level of compliance with the rules set under the CFP, we built a contribution analysis (CA) framework (for more detail on this framework, see Annex 5). This case study evaluates two of the hypotheses set in the CA framework:

- H1a: Risk assessments effectively identify high-risk fleet segments, which help Member State to effectively focus their fisheries control resources, hence increasing the likelihood that controls detect any infringement committed and disincentivising them.

- H1b: Member States develop a list of high-risk vessels that is shared with EFCA and other Member States. This list complements the risk assessment and helps to focus resources on the highest risk vessels. Without EFCA, Member States would not exchange information on high-risk vessels. Vessels that are in the list are disincentivised from committing infringements.

By and large, this evaluation confirms that both hypotheses are true. In relation to H1a, the sections above on effectiveness already explained that stakeholders agree that the RA methodology is effective at identifying high risk fleet segments (although there is room for improvement), that Member States follow EFCA's methodology when doing their national risk assessments, that they implement control and inspection activities in line with the treatment measures identified, and that they (the sample of Member States interviewed) do not conduct alternative risk assessments on their own following their own methodologies, which otherwise might refute the hypothesis. There is only one test in the contribution analysis framework (see Annex 5) which partly refutes the hypothesis: According to the JDP assessment reports reviewed (Med and NS JDP reports for 2020), some Member States did not provide data on time, or data that was complete to inform all indicators.

H1b has also been confirmed in the evaluation, with strong evidence. Stakeholders were very positive about the usefulness of the list of high-risk vessels and, as with the risk assessment, Member State follow EFCA's processes: National authorities prioritise vessels that are in the list when doing inspections, they mostly find it easy to access the list of high-risk vessels from other Member State through Fishnet, and national authorities trust the lists shared by other Member States, even if they are not always up to date or not all Member States share their lists. The latter, the lack of updated lists or lists at all (some Member States do not compile or share their list) is the only test that refutes the hypothesis.

National authorities staff interviewed confirmed that they conduct inspections in line with the recommended treatment measures and prioritise inspections on high-risk vessels within target fleet segments over other fleet segments or vessels, hence reinforcing the hypothesis that the RRA and the list of high-risk vessels contribute to increasing the likelihood of detecting infringements.

In addition to the CA framework, analysis of quantitative data on inspections and infringements also provides an indication of the effectiveness of the RA and the list of high-risk vessels. Effectiveness can be assessed by comparing the difference in percentage of inspections with suspected infringements in target vessels, versus the percentage of inspections with suspected infringements in non-target vessels. In 2020 in the NS JDP, the percentage of inspections with a suspected infringement was 8% for target vessels (nearly double from 2019) and 1% for non-target vessels, suggesting that the list was successful at identifying high-risk vessels in the NS in 2020. This indicator is not available for the Med in 2020.

8.3.5 Appropriateness of the activities undertaken within the Risk Assessment

Overall, the evaluation concludes that the activities undertaken in the RA are adequate to meet its objectives (i.e., identifying high-risk fleet segments). One survey respondent from DG MARE, however, identified one activity or service that EFCA could provide to help Member States manage risks that is currently not within the scope of EFCA's activities. This survey respondent would like to see EFCA playing a greater role in helping Member States to conduct control, enforcement and inspection activities on the basis of "risk management" (as per Art 5(4) Control Regulation) instead of exclusively focusing on "risk assessment" in the context of the SCIPs. This would entail enlarging the scope of control and inspection activities to, for instance, weighing and catch registration activities. According to this

respondent, there are several such activities outside the scope of JDPs that Member States need guidance on, as is evidenced by the growing number of infringement proceedings launched by the Commission. The evaluation team has not been able to triangulate this information, since data on infringement proceedings is not publicly available.⁸⁴

8.4 Efficiency

EFCA dedicated 3.4 and 2.9 million Euros to RA and data analysis in 2020 and 2021, respectively, according to EFCA's Annual Reports for 2020 and 2021. This represented 20% of the total budget dedicated to operational activities in 2020, and 14% in 2021. The difference in percentages is mostly due to the increase of expenditure in coast guard and capacity building activities in 2021, relative to 2020. EFCA executed 100% of the budget allocated to RA in 2020, and 86% in 2021. The latter was the result of reallocation of resources to other operational activities.

Some interviewees and survey respondents from DG MARE commented that the risk assessment sector should be a horizontal sector, instead of being part of the regional sectors. According to these interviewees, it would ensure that resources are allocated more equally across sea basins. Some interviewees considered that the RA activities for the Med are under-resourced; however, EFCA staff indicated that they use a similar level of resources for all sea basins. The evaluation team has not been able to access information on resources spent by EFCA on RA by sea basin, which limits the extent to which a conclusive assessment can be made. Nevertheless, this evaluation has found that some interviewees and survey respondents in the Med considered that the RRA is not sufficiently tailored to the realities of their fishing fleet, which may indicate that more resources may be needed in designing indicators or defining fleet segments that are better suited to this sea basin.

More broadly, at the EU level, having a common methodology applied across Member States and a team at EFCA analysing data for the different risks identified per sea basin is an efficient use of resources in the EU. Without EFCA and the common RA methodology, each Member State would have to dedicate their own resources to this task.

8.5 Relevance

8.5.1 Alignment of the Risk Assessment objectives with the needs in the EU

The RA is completely aligned with the needs expressed by EU Member States. One national authority interviewed mentioned that, without EFCA, they would not have the methodologies to analyse their data on inspections, conduct their own risk assessments, and decide where to focus their resources. This may be less relevant in the NS JDP, since some Member States already had their own methods to evaluate risk, according to one interviewee. However, using EFCA's RA methodology ensures the methodology is applied uniformly across Member States.

The methodology is also aligned with the needs expressed by the European Commission, although most interviewees and survey respondents from DG MARE expressed a desire for EFCA's role to be expanded to new activities, tackling, for instance, risks related to weighing and traceability. This applies to some extent to the RA methodology, which currently focuses mostly on infringements committed at sea or in ports. For instance, in the NS JDP in 2020, the three risk treatment measures were: Prioritised inspections of fishing vessels identified through a regional target vessel list; specific actions focused on the priority threats, fleet segments of higher risk of non-compliance, periods and areas identified of high

⁸⁴ Although there are some press releases on infringement proceedings, they are not included in the European Commission's infringements proceedings database (https://ec.europa.eu/atwork/applying-eu-law/infringements-proceedings/infringement_decisions/index.cfm)

risk and/or very high-risk activities; and monitoring of possible occurrence of discards and presence of juveniles of certain fish species. In the Med JDP in 2020, the risk treatment measures were: Inspections of fishing vessels, in particular in the fleet segment identified as very high, high and medium risk levels; specific campaigns focused on the priority threats, fleet segments and the areas defined; and last-haul analysis.

8.5.2 EFCA's reaction to technological, scientific and socio-economic changes in relation to the Risk Assessment

Interviews also explored the extent to which the implementation of the RA exercise is / may be affected by new developments, as well as ways to ensure the RA remains fit for purpose in the face of Brexit and new technologies.

Regarding the use of new technologies, some interviewees argued that there is some pressure to move to new monitoring tools (e.g. cameras to control the landing obligation). This could be a challenge for the RA methodology, for example in terms of how to include this data in the risk analysis. It was suggested EFCA should be proactive in exploring how new developments may affect and enhance the RA methodology.

In relation to Brexit, and as explained in the introduction of this case study, EFCA organised two workshops with Member States to address threats of non-compliance resulting from Brexit. At the workshop, actions for several potential scenarios of a fisheries agreement between the EU and the United Kingdom were discussed. National authorities interviewed mentioned that EFCA has been very proactive at analysing and addressing risks for compliance with CFP derived from Brexit.

8.6 Coherence

The RA methodology and the RRA are very coherent with wider EU policy. The EFCA Founding Regulation, in particular Article 10, provides EFCA its mandate of coordination of joint inspection and surveillance activities through JDPs, for the implementation of a SCIP.

The RA methodology, in particular, is fully aligned with the procedures for risk assessment in the context of JDPs established in Article 5 of Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1986 (SCIP).

The risk treatment measures identified through the RRA are aligned with Article 6.2 of SCIP, which mandates EFCA to establish and coordinate a risk management strategy through a JDP. However, the scope of SCIP (Art. 2) is broader than the scope of the RA, since it includes weighing, processing, marketing, transport, storage, importation, indirect importation, exportation, and re-exportation of fisheries products - activities that are not included in the RA.

Finally, the scope of the RRA is fully aligned with the fisheries established in SCIP for the Med and NS sea basins.

8.7 EU added value

The RA process provides a very high EU added value. In the absence of EFCA RA methodologies and activities, interviewees from Member States indicated that:

- Some Member States would not be able to analyse information on inspections, infringements, and level of compliance by themselves. This would mean that they would not know what the high-risk fleet segments and vessels operating in their waters are, and they would not know how to prioritise inspection activities.

- MS would not share their list of high-risk vessels with each other, therefore limiting the effectiveness of inspections of vessels with flags from other Member States.

This would all lead to reduced effectiveness of the JDPs and lower compliance with the CFP.

8.8 Conclusions

This evaluation concludes that the implementation of the RA in the Med and NS JDPs is effective at identifying high-risk fleet segment categories and enabling JDP control and inspection activities to focus on these, hence increasing the likelihood that controls detect any infringement committed and disincentivising them. The effectiveness of the RRA appears to be higher in the NS JDP than in the Med JDP. Analysis of the 2020 JDP assessment reports for both sea basins and of information provided by interviewees reveals that the likely reasons for this are:

- The different fisheries covered in the sea basins. The SCIP for the Med, which only covered bluefin tuna until 2014, has progressively widened its scope, and therefore the methodology may not be well adapted yet to the fisheries that were more recently incorporated.
- The fleet in the NS is formed by fewer, and larger vessels than in the Med. On the one hand, this provides more data, as larger vessels are obliged, for instance, to maintain e-logbooks; and on the other hand, fleet segments can be more targeted or include a smaller number of vessels.

Indeed, the main limitations observed by interviewees in relation to the application of the RA methodology in the Med JDP are the lack of e-logbooks in a large fleet of the Med (due to many vessels being smaller than 12 metres, and therefore not obliged to maintain e-logbooks) and the large size of the fleet segments identified (in terms of number of vessels within a given segment).

Other challenges identified are the lack of indicators for some threats, and the poor quality or lack of timely submission of data by Member States. In addition, interviewees also identified room for improvement in the workshops and the recommendations stemming from them (the risk treatment measures).

The list of high-risk vessels complements very well the RRA and helps national authorities to focus their resources on the fleet segments and vessels with the highest risk of non-compliance. Both the RRAs and the list of high-risk vessels make a significant positive contribution to more effective fishing controls, which in turn act as a deterrent to non-compliance, and are therefore likely to have a positive (albeit impossible to measure) effect on compliance with the CFP in the fisheries within the scope of the SCIP.

The RA responds to the needs of Member States and the European Commission in terms of identifying risks and risk treatment measures; however, the European Commission would like EFCA to expand the range of infringements that they analyse within the RRA, and to cover also potential infringements during weighing, processing, marketing, and transport of fish products. This would be in line with the scope of SCIPs, but would likely need additional resources from both EFCA and national authorities. EFCA will also need to further adapt their methodology to incorporate data from technologies that monitor compliance with the landing obligation (e.g. from Remote Electronic Monitoring) if and when the revised Control Regulation is adopted. Data from REM will likely improve the RRA not only in relation to the landing obligation, but also in relation to other threats such as compliance with illegal gear, or misrecording of the catch data.

The evaluation also concludes that the RA process conducted by EFCA provides a very high EU added value and a more efficient use of resources than in a hypothetical scenario where EFCA did not exist and Member States had to conduct their own RA.

9 Annex 3: Case study on training for Union Inspectors

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Scope of the case study

The scope of this case study comprises the training programme for Union inspectors, including the e-learning platforms and workshops organised in the context of JDPs.

9.1.2 Methodology

This case study draws on a combination of sources. Programming documents, activity reports, and monitoring information were primarily used to inform the framework of the analysis. In addition to this, the online survey and in-depth consultations with EFCA staff (2), Administrative Board members (2), European Commission officials (2), and stakeholders from national authorities (8) were used to provide evidence on the key aspects of the training programme.

9.2 Overview of the activity

9.2.1 Overview of the activity

The role of Union inspectors is provided for by Article 79 of the Control Regulation,⁸⁵ which establishes that Union inspectors are entitled to carry out inspections in Union waters and on EU vessels outside of Union waters. In practice, Union inspectors may be responsible for control and inspection activity in specific JDPs or in international fisheries control programmes, where the European Union has the authority to carry out controls. Union inspectors are nominated by Member States, the European Commission, and EFCA, in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and the list of Union inspectors is made available in the Official Journal of the European Union.⁸⁶

The Training and Capacity Building Sector is responsible for coordinating training activities for inspectors within EFCA, in relation to the training delivered both to EU Member States' inspectors operating within JDPs and to third country inspectors.

The objective of the training programme for Union inspectors is to support the effective and uniform application of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), whilst taking into account any legislative updates.⁸⁷ In particular, the training seeks to contribute to a level playing field and a harmonised inspection methodology⁸⁸ in order to ensure a uniform application of the CFP.

⁸⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009

⁸⁶ Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32009R1224> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁸⁷ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021, Single Programming Document: Multiannual work programme 2021-2025 and Annual work programme 2021, page 19, available at <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Single%20Programming%20Document%20Multiannual%20work%20programme%202021-2025%20and%20Annual.pdf.pdf> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, page 19.

The Union inspector training organised and delivered by EFCA covers a variety of control and inspection aspects related to the CFP, as well as specific rules laid out in the JDPs. The key components of the training programme for Union inspectors are listed below.

- **Core Curriculum:** The Core Curriculum comprises a series of three different modules⁸⁹ in the form of handbooks that are used for trainers and for course participants. These illustrate general notions about controls in port and at sea, and are suitable for all Union inspectors. Currently, a revision of the core curriculum is ongoing, with a view to integrating the four modules into a single handbook.
- **E-learning platform:** The e-learning platform is largely based on the Core Curriculum. This is intended to be used as an introduction to aspects of control that are relevant for Union inspectors and other national inspectors. It is interactive and includes quizzes at the end of each section. Although e-learning courses are not mandatory, upon completion, participants may download a certificate of completion. Aside from this, the platform is also used as a calendar to register for in-person and virtual courses, and as a means for sharing documentation with course participants.
- **‘Training the trainers’:** These are sessions that aim to provide EFCA’s staff and Member States’ officials with the necessary procedural knowledge to deliver training courses for Union inspectors. As part of these sessions, officials receive training on how to deliver courses, and are provided with explanatory documents, training feedback forms (to be distributed at the end of each training session), and access to the e-learning platform (used to sign up for courses and for sharing course materials).
- **Regional trainings:** In the context of JDPs, regional trainings before the start of each campaign bring together inspectors from different Member States from the same JDP, and deal with the legal provisions in force, particularly newly adopted measures at EU and RFMO level. Examples of regional training include, *inter alia*, overviews of the JDP ‘concept’ and features⁹⁰, or technical training sessions such as on the use of IMS⁹¹.
- **Training alongside national authorities.** Although EFCA’s main role is to train Member States’ officials to be able to deliver training to their colleagues in their Member States, there are instances where EFCA delivers training directly to Member States inspectors. The EFCA units in charge of specific JDPs and international operations follow the Training and Capacity Building Sector’s guidelines when organising their own training sessions. Such trainings are normally tailored to a specific JDP or international setting, and can be delivered either as a standalone course, or alongside Member States’ courses or with national trainers. EFCA is also able to deliver ad hoc courses and sessions at the request of Member States, including on-site training sessions.

⁸⁹ The handbooks cover: 1) Inspection at sea; 2) Port inspection (landing inspection and transshipment inspection); 3) General principles, for fisheries inspectors and Union inspectors.

⁹⁰ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2020. North Sea Joint Deployment Plan 2020 Assessment Report, page 53.

⁹¹ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021, Mediterranean Sea and Eastern Atlantic Joint Deployment Plan 2020 Assessment Report, page 65.

In 2021, EFCA organised 35 courses for EU inspectors, which were attended by 1,273 participants⁹². Due to COVID-19, most courses were held online, although in previous years training sessions were primarily held in the Member States.

9.2.2 Actors involved

The preparation of course materials and the delivery of the training programme relies on a close collaboration established between EFCA and the Member States. In fact, EFCA's Training and Capacity Building Sector, the Sectors in charge of specific JDPs, and Member State representatives all contribute to the organisation of the training programme.

Minutes from various Steering Group on Training and Exchange of Experience (SGTEE) meetings⁹³ show that Member State representatives are actively involved in the drafting of the content of e-learning modules,⁹⁴ in the update of the core curriculum,⁹⁵ and in the definition of future priorities of the training programme.⁹⁶

This is confirmed by feedback gathered during the course of interviews with representatives of national authorities, who emphasised EFCA's efforts to coordinate with national authorities for the delivery of training programmes at regional and national level.

9.2.3 Monitoring information data

EFCA's e-learning platform records data on users' interaction with the platform. The data allows to show the evolution of the number of users registered over time, and the number of users compared to the total number of Union inspectors.

By 19 April 2022, EFCA's e-learning platform had 1,028 users from across the EU. Between 2017 and 2021, the e-learning platform attracted 953 new users (the platform had only been launched in mid-2016⁹⁷). As illustrated in Figure 109, the number of users grew rapidly every year, increasing considerably especially between 2020 and 2021 (+78%). Similarly, between 2020 and 2021 the number of Union inspectors registered to the platform grew by 52%.

⁹² European Fisheries Control Agency, 2021, Annual Report 2021 (Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021), page 178.

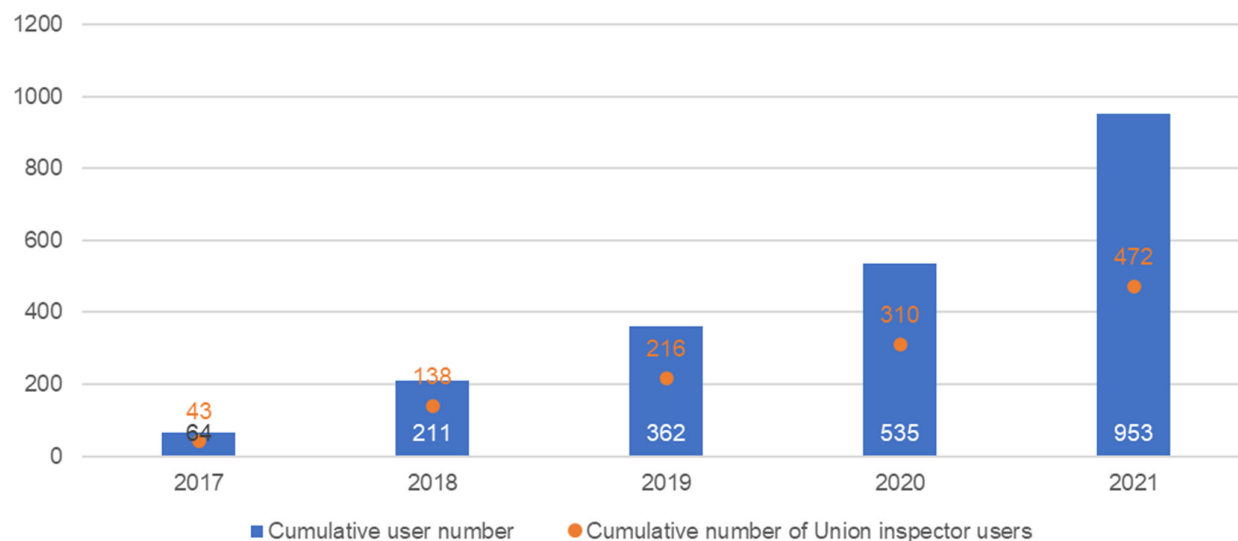
⁹³ Notes of meetings held between 2017 and 2021.

⁹⁴ Minutes of the Working group on and Steering Group on Training and Exchange of Experience (WG-SGTEE). 10-11 October 2017, Porto (PT).

⁹⁵ Minutes from the Steering Group on Training and Exchange of Experience (SGTEE) meetings held online via Member State TEAMS on 20 January 2021.

⁹⁶ Minutes of the Steering Group on Training and Exchange of Experience (SGTEE). 14 January 2020, Paris (France).

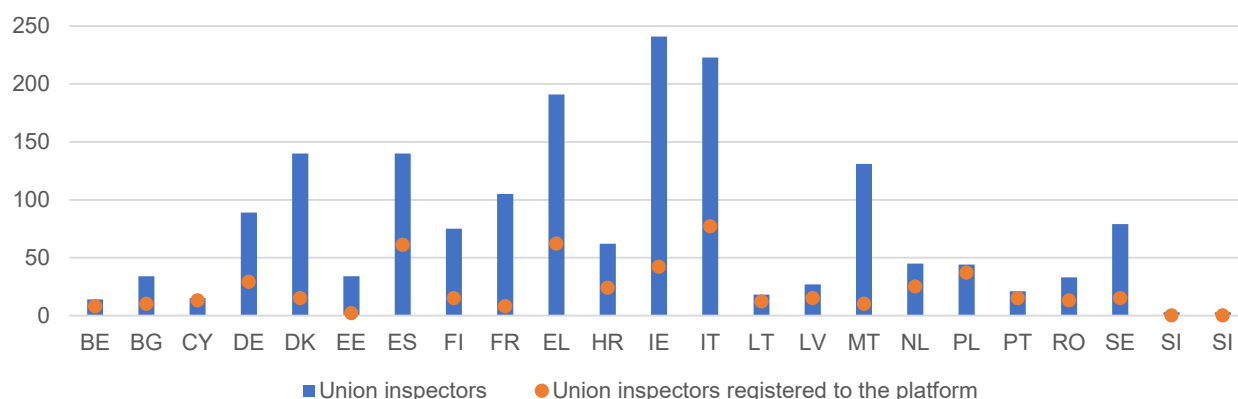
⁹⁷ Blomeyer & Sanz, 2016, Final Report Five-Year Independent External Evaluation of the European Fisheries Control Agency, page 56.

Figure 109: Cumulative number of e-learning platform users and Union inspectors registered to the platform

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EFCA monitoring information.
 Note: Users' first log-in between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2021.

Figure 110 compares the number of Union inspectors in each Member State to the number of Union inspectors that have registered to the platform. It appears that the platform is not systematically used by Union inspectors. In most Member States, less than half of all Union inspectors are registered on the platform, especially in larger Member States.

However, multiple interviewees explained that taking the courses offered by the e-learning platform is not a requirement to obtain the title of Union inspector. In fact, one interviewee noted that EFCA's training programme (including the e-learning platform) was not designed as a preparatory course for the role of Union inspector; instead, it is supposed to support Union inspectors in ensuring a harmonised application of the CFP. In addition, Union inspectors may take in-person (or virtual) training courses.

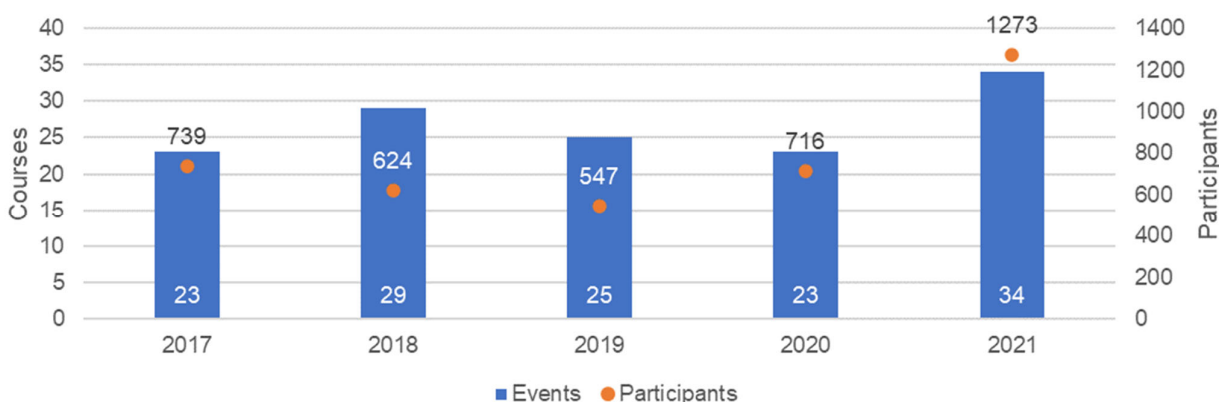
Figure 110: Number of Union inspectors and number of Union inspectors registered to the e-learning platform

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EFCA monitoring information.
 Note: Data as of 19 April 2022. Member States with no Union inspectors have been omitted.

As regards in person and virtual training courses for Union inspectors, data shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has not led to a reduction in training activity. Instead, as illustrated in Figure 111, the number

of courses held per year stayed more or less the same between 2017 and 2020, but it increased considerably in 2021 compared to the previous year.

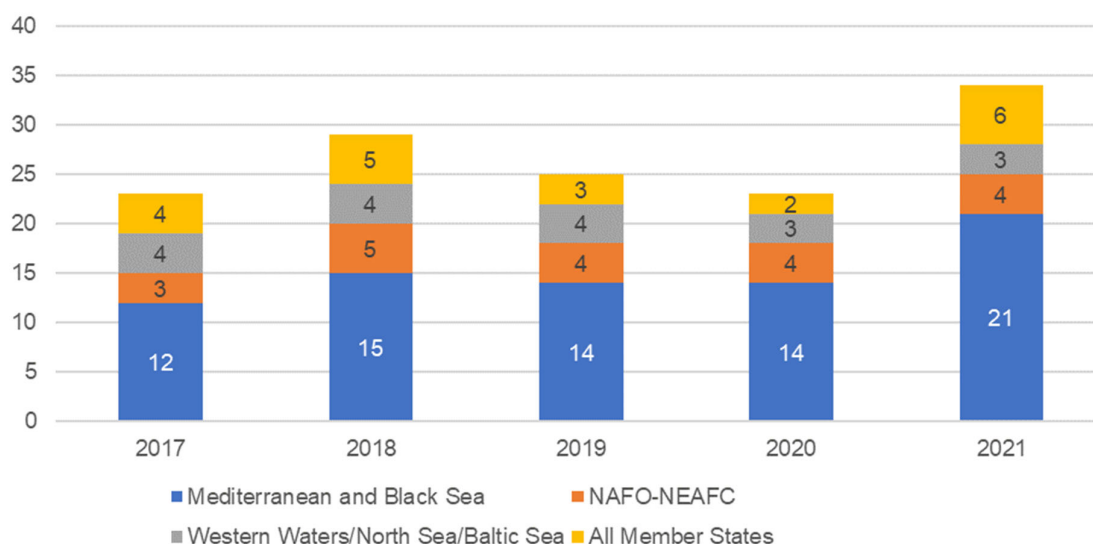
Figure 111: Courses and participants of training courses for Union inspectors



Source: Authors' elaboration based on EFCA's Annual Reports 2017-2021.

Figure 112 provides an overview of the number of courses by sea basins. There appears to be a marked increase in the number of courses held in the Mediterranean⁹⁸ in 2021 (especially due to support to national training programmes), whilst the number of courses for all other regions remained constant throughout the period 2017-2021. According to an interviewee, differences in the number of courses organised in the different sea basins are attributable to the fact that many courses are organised at the request of Member States, and some Member States seek EFCA's collaboration more often than others.

Figure 112: Training courses by region



Source: Authors' elaboration based on EFCA's Annual Reports 2017-2021.

The content of in-person courses is specifically adapted to the characteristics of each sea basin and JDP, as explained by interviewees. This is done in order to ensure that the courses are as specific as possible to the species of fish, fishing vessels, and seasons in each JDP. Nevertheless, course topics

⁹⁸ No courses for the Black Sea were organised in 2017; two separate courses for Bulgaria and Romania were held in 2018 and 2019, and one course for both Bulgaria and Romania took place in 2020 and 2021.

overall have remained broadly consistent across the years, except for courses organised by EFCA at the request of Member States.

9.3 Effectiveness

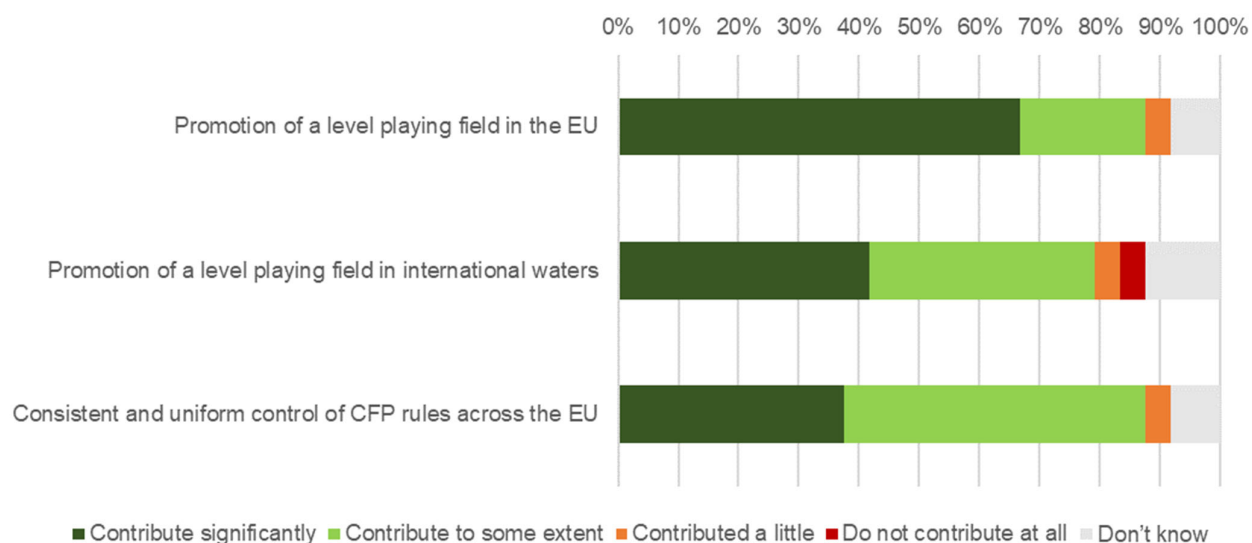
9.3.1 Implementation of the training programme

Although it is complex to establish the exact contribution of EFCA's training programme to changes in the level of compliance with the CFP, feedback from inspectors, EFCA internal stakeholders, and representatives of the European Commission indicates the training programme as one of the cornerstones of EFCA's activities. For an Administrative Board member, the training programme had quickly become one of EFCA's "flagship projects".

Several interviewees, including Union inspectors, stressed that EFCA's training programme, especially within the context of JDPs, is essential to ensure that inspectors from different Member States have a common understanding of the legislation and can therefore carry out joint control and inspection activities. EFCA's in-depth knowledge of the legislation, along with the technical know-how of control and inspection procedures, were considered the main factors driving the successful implementation of the training programme.

These findings appear to be corroborated by the results from the stakeholder survey, as shown in Figure 113. There was a clear consensus among stakeholders that the training for Union inspectors actively contributes to the promotion of a level playing field in the EU. Stakeholders also believed (albeit less strongly) that the training programme for Union inspectors was able to contribute to a level playing field in international waters and that it fostered consistent controls based on CFP rules across the EU.

Figure 113: Do you think the training of Union inspectors contributes to the following? Please note: by 'establishing a level playing field' in the EU and with third countries, we mean that fisheries control rules are interpreted and applied in a consistent way across the EU and third countries. (All stakeholders that were involved in training)



Base: 24

Table 5 shows a breakdown of the views illustrated in Figure 113 according to the respondents' role in the training of Union inspectors. All respondent groups (those involved in training preparation, trainers, and training participants) seem to have overall similar views with regard to the training programme.

Table 5: Do you think the training of Union inspectors contributes to the following? Please note: by 'establishing a level playing field' in the EU and with third countries, we mean that fisheries control rules are interpreted and applied in a consistent way across the EU and third countries. (All stakeholders that were involved in training)

		Promotion of a level playing field in the EU	Promotion of a level playing field in international waters	Consistent and uniform control of CFP rules across the EU
Involved in designing / planning training (e.g. preparation and updating of materials) Base: 6	Contribute significantly	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	3 (50%)
	Contribute to some extent	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	3 (50%)
	Contributed a little	-	-	-
	Do not contribute at all	-	-	-
	Don't know	-	-	-
Trainer Base: 3	Contribute significantly	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	1 (33%)
	Contribute to some extent	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)
	Contributed a little	-	-	-
	Do not contribute at all	-	-	-
	Don't know	-	-	-
Training participant / e-learning platform user Base: 15	Contribute significantly	11 (73%)	6 (40%)	5 (33%)
	Contribute to some extent	1 (7%)	4 (27%)	7 (47%)
	Contributed a little	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
	Do not contribute at all	-	1 (7%)	-
	Don't know	2 (13%)	3 (20%)	2 (13%)

9.3.2 Content of the training programme

Overall, information gleaned from different stakeholders suggests that the training of Union inspectors contributed to the harmonisation of control practices also through the exchange of best practices between Union inspectors and EFCA staff during the course of training sessions and workshops. According to one inspector, the training received from EFCA gave them the confidence to be applying the CFP correctly and consistently.

"After the training, I felt I had a much greater understanding of the EU legislation, and I was able to apply correctly the control procedures. [...] Overall, it gave me confidence. [The training] is followed by JDP experience, so that one can immediately put everything [they learnt] into practice." (National authority official)

The survey results also indicate that training participants were able to develop a variety of job-related practical skills as a result of their participation in the training, as illustrated in Figure 114. These

encompassed a variety of skills, from knowledge of control methodologies, to more general control and inspection procedures. Furthermore, almost half of the participants stated that they had trained other colleagues based on the training they received from EFCA.

Figure 114: Have you applied what you learnt in the EFCA training(s) in your work at all? Please select all that apply.



Base: 31

The inclusion of practical exercises and moments where participants were able to exchange views with colleagues during the training was indicated by several participants and trainers as one of the unique aspects that made the training successful. In particular, exercises on EFCA's chartered vessel or on fishing vessels during training sessions in Member States were considered as an important part of the training. However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced a sudden shift from in-person training to online training, and thus practical exercises were suspended. There was consensus among interviewees that EFCA made considerable efforts to render the training interactive despite being online (for example, by including case studies and audience interaction tools). Nevertheless, the lack of practical course components and the limited opportunities for interaction with other course participants might explain, at least in part, the declining satisfaction rate with the training courses shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Training satisfaction rate (percentage of 'very good' and 'good') from course assessment forms

	2019	2020	2021
Satisfaction rate	98%	93%	89%

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EFCA's Annual Reports 2019-2021.

Note: Data prior to 2019 not available.

Similar feedback around the need for more interaction was expressed by some e-learning platform users. One interviewee noted that in their Member State only fisheries inspectors that have been working for at least two years as national inspectors can be nominated Union inspectors. When they became Union inspector and used the platform, they had the impression that most of the content was basic,

albeit of high quality, because it was already known to them given their experience as a national inspector.

Although EFCA had to adapt its training to the circumstances of the pandemic, stakeholders who had been involved in training activities for several years noted a clear improvement in the quality and depth of the training programme, which made it possible to cover comprehensively all aspects of JDP control and inspection procedures. Other stakeholders noted that the training programme had achieved a good balance between theoretical elements and more practical exercises, making it relevant to the day-to-day activity of Union inspectors.

"EFCA has improved a lot their way of making presentations. Training sessions are more practical, and focus a lot on how to apply legislation in practice with concrete examples." (National authority official)

Positive feedback also emerges from an overall assessment of the training provided by survey respondents, as illustrated in Figure 115. An overwhelming majority of respondents believed that the training was worth their time, and that it was engaging, relevant, and up-to-date with the latest technical developments in the field.

Figure 115: Thinking about the training you participated in, do you think it was...



Base: 31

9.3.3 Limitations of the training programme

Some interviewees recognised that EFCA had consolidated its way of preparing and delivering the training of Union inspectors and therefore suggested that the Agency could now seek to cover additional aspects of control in its training programme. For example, interviewees mentioned that EFCA's training could start covering areas such as new technologies, in particular CCTV systems for the monitoring of compliance with the landing obligation, and on land-based controls and inspections (e.g. weighing practices when vessels are in port).

Further to this, it was pointed out that in-person training (and virtual training sessions during the pandemic) is often JDP-specific. Whilst it was recognised that this is necessary to ensure harmonisation across the Member States that cooperate within the context of the JDPs, it was also felt by some that such an approach to training could undermine uniformity at EU level. In fact, it was explained that, over the years, JDPs have evolved, and differences on key concepts, such as the implementation of the landing obligation, have started to emerge. It was thus argued that, because the training courses are JDP-specific, such divergence could be somewhat amplified by the training programme.

Comments also pointed at different levels of engagement with the training programme as a potential factor undermining the effectiveness of the training – although this is often independent of EFCA's efforts.

"The issue is not EFCA's ability to deliver the training. At times, there appears to be some 'apathy' from the Member States. Participants are the same for many events, and I get the impression that Member States are not always offering the training to the right participants, i.e. the inspectors themselves." (EFCA staff member)

Varying levels of engagement from Member States might in fact undermine the effectiveness of the training programme. Figure 112 already shows differences across sea basins in the use of EFCA training resources. Feedback from stakeholders representing some Member States indicated that the e-learning platform is not always actively promoted among officials – for example, a Union inspector only heard about it because a colleague informally recommended it, and thus decided to try it out.

9.3.4 Contribution of the training of Union inspectors to the harmonisation of inspections across the EU

To assess the contribution of EFCA to increasing the level of compliance with the rules set under the CFP, we built a contribution analysis (CA) framework (for more detail on this framework, see Annex 5). This case study evaluates hypothesis 4, as set out in the CA framework:

- H4: The training for Union inspectors contributes to harmonising the way inspections are conducted across Member States, hence levelling the playing field and reducing the likelihood that fishers commit infringements against CFP.

Overall, the findings from this case study confirm the hypothesis that the training programme for Union inspectors is effective at fostering a harmonised approach to inspections, and thus make the playing field more level whilst reducing the likelihood of infringements.

As explained in the previous sections, participants who took part in the interviews and responded to the survey were broadly in agreement about the fact that the training was useful. During interviews, they confirmed that they had acquired specific knowledge and skills that they applied in their day-to-day job.

There was a general sense among participants (but, more generally, also among other stakeholders familiar with the training) that the training programme enhances the level playing field across the EU, which is especially clear in the survey results (Figure 113).

National officials tend to attend multiple training sessions or workshops more than once during their career, and satisfaction rates are consistently high, although there are indications that Member States might not always promote the programme effectively.

Lastly, the only test that might refute the hypothesis is around whether other training programmes, not delivered by EFCA, contribute more to the level playing field. As feedback from in-depth consultations and the survey (Figure 118) show, there is no indication that other training programmes contribute more than EFCA's training to the establishment of a level playing field.

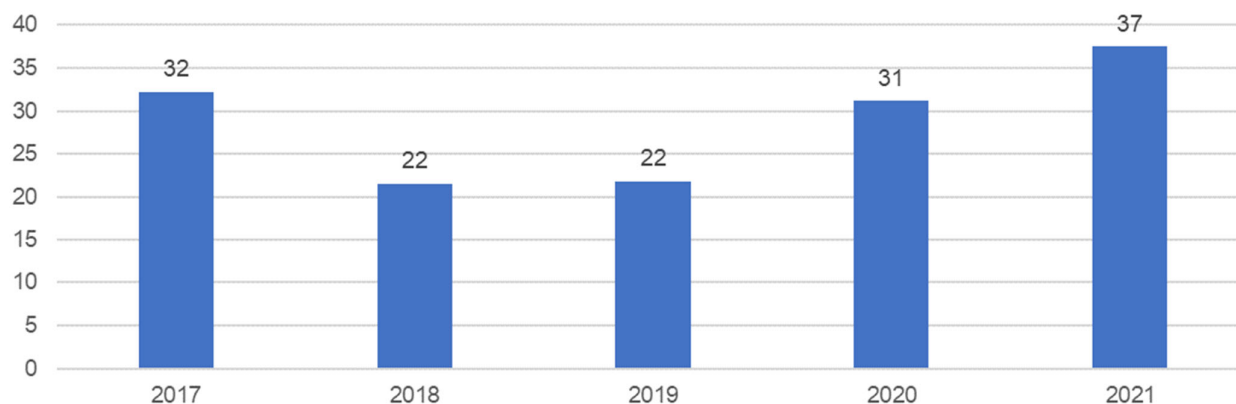
9.4 Efficiency

There was broad consensus among interviewees that resources for training activities within EFCA are sufficient, although more investment might enable EFCA to make more frequent updates to the training materials, benefit from better IT support, and implement more tailored follow-up for training participants.

According to some interviewees that took part in ‘training the trainer’ courses, there are clear advantages that stem from EFCA’s approach to training. Some training participants explained that, after attending EFCA courses, they were able to organise courses for their colleagues using the materials and tools made available by EFCA. In one Member State, a Ministry official reported that, after taking part in ‘training the trainers’ sessions, they went on to deliver training on fisheries control not just to colleagues in his same department, but also to officials in the coast guard and the police who are also involved in fisheries control. This therefore suggests that the training programme exploits a ‘multiplier effect’, which allows EFCA to train only a relatively small number of Union inspectors that can then train other colleagues in their Member States, with clear cost-savings. Cost-savings also extend to Member States’ authorities, because they can use the e-learning platform for scheduling courses and sharing course materials, and can often receive EFCA’s direct support if staff that speaks the national language is available, as pointed out by some interviewees.

Furthermore, the shift to online training courses was fortuitous in the sense that it allowed EFCA to further expand their reach, as shown by the increase in the average number of course participants in the years of the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 116). This is likely to have reduced the cost per capita of the training.

Figure 116: Average number of participants per course



Source: Authors' elaboration based on EFCA's Annual Reports 2017-2021.

9.5 Relevance

There was broad consensus that the training responds to Member States' different training needs and is up-to-date with the legislation. Whilst stressing that the training programme for Union inspectors is comprehensive, some interviewees were appreciative of EFCA's efforts to provide tailored training sessions for Union inspectors based on Member States' requests, and to organise follow-up meetings or workshops to further explain technical topics if the need arose.

"If a Member State requests training on a specific topic, EFCA will do its best to accommodate [the request]."
(Administrative Board member)

Alongside the training programme, a number of stakeholders indicated how the e-learning platform had made it possible to provide additional support for learners; in at least one Member State, the use of the e-learning platform is now a requirement for Union inspectors.

The translation of the e-learning platform materials (completed in 2019⁹⁹) was mentioned by a number of national inspectors and by EFCA staff as an important aspect that allowed EFCA's training to have a wider impact. Although the study materials have been translated, EFCA is not able to offer courses in all Member States in their national language, which might limit uptake. However, the primary objective of EFCA's training programme is to train a limited number of national inspectors that can then train other national colleagues, rather than providing training courses directly to all Union inspectors in all Member States (and this seems to be confirmed by the fact that a large proportion of course participants goes on to train other colleagues, as illustrated in Figure 114)

9.6 Coherence

The training programme for Union inspectors focuses entirely on the application of EU legislation (and other relevant legislation for international JDPs). Therefore, it is designed in such a way to ensure that it is fully compatible, but not overlapping, with any form of national training for fisheries inspectors.

Union inspectors normally undergo formal national training, including examinations. This means that the training for Union inspectors, as well as the use of the e-learning platform, are intended to deepen inspectors' knowledge and interpretation of specific aspects of the legislation, particularly with regard to activity in the context of JDPs. For this reason, several interviewees were of the opinion that the EFCA training programme is fully complementary to their national training.

In addition, according to interviewees, duplication with other forms of training is generally avoided because EFCA is able to provide training materials and presentations that are tailored to the specific needs of Member States. Nevertheless, some interviewees were of the view that minimal overlapping may occur when topics covered in the more general EFCA trainings are also relevant in the national context.

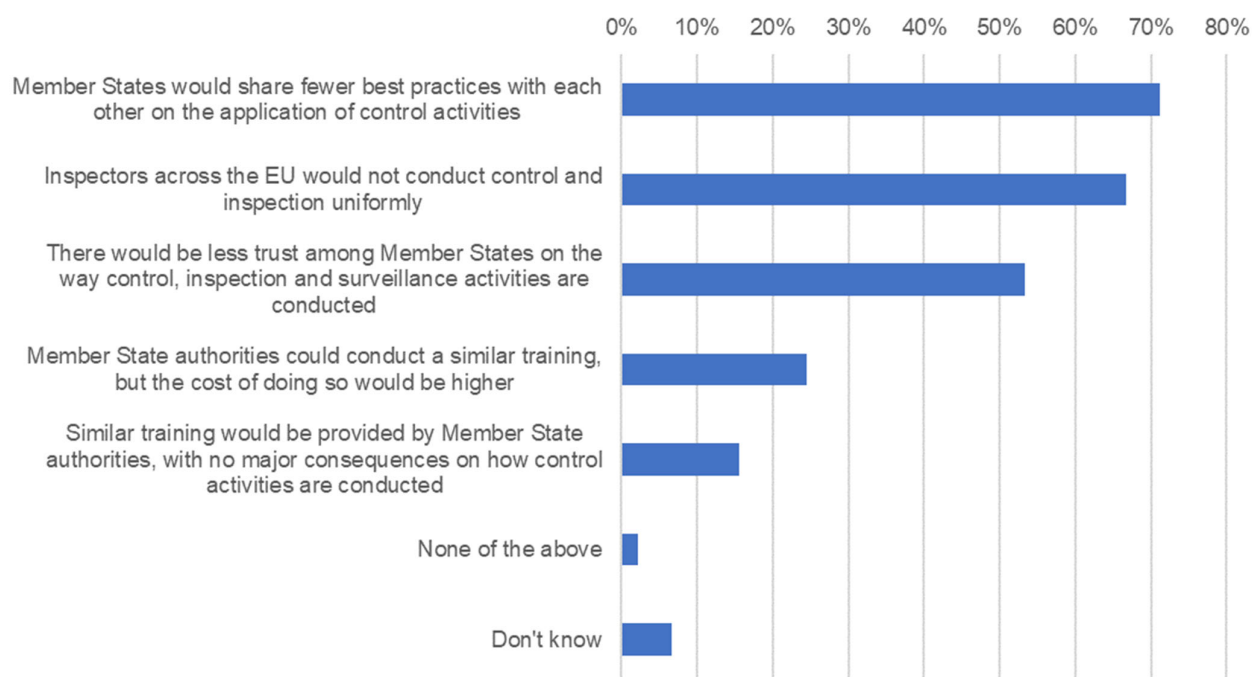
9.7 EU added value

A number of interviewees agreed that, in the absence of an EFCA training programme for Union inspectors, Member States would struggle to achieve actual harmonisation in controls and inspections, although alternatives to the training programme would be found somehow.

Survey respondents were asked what the likely consequences would be if EFCA did not conduct any training or capacity building at all. The results are illustrated in Figure 117. There was strong consensus that, in the absence of EFCA's training programme or capacity building activities, Member States would share best practices on control less, and disparities could emerge in the way inspection and control activities are carried out across the EU. More than half of respondents also suggested that, without the training and capacity building programme, there would be less trust among Member States on the way control activities are carried out.

⁹⁹ European Fisheries Control Agency, 2018. Annual Report 2018, page 53, available at: <https://www.efca.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EFCA%20Annual%20Report%20for%20year%202018.pdf> (last accessed: 20 July 2022).

Figure 117: If EFCA did not conduct any training or capacity building activities at all, which of these situations do you think would be the most likely? Please select up to three statements.



Base: 45

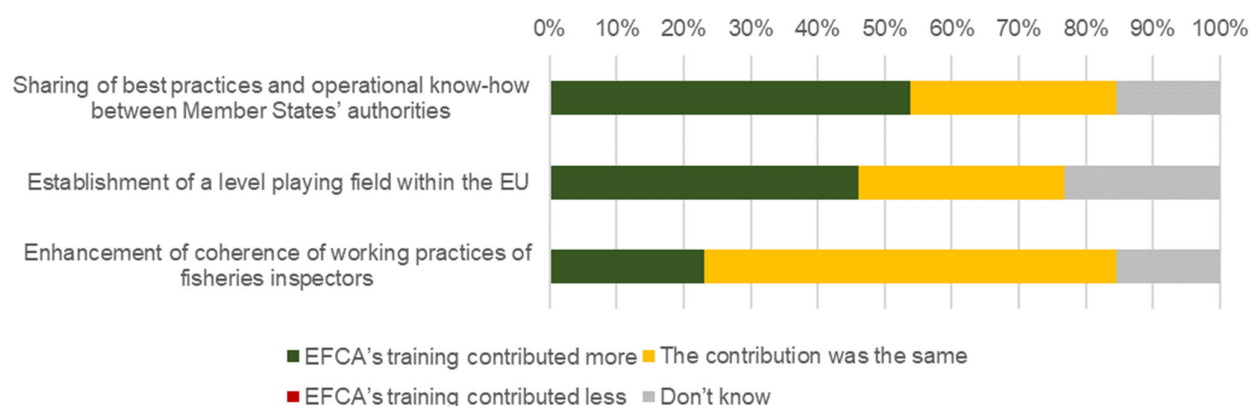
As a Union inspector pointed out, Member States would train their own inspectors based on their national understanding of the EU rules, which might not always be the correct interpretation. Another inspector with experience as a trainer was adamant about the fact that Member States would struggle to provide a harmonised training, because they would not have a common background in relation to the interpretation of the CFP rules. In addition, it was felt that EFCA's added value lays in the solid experience of its staff involved in delivering training and preparing training materials; therefore, the value added of the training programme for Union inspector has grown over time.

The only drawback of the success of the training programme, according to a stakeholder, was that its popularity could overshadow other equally important activities undertaken by the Agency.

"The only word of caution is that there is always a risk that an activity that is very important or popular becomes too much of a flagship [activity] of the organisation, and then you forget about the other activities. [...] I would remain careful not to promote it as the main (or even only) EFCA activity." (Administrative Board member)

Lastly, survey respondents that had participated in other training programmes were asked to compare those to EFCA's training. Overall, EFCA's training was either deemed more impactful or to have at least the same level of impact as other training programmes (e.g. national ones). This is shown in Figure 118.

Figure 118: Comparing the training you received from EFCA to this other training, how much do you think EFCA's training contributed to these objectives?



Base: 13

9.8 Conclusions

Over the years, the Union training programme has become one of the flagship activities implemented by EFCA. By and large, feedback on the programme is positive, and Union inspectors that have participated in the training recognised the importance that the training activities had in their day-to-day work, and valued the indirect benefits of the training programme, such as the possibility to exchange views and advice with colleagues from other Member States when taking part in in-person training sessions. The training was also deemed highly relevant because EFCA endeavoured to provide specific training tailored to Member States' requests.

The e-learning platform appears to have expanded its user base considerably, especially during 2020 and 2021. During the same period, EFCA demonstrated its ability to quickly adapt to the pandemic and, instead of suspending all training sessions, it was able to shift to on-line sessions, and this was probably due, at least in part, to its longstanding experience with using IT tools for its activities.

The training was also seen as complementary to national training courses, and the underlying training model (i.e. 'training the trainers') makes the training cost-effective.

The forced shift towards online modes of delivery of the training might turn into a useful opportunity for the future of EFCA's training programme. Although it may have also contributed to a very small decrease in the overall levels of participant satisfaction (Table 6), organising training sessions online and promoting the use of the e-learning platform have shown that EFCA can reduce costs by cutting down on travel expenses whilst expanding its audience. The only shortcomings of the current format might be related to the promotion of the e-learning platform and the selection of training participants, over which EFCA has relatively little control.

Thus, in the future, EFCA could continue to pursue a hybrid approach to training, by combining virtual and in-person training sessions, with practical exercises, which were deemed important but were not implemented due to COVID-19. The combination of online and real-life training could allow to expand the reach of the Union training programme whilst ensuring that the training is financially sustainable.

10 Annex 4: Evaluation Question Matrix

Table 7: Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM)

EQ	Criterion	Evaluation Question	Interpretation of the Q	Hypotheses to test	Indicators	Data sources	Analytical methods
1	Effectiveness	How successful is EFCA in reaching the expected objectives and results?	The Single Programming Document combines EFCA’s Multi-Annual Work Programme 2022-2026 and the Annual Work Programme 2022. We interpret the objectives in the EQ are aligned to the four areas of intervention in the	See underlying hypotheses in the evaluation sub-questions	See underlying indicators in the evaluation sub•questions	As per data sources in sub-questions	As per methods in sub-questions
1.1	Effectiveness	... in coordinating fisheries control, inspection and surveillance activities among MS?	This question is intended to explore EFCA’s role as facilitator of coordination of operational initiatives among EU Member States. In particular, the question will assess EFCA’s effectiveness in relation to JDPs and to the development and improvement of common procedures, methodologies, and best practices for control and inspection activities.	EFCA's coordination work ensures that there is increasing uniformity in control and inspection activities among Member States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views from participants in coordination activities on the effectiveness of EFCA's support• Views from all stakeholders on the extent to which EFCA's work increases uniformity in control and inspection activities• Evidence of effectiveness of coordination in monitoring information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Desk research (Monitoring and audit reports, European Commission CFP reports, Inspection and control data, Business plans, JDP assessment reports)•In-depth interviews•Stakeholder survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Descriptive analysis of inspection and control data•Case study on JDP's risk assessment•Qualitative assessment based upon stakeholder views and statistical data
				JDPs and operational plans are effective tools to coordinate control activities among MS operating within a specific region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comparative analysis of inspection activities conducted by MS within a given JDP• MS national authorities, officials and fishing industry's views on the extent to which JDPs are effective to coordinate activities• KPI: Percentage of control and inspection means deployed in accordance with the JDP schedule		
				The level of coordination varies depending on the infringement tackled: high in protecting certain areas, low in landing obligation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stateholders' views on level of coordination per type of infringement• Comparative analysis of inspection activities per type of infringement and MS• KPI: % of inspections on the two highest risk fleet segments		
1.2	Effectiveness	... in ensuring effective and harmonised application of Union inspection procedures?	This question will assess EFCA's role in improving common procedures, methodologies, and best practices for control and inspection activities and how it leads to implementation of harmonised control methods, procedures, and minimum inspection standards. EFCA’s activities for the creation of a pool of Union Inspectors and the accreditation programme for Union Inspectors will also be reviewed.	Training of Union inspectors contributes to achieving a level playing field in all Member States with regard to control and inspection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views of Union inspectors on the effectiveness of the training, and extent to which they use the learning acquired when conducting inspections• Views of Union inspectors on the extent to which other inspectors use the training and it contributes to a level playing field• KPI: % of users considering the training platform meets their expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-depth interviews of Union inspectors• Stakeholder survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case study on training for Union inspectors• Analysis of training and capacity building activities (evaluation reports, etc.)
				EFCA's guidance on inspection procedures is used by MS in their operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proportion of MS and Union officials who report using EFCA's guidance• KPI: Number of guidelines/ methodologies in JDP decision / published in EFCA Website	Survey of stakeholders	
				Training for Member States' trainers ensures that a common standard of inspections and controls is applied across all Member States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views of attendants on the effectiveness of the training received• Survey responses on extent to which trainers used the learning acquired to teach other officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey of stakeholders• Internal documentation on attendance and satisfaction with the training	
				Coordination and compliance among Member States is enhanced, although differences remain due to the role of Member States with regard to inspections and controls in national waters, which depends on national strategies and budgetary allocations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey responses on the role of Member States' budget allocations and adoption of methodologies• Stakeholders' views on the extent to which differences between Member States exist with regard to their approach to inspection and controls• Analysis of inspection and control activities and infringements among MS within the same region/area (i.e. to assess whether activity is similar among MS within a given area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stakeholder survey- Statistical data- In depth interviews	

EQ	Criterion	Evaluation Question	Interpretation of the Q	Hypotheses to test	Indicators	Data sources	Analytical methods
1.3	Effectiveness	... in assisting the EU in its international dimension?	The international dimension of EFCA activities is regulated by Article 30 of the CFP basic regulation and EFCA Founding Regulation, and is further informed by the Working Arrangements on EFCA’s international activities with the European Commission’s DG MARE. With this legal framework in mind, this question will review evidence around the effectiveness of EFCA’s activities, and in particular in RFMOs where there is a Joint International Inspection Scheme in force, and in support of control in third countries. This question thus requires an assessment of the effectiveness of activities such as operational coordination structures and events, capacity	Cooperation activities with RFMOs and third countries are effective at levelling the playing field in fishing control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views of stakeholders involved in international operations on the extent to which activities with RFMOs and third countries help levelling the playing field• Survey responses on the extent to which international projects with third countries are useful and impactful• KPI: % of RFMOs and third countries EFCA assisted on Commission requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Monitoring and audit reports•Administrative Board meeting minutes•Business plans•In-depth interviews•Stakeholder survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualitative analysis based on stakeholders' views on the effectiveness of these activities• Outcome mapping of impacts of international activities
				Pilot projects with third countries demonstrate new effective ways of cooperating, sharing resources and controlling fishing activity in international and coastal waters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of impacts of pilot projects with third countries in relation to cooperation, resource sharing, and controls		
				New coordination projects have been implemented in North Atlantic, and these are effective at tackling issues arising from Brexit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views of stakeholders involved in international projects in the North Atlantic on the extent to which these projects help to address issues arising from Brexit		
1.4	Effectiveness	... in supporting coast guard functions conducted by MS, and cooperating with Frontex and EMSA Agencies to this end?	In 2016, EFCA’s Founding Regulation was amended to include additional responsibilities for EFCA with regard to its participation in coast guard functions in the EU. To this end, the evaluation question will assess EFCA’s contribution to the Coast Guard initiative, and the characteristics of its cooperation practices with EMSA and Frontex. In particular, this question will look at practical sharing of information, capacity building, sharing of assets and other capabilities with Member States and other agencies involved in multi-purpose operations, as well as the activities put in place to promote and facilitate the use of technologies.	EFCA has developed working practices and coordination mechanisms that allow it to cooperate effectively with EMSA and Frontex, and works effectively along with these agencies in the context of the Coast Guard initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views from EMSA and Frontex on the effectiveness of EFCA's inputs to the Coast Guard initiative• Views from EFCA staff on the effectiveness of this cooperation• KPI: Percentage of EFCA chartered means operational days carried out in multipurpose operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Monitoring and audit reports•European Commission’s reports on the EU Coast Guard initiative•Administrative Board meeting minutes•Business plans•In-depth interviews•Stakeholder survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualitative analysis based on stakeholders' views on the effectiveness of cooperation activities• Outcomes harvesting approach to map the benefits of this cooperation
				EFCA benefits from sharing technologies deployed by other agencies for the purpose of fisheries control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views from EFCA and DG MARE on the benefits from sharing technologies• Views from DG MARE, EMSA, Frontex and MS's coast guard authorities on the extent to which EFCA makes the most of available technologies• KPI: Satisfaction rate of users of the CG portal [if useful]		
				EFCA supports other agencies by sharing technologies, know-how, and best practices on operations at sea and onshore.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Views from those participating in coast guard operations on the support provided by EFCA		
2	Effectiveness	What is EFCA’s impact on achievement of a high level of compliance with rules made under the CFP?	Compliance levels depend, primarily, on: (a) Likelihood of the vessel/fishing industry being inspected; (b) enforcement measures in place; (c) the extent to which other vessels commit infringements (as it affects the level playing field); and (d) culture and values. EFCA's activities contribute to: (a) by increasing the effectiveness of control activities through, for instance, risk assessments that identify high-risk vessels/fleet or CCTV monitoring; (b) through cooperation activities and sharing of information, which allow all vessels to operate under the same rules within a certain location; (c) through communication and awareness raising activities. Under this question, we will assess the effectiveness of these three activities in improving compliance with CFP, per type of infringement/obligation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk assessments in the context of JDPs effectively identify high-risk vessels, hence increasing the likelihood that controls detect any infringement committed and disincentivising them.• Joint Deployment Plans are implemented effectively, which improves coordination in control and surveillance among MS, and compliance with CFP• EFCA activities in the field of the landing obligation contribute to harmonising inspections across MS, improving the level playing field for EU fisheries and enhancing compliance with the LO• The training for Union Inspectors contributes to harmonising the way inspections are conducted across MS, hence increasing the level playing field and reducing the likelihood that fishers commit infringements against CFP• EFCA activities contribute to establishing a culture of compliance (through activities that level the playing field and communication and awareness raising activities).	<i>This question will be assessed via Contribution Analysis. For more information on indicators and methodology, see chapter 3.3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-depth interviews• Stakeholder survey• EC report on implementation of the fisheries control regulation 2015-2019• EFCA evaluations of compliance with the landing obligation in certain fisheries• Statistical data on inspections, infringements, ratio between them, other relevant indicators, per JDP• JDP reports• Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribution Analysis• Statistical analysis of infringement data• Case studies (all)• Application of literature/studies that study the relationship between likelihood of infringements being detected and level of compliance in the fishing industry
3	Effectiveness	To what extent are the current activities carried out by EFCA appropriate for achieving its objectives?	We interpret this question as a constructive critique of the alignment between the activities conducted by EFCA and the objectives it pursues, with a view to provide an assessment of any gaps (e.g. objectives that the Agency is not addressing sufficiently in its operations), and recommendations for changes or re-balancing of existing activities, if any.	The activities undertaken by EFCA are fully aligned with the objectives sought.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholders' views on the appropriateness of EFCA's objectives and activities- Expert judgement of EFCA's Intervention Logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EFCA work programmes and annual reports• EFCA monitoring data• Survey of & interviews with EFCA stakeholders• Regulations establishing EFCA's role and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of EFCA's Intervention Logic and work plans against its founding regulation and against responsibilities established in other regulations (e.g. fisheries controls, landing obligation, etc.)
				All objectives are being addressed by the activities, and the resources are used in a proportionate manner (i.e. the resources are aligned with the importance or weight given to the EFCA objectives in the Founding Regulation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statistical analysis of budgetary distribution across units and high-level objectives		
				There are some stakeholders who consider international activities are not as necessary as operations in EU waters, and that they might be less effective in terms of promoting compliance (e.g. in relation to IUU fishing); however, the activities align with EFCA's legal obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stakeholders' views on international operations (as per EQ 1.3) and analysis of EFCA's responsibilities as per regulation		

EQ	Criterion	Evaluation Question	Interpretation of the Q	Hypotheses to test	Indicators	Data sources	Analytical methods
4	Efficiency	To what extent is EFCA cost-effective (i.e. are human and other resources appropriate to fulfil efficiently and effectively EFCA's objectives and activities)?	This question seeks to analyse the overall cost-effectiveness of EFCA's management and activities and ICT tools. This question shall thus focus on the following elements: 1) Aspects related to resourcing (and, in particular, staff resources). We understand that the Agency is eager to learn how to improve its cost-effectiveness in view of the increased role it will have to play in the future (linked to Brexit, the EU Green Deal, and the potential new control regulation). This question will aim to provide some lessons learned that will help the Agency prioritise its activities in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distribution of human and financial resources to different activities is proportionate to their significance and results • The budget increase that took place in 2017 was distributed proportionally across objectives, based on the priorities identified by the Administrative Board. However, increasing resources have been devoted to specific areas (e.g. Brexit preparations and adjustments). • EFCA's efforts for efficiency gains (through simplification, scalability and streamlining, organisational adaptations, digitalisation, synergies with other agencies, etc.) have resulted in tangible savings. • Inefficiencies, duplications, overlaps or ambiguities of tasks between units or individuals are minimised. • New activities implemented by the Agency (e.g. REM pilots) improve its overall cost-effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders' views on the appropriateness of EFCA's budget allocations to objectives and activities, in particular in light of future trends in the fishing industry and geo-political developments (Brexit, North Sea) • Statistical analysis of budgetary distribution across units and high-level objectives • KPI: Execution payment appropriations • KPI: Percentage of planned procurements launched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFCA annual reports and accounts • Other relevant internal or public documents on budget allocation and execution, working methods (incl. ECA audits) • Survey of & interviews with EFCA stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-effectiveness analysis of activities analysed in case-studies • Light touch cost-effectiveness analysis of other activities
			2) EFCA IT systems for exchange of data on fisheries activities and data on control and inspection of fisheries activities (i.e. VMS, ERS, EIR ACTREP, JADE, EFCA IMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFCA has adopted the latest data standards and formats for exchanging data on control and inspection activities. • EFCA data standards are compatible with Member States' systems. • EFCA data exchange system allows for quick and seamless transfer of data, which reduces to a minimum the administrative burden placed on Member States' authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders' views on the functioning of EFCA's IT systems, their user-friendliness, and their compatibility and/or integration with national and legacy systems still in use. • KPI: Availability rate for all ICT systems • KPI: IT security incidents reported to the Information Security Officer and registered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFCA annual reports • EFCA documentation and reports on IT systems and data standards • Interviews with EFCA stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of data standards used • Qualitative analysis of interoperability and data standards based on desk research and stakeholder views
			3) EFCA IT system for information exchange (FISHNET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FISHNET streamlines communication and coordination between Member States and EFCA, optimising the use of resources Add something for point 3, FISHNET • FISHNET is used effectively by all the stakeholders involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder views in interviews and survey on the functionalities of FISHNET • KPI: User evaluations of FISHNET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFCA documentation and reports FISHNET • EFCA user satisfaction surveys • Interviews with FISHNET users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistics of FISHNET user ratings • Qualitative analysis of FISHNET performance and user-friendliness based on desk research and stakeholder views
			4) New technologies used for control of fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFCA uses new technologies available (e.g. satellite imagery) for fisheries control in an efficient way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of cases in which EFCA has used new technologies • Research conducted by EFCA on the possibilities offered by new technologies in the field of fisheries control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFCA annual reports • Interviews with EFCA stakeholders and EMSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative assessment
5	Efficiency	To what extent are EFCA's internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the agency adequate for ensuring efficient performance while minimising its administrative burden?	This question will examine EFCA's internal provisions for programming, monitoring, and reporting, with a particular focus on the development, application, and upgrade of KPIs to evaluate the agency's performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFCA staff consider the administrative burden for programming and reporting not excessive • Administrative and Advisory Board members are satisfied with the content and usefulness of SPDs, reports, monitoring & evaluation mechanisms • EFCA's organisational effectiveness and administrative burden for its staff are comparable to those of other EU Agencies • Good practices as regards programming, reporting, monitoring and evaluation are adhered to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders' views on the extent to which monitoring and reporting is proportionate to the transparency and accountability needs of EFCA • Administrative Board and Advisory Board's feedback on the extent to which the materials produced by the agency are suitable for the transparency and accountability needs of EFCA • Stakeholders' views on EFCA's the extent to which internal working practices are effective • KPI: Preparation, adoption, and notification of the SPD, Annual Report, Budget and the Accounts in due course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with EFCA staff, Administrative and Advisory Board members • EFCA work programmes and annual reports • EFCA monitoring data • Documentation on the performance of EFCA and other EU Agencies (incl. the 2020 ECA report), and on good administrative practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative assessment of EFCA's mechanisms based upon stakeholders' views and analysis of internal documentation
6	Efficiency	To what extent are EFCA's administrative and horizontal working practices efficiently supporting the operational activities of the Agency?	This question will entail a review of the administrative and horizontal working practices followed by EFCA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working practices and internal structures have evolved over the years to respond to the increasing scope of EFCA's activities and responsibilities. • Governance arrangement promote proactive participation of all the relevant stakeholders. • EFCA staff and key stakeholders consider the Agency's structure and division of labour between operational and other functions to be appropriate • The administrative and horizontal functions are well managed and coordinated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from those familiar with EFCA's internal organisation on the extent to which working practices have adapted to changes • Feedback from those familiar with EFCA's internal organisation on the extent to which internal structures promote stakeholder engagement and are based on effective management and coordination • Survey feedback from those familiar with EFCA's structures on the extent to which EFCA's internal organisation is effective • KPI: Number of Administrative Board meetings • KPI: Open remarks/recommendations from ECA and IAS [rated Very Important or Critical] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with EFCA staff, Administrative and Advisory Board members • EFCA annual reports and accounts • EFCA internal documents, e.g. results of staff satisfaction surveys, minutes of meetings concerning the structure, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative assessment of EFCA's structure and effectiveness of administrative and horizontal working practices, based upon feedback received from EFCA staff, administrative and advisory board, and analysis of internal documentation.

EQ	Criterion	Evaluation Question	Interpretation of the Q	Hypotheses to test	Indicators	Data sources	Analytical methods
7	Relevance	To what extent do the objectives set in EFCA’s Founding Regulation still correspond to the needs within the EU?	Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council requires Member States to ensure the effective control, inspection and enforcement of the rules of the common fisheries policy and to cooperate with each other and with third countries to that end. One of the objectives of EFCA according to its Founding Regulation is to organise the operational coordination of fisheries control and inspection activities by the Member States and to assist them to cooperate so as to comply with the rules of the CFP in order to ensure its effective and uniform application. This question will assess whether there is still a problem that needs to be addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Although there has been progress towards establishing a level playing field in control and inspection activities among MS, a perfect level playing field has not been achieved yet.• There is still need for EFCA's role in coordination of control activities among MS.• Shifts in EU and/or MS political priorities, and/or economic, social or environmental circumstances have altered the key needs of stakeholders (e.g. needs that are not included in the Founding Regulation, such as needs in relation to Brexit, RFMOs, or the EU Green Deal).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback from interviewees familiar with EU-level and MS-level political, economic, social, and environmental priorities on the extent to which EFCA's objectives still reflect broader needs• Interviewees' feedback on EFCA's legal competence to addressing the needs in the sector of fisheries• Alignment between needs expressed by EFCA’s stakeholders in relation to EFCA’s activity, and the competences established in the Founding Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•European Commission policy papers and staff working documents•Survey of & interviews with EFCA stakeholders•Documents on key needs and priorities for the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Problem analysis•Qualitative assessment of alignment between needs and activities
8	Relevance	How well has EFCA been reacting to the technological, scientific and socio-economic changes (e.g. stemming from the digital transition, the European Green Deal and the Covid-19 pandemic) in the implementation of its mandate?	This question will assess how well EFCA anticipates and/or reacts to changings in the context (e.g. Brexit, Covid-19) and shifts in political priorities (e.g. the EU Green Deal). It will assess EFCA's response to this type of events/circumstances, how fast it reacts, and how appropriate the responses or mechanisms put in place are to deal with these changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•EFCA’s multiannual work programmes demonstrate an identification of and adaptation to key contextual changes•EFCA’s strategic multiannual objectives and related priorities have evolved in line with new and emerging challenges•EFCA was able to implement and, where necessary, adapt its 2020 and 2021 work programmes in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic• Delays in the adoption of the UN/FLUX standard have hindered technological progress in certain areas (e.g. international cooperation).• EFCA reacted quickly to Brexit (e.g. by anticipating potential issues in fisheries and looking for solutions)• EFCA has put in place a strategy/roadmap to support the EU Green Deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback from interviewees familiar with EU-level and MS-level political, economic, social, and environmental priorities on the extent to which EFCA has adapted to changing circumstances• Survey responses on questions related to EFCA's ability to adapt to current and future challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•EFCA work programmes and annual reports•Administrative and Advisory Board meeting documents•Interviews with EFCA stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Qualitative assessment based on desk research and interviews of EFCA staff, DG MARE, and Advisory Board•Case study on data and information systems
9	Coherence	To what extent are the inter-agency cooperation mechanisms among EFCA, EMSA and Frontex coherent with the Coast Guard Functions objectives / tasks provided by Article 8 of EFCA’s Founding Regulation?	This question will review the way inter-agency cooperation with EMSA and Frontex works as part of the Coast Guard initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•The actual activities and mechanisms on coast guard cooperation match those in Art. 8.1. (a)-(e)•The working arrangement (cp. Art 8.2.) and practical handbook (cp. Art. 8.3) were developed and provide a solid basis for EFCA’s coast guard functions• The cooperation mechanisms are coherent and provide the best use of EU resources. EFCA regularly receives information from coast guard bodies and uses it in its operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder feedback from those involved in coast guard functions on the extent to which the involvement of EFCA in coast guard operations has been effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•EFCA work programmes and annual reports•Tripartite Working Arrangement and other documents on EFCA’s coast guard functions•Interviews with EFCA, EMSA and Frontex	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Qualitative assessment based on desk research and interviews of EU Agencies
10	Coherence	To what extent are EFCA activities coherent with wider EU policy?	This question will analyse the extent to which EFCA activities are aligned to EU policy, mainly: EU Green Deal, biodiversity and conservation policies, Farm to Fork.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•EFCA's activities are critical to the achievement of the objectives of the CFP.•EFCA's activities promote high conservation standards within the EU fishing industry and ensure that marine resources are preserved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder feedback on the level of synergy between EFCA's activities and objectives and broader EU policies• Survey questions on synergies and frictions between EFCA's activities and other policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey of & interviews with EFCA stakeholders•EFCA annual reports•Literature / documentation on links between fisheries controls and other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Qualitative assessment based on desk research of EU policy, the evaluation team's expert knowledge, and interviews with EU level stakeholders
11	EU added value	What is the EU added value of EFCA, in particular as regards operational processes and role effects (e.g. harmonisation of inspection procedures, inspectors training... [list non exhaustive])?	This question seeks to establish if EFCA provide values added across a series of operational processes and activities, and whether the activities it carries out provide value added compared to what Member States could achieve without the support of EFCA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•EFCA’s role in planning, implementing and assessing the JDPs is a key enabler of their effectiveness•EFCA’s capacity building and other activities contribute to the identification and sharing of good practices between Member States•EFCA’s activities and materials generate economies of scale (i.e. cost savings compared with MS acting individually)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder feedback from those representing Member States on the extent to which EFCA's role allows for cost savings compared to Member States acting alone• Stakeholder feedback on the extent to which it would be possible to achieve the same results without EFCA's input	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey of & interviews with EFCA stakeholders•Evidence on the effectiveness of EFCA activities (see above)•Any further evidence EFCA can provide on synergy effects, dissemination of good practices, economies of scale, or other forms of added value above and beyond what MS would have been able to generate on their own	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Qualitative assessment based on analysis of activities conducted by the Agency, its cost-effectiveness, and stakeholders' views on EU added value
12	EU added value	What would be the most likely consequences of the termination of the Agency?	This question seeks to investigate the potential consequences stemming from the closure of EFCA’s operation in order to understand the impact that this could have on the application of the CFP and, more broadly, on the preservation of marine resources in the EU and third countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•JDPs would be likely to continue without EFCA’s input•The Commission could effectively meet the EU’s international obligations (incl. in the fight against IUU fishing activities) without EFCA support•Certain other core functions could be taken over by other national or EU authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder feedback on the extent to which it would be possible to achieve the same results without EFCA's input• Survey responses on the potential consequences of EFCA's termination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey of & interviews with EFCA stakeholders•Sources of information on if and how specific activities that are now in the remit of EFCA were delivered previously	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Critical assessment of the role played by EFCA and mapping of stakeholders who could deliver its functions

11 Annex 5: Contribution analysis framework

Contribution Analysis framework for Hypothesis 1

H1: Risk assessments in the context of JDPs effectively identify high-risk vessels, hence increasing the likelihood that controls detect any infringement committed and disincentivising them.				
Test	Source	Confirming / Refuting	Causal mechanism	Strength of evidence
MS consider that the risk assessment methodology provided by EFCA is effective at assessing and classifying risks	Interviews with national authorities	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Volume of voice
MS concerned by JDPs conduct national risk assessments following EFCA's methodology	Monitoring information and interviews with EFCA staff involved in risk assessment	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Authoritative source
MS provide to EFCA catch and landing data that is of good quality and is submitted on time	JDP assessment reports	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Authoritative source
Stakeholders (groups 1 and 2) agree that the regional risk assessments conducted by EFCA effectively identify the adequate level of risk by stocks, gear, fleet segment and time of the year, based on likelihood and potential impact	Interviews with groups 1 and 2	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice (divergent opinions will be weighted according to interviewees' expertise)
MS concerned by JDPs provide a list of medium, high and very high vessels, and they regularly update it	Monitoring information and interviews with EFCA staff involved in risk assessment	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Authoritative source
MS receive on time and in a user-friendly format the list of target vessels	Interviews with EFCA staff and national authorities	Confirming	Intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
MS implement control activities in line with the risks identified (i.e. targeting higher risk vessels, as per the list facilitated by EFCA)	Interviews with national authorities, JDP assessment reports	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
MS conduct additional risk assessments, not coordinated by EFCA or without using EFCA's resources	Interviews with national authorities	Refuting	Condition to other contribution	Volume of voice
MS consider their own risk assessments, conducted without EFCA's inputs, are more effective at identifying risks	Interviews with national authorities	Refuting	Other contribution	Volume of voice
MS target vessels that were not in the target list provided by EFCA, but that they have identified as high risk through other means (for the same species covered by JDP)	Interviews with national authorities	Refuting	Other contribution	Volume of voice
Group 3 stakeholders agree that being identified as medium, high or very high risk vessel incentivises those vessels to comply with CFP	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice

Contribution Analysis framework for Hypothesis 2

H2: Joint Deployment Plans are implemented effectively, which improves coordination in control and surveillance among MS, and compliance with CFP				
Test	Source	Confirming / Refuting	Causal mechanism	Strength of evidence
The implementation of JDPs is self-assessed as successful or satisfactory	JDP assessment reports	Confirming	Intended contribution	Consistent chronology
EFCA implements the recommendations set in JDP assessment reports	JDP assessment reports, interviews with groups 1 and 2	Confirming	Intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
EFCA effectively assists MS in the implementation of recommendations set in JDP assessment reports	JDP assessment reports, interviews with groups 1 and 2	Confirming	Intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
Member States engage in joint inspection and surveillance activities in the EU and international waters and on their territory where appropriate	Interviews with groups 1 and 2, monitoring data	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
EFCA provides the adequate IT tools and means for MS to transmit VMS, ERS and inspection activities data in a reliable manner, without data gaps or interruptions	Interviews with groups 1 and 2, monitoring data	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
All MS concerned by JDPs share their VMS, ERS, and the inspection and surveillance activity reports	Monitoring information (JDP assessment reports) and interviews with EFCA	Confirming	Intended contribution	Authoritative source
Identified delays or lack of data from VMS, ERS, etc. from MS or third countries are followed up by EFCA, and actions identified and implemented when necessary	JDP assessment reports, interviews with groups 1 and 2	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
National authorities consider that all MS have an equal picture of the fisheries and inspection effort at regional level.	Interviews with national authorities	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
MS exchange inspection and surveillance data bilaterally, without coordinating with EFCA	Interviews with national authorities	Refuting	Other contribution	Volume of voice
EFCA acts effectively upon suspected infringements reported by national authorities	Interviews with groups 1 and 2	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
MS deploy at least the volume of surveillance assets at sea and in the water that they committed to	JDP assessment reports and interviews with national authorities	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
MS exchange, as a minimum, the number of inspectors at sea and ashore that the committed to	JDP assessment reports and interviews with national authorities	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
Other external factors (e.g. MS own initiative) contributed to MS exchanging surveillance assets without EFCA's coordination / without the JDP context	Interviews with national authorities	Refuting	Other contribution	Volume of voice
Inspectors deployed on "Lundy Sentinel" agree that inspections were conducted in the most effective way (despite Covid)	Interviews with EFCA staff and MS inspectors	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Stakeholders (all groups) agree that special campaigns are conducted in the areas where the risk is highest	Interviews and online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Special campaigns are conducted effectively, with high cooperation among EFCA and MS	JDP assessment reports, interviews with groups 1 and 2	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
Stakeholders (all groups) agree that special campaigns increase the effectiveness of controls, and increase the likelihood of discovering infringements against the CFP	Interviews and online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice

Contribution Analysis framework for Hypothesis 3

H3: EFCA activities in the field of the landing obligation contribute to harmonising inspections across MS, improving the level playing field for EU fisheries and enhancing compliance with the LO				
Test	Source	Confirming / Refuting	Causal mechanism	Strength of evidence
Stakeholders (all groups) agree that EFCA activities contribute to improved compliance with the LO	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
National authorities report an increase of the level of sanctions applied to infringements against LO	Interviews with national authorities	Refuting	Other contribution	Volume of voice
MS follow the last haul observation procedures established by EFCA	Interviews with national authorities	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Volume of voice
MS report their Last Haul (LH) observations to EFCA for analysis	Monitoring information, interviews with EFCA staff and national authorities	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
EFCA estimates the level of compliance with the Landing Obligation using LH data provided by MS, and sets up action plans based on the results	Interviews with EFCA staff and monitoring information	Confirming	Intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
Participants of training in landing obligation report that training helped them to conduct control in a more effective and harmonised way	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Participants of training in landing obligation report that they have improved their knowledge in LO control procedures, but this was mainly due to other training/activities undertaken	Online survey	Refuting	Other contribution	Volume of voice
MS agree that EFCA contributes to LH observations being conducted in a harmonised way across MS	Interviews with national authorities	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Volume of voice
Group 3 stakeholders agree that LH observations incentivise fishers to comply with LO	Online survey	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Volume of voice

Contribution Analysis framework for Hypothesis 4

H4: The training for Union Inspectors contributes to harmonising the way inspections are conducted across MS, hence increasing the level playing field and reducing the likelihood that fishers commit infringements against CFP				
Test	Source	Confirming / Refuting	Causal mechanism	Strength of evidence
Participation in training activities for Union inspectors was high	Monitoring information, interviews with EFCA staff	Confirming	Condition to intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
Training participants agree that the training was useful	Monitoring information, online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Convergent triangulated sources
Training participants report that they use the learning acquired in their job	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Training participants report that, after the training, they feel better skilled to conduct inspection activities	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Training participants report that the training contributed to improving the level playing field for the fishing industry in EU waters	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Training participants report that they participated in other training activities, and this other training contributed more the establishment of a level playing field	Online survey	Refuting	Other contribution	Volume of voice

Contribution Analysis framework for Hypothesis 5

H5: EFCA activities contribute to establishing a culture of compliance (through activities that level the playing field and communication and awareness raising activities).				
Test	Source	Confirming / Refuting	Causal mechanism	Strength of evidence
Stakeholders (all groups) agree that the level playing field for fishers among EU vessels has improved in the period 2017-2021	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Stakeholders (all groups) agree that the level playing field between EU and third country vessels fishing in EU waters has improved in the period 2017-2021	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Stakeholders agree that EFCA contributes to raise awareness among all players involved in the full range of activities related to fisheries (catching, processing, distribution and marketing) on the importance of compliance with the CFP rules.	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Group 3 of stakeholders agree that EFCA contributes to raise awareness of industry on the importance of respecting conservation measures.	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Groups 2 and 3 agree that EFCA contributes to a fair and uniform application of the control rules across fisheries and Member States, including third country vessels fishing in EU waters	Online survey	Confirming	Intended contribution	Volume of voice
Stakeholders (all groups) consider that it is mainly actions conducted by MS without EFCA's coordination that have increased the level playing field among EU fishers	Online survey	Refuting	Other contribution	Volume of voice

For more information

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Ipsos Public Affairs works closely with national governments, local public services and the not-for-profit sector. Its research staff focus on public service and policy issues. Each has expertise in a particular part of the public sector, ensuring we have a detailed understanding of specific sectors and policy challenges. Combined with our methods and communications expertise, this helps ensure that our research makes a difference for decision makers and communities.

