

SWEDEN

Title of program

Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIG)

Objectives of program

- Contribute to achieving a sustainable balance between fishery resources and their exploitation.
- Strengthen competitiveness of the sector and develop economic viable enterprises in the sector by creating a favourable structure.
- Improve market supply and value added to fishery and aquaculture products.
- Contribute to revitalising areas dependent on fisheries and aquaculture.

Forms of support

- Direct payments, cost reducing transfers.
- Aid is granted in the form of direct subsidies or as a type of loan, where beneficiaries have no obligation to pay back the loan as long as the stipulated conditions are met. The construction of the loan includes no interest and might be called a conditioned subsidy. In normal cases the loan is written off during a ten year period. A security has to be given if the aid is in the form of a loan and if the value of the aid (loan) amounts to more than SEK 400 000.

Category of transfer

- Management, research and enforcement expenditure;
- Fisheries infrastructure expenditure;
- Payment for vessel decommission applies, but licence retirement does not apply;
- Investment and modernisation schemes;
- Other cost reducing transfers.

Cost recovery or offsetting charges

n.a.

Recipient fishery, fisheries or sector(s)

Support for renewal of the fishing fleet is limited to vessels below 18 meters. For modernisation of the fishing fleet, the vessels have to be listed in the EU's register of fishing vessels for at least five years. There is a higher grant for projects of collective interest within the small-scale coastal fisheries. Otherwise the transfer is generally available to the fisheries sector.

Aid is granted only on condition that the fishing effort is not increased. Priority is given to project in order to increase the fish quality and to improve the selectivity of the fishing gears, as well as to improve working conditions and safety on board.

Brief details of the key aspects of the management system in place in the recipient fishery or fisheries

The different functions of the management and control systems of the structural funds are defined in Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.

A Monitoring Committee for the structural programme is set up and includes representation of the regional and local authorities, economic and social partners and other relevant competent bodies. The Committee shall confirm and adjust the Program Complement and approve the criteria for selecting investments or projects that are to be granted aid. Other tasks for the Monitoring Committee are to draw up and approve the annual implementation report and submit the report to the Commission.

The Government has appointed the representatives of the Monitoring Committee. The Committee meets twice a year.

According to the EU regulations a Managing Authority is designed to manage the structural programme. The managing authority is responsible for efficiency and correctness of management and implementation of the programme. The managing authority is also responsible for setting up a system of statistics and for delivering the information concerning the implementation of the programme to the EU Commission. The Managing Authority prepares the meeting of the Monitoring Committee and proposes amendments of the programme.

The Swedish Government has appointed the Swedish Board of Fisheries as managing and paying authority for the fisheries programme outside Objective 1 areas. The Swedish Board of Fisheries has the competence to issue national instructions concerning the FIGG.

The Industry development unit of the Swedish Board of Fisheries has the practical function of the managing authority and the head of the unit decides to approve or reject aid to individual project or investments. The unit is co-ordinating the administration of the FIGG and has prepared a manual for the Swedish Board of Fisheries and the County Boards on handling and payments. The Administrative Department of the Board handles the execution of the payments. As a paying authority the Administrative Department is also responsible for submitting payment applications to the Commission.

The County Boards, acting as intermediate bodies, work closely together with the Board of Fisheries with the implementation of the programme. The County Boards receive all applications of structural aid. The decision-making process is shared between the Board of Fisheries and the County Boards. The separation of duties is stipulated in a national ordinance.

Transfer directed towards the aquaculture sector or the processing sector?

The transfer is directed towards the aquaculture sector and the processing sector as well.

Rules and conditions

The Member State of the EU shall designate the competent body that receives the applications. The competent body has to check that the application is in accordance with Community and national legislation as well as with the programme and complement.

If the costs are considered to be eligible, the project or investment is compared with others and attached a priority indication. Projects/investments that have been allocated high priority are granted aid. Otherwise the applications are rejected.

The decision-making process in Sweden is shared between the Board of Fisheries and the County Boards. The application is always sent to the County Board (21 counties). The application shall be submitted to the County Board where the physical investment will take place or where the project will be carried out. The County Boards shall check that the application-form is completely fulfilled. Any complementary information is requested by the County Boards. The application is hereafter forwarded to the Swedish Board of Fisheries for decision-making or allocation of funds (in cases where the County Boards makes the decisions.)

On the Industry development unit, of the Board of Fisheries, eight officials are working with the implementation of the FIGG. Each person is responsible for at least one measure. The number of applications differs widely among the measures.

The execution of payments

In general, payments to the final beneficiaries are only based on actual costs.

The final beneficiary sends the request for payment to the paying authority or to an intermediate body, acting on behalf of the paying authority. Payment by the final beneficiaries shall be supported by receipted invoices. Where this cannot be done, payments shall be supported by accounting documents of equivalent and probative value. If a project or investment is selected for a check on the spot the management and control systems will require the recording or verifications of the individual operations on the spot.

The member states shall satisfy that there are procedures to ensure that documents relevant to specific expenditure incurred and payments made under the assistance are kept available for the EU Commission for a period of three years (unless otherwise decided in bilateral arrangements with the EU Commission) following the payment by the EU Commission of the final balance.

In Sweden the requests for payments, together with supporting documents, are sent to the County Boards. The County Boards check the request for payments and confirm that the costs can be verified and that the costs of the project or investment are in accordance with the decision. The County Boards are also responsible for carrying out on the spot checks when this is required according to the national rules.

The County Boards send the request for payment together with a certificate to the Administrative department at the Swedish Board of Fisheries. The County Boards make a statement in the certificate whether the requirements for the payment are fulfilled.

The Administrative department makes additional checks of the request and decides to approve or reject the whole or a part of the claim. If the costs are approved the payment will follow.

The Administrative department demands that the beneficiary shall report the results of the project according to the monitoring indicators stipulated in the programme and the Program complement before any payment is made.

The approved beneficiaries of the support scheme are specified for each measure and could be: fishers, authorities, institutes, organizations, aquaculture companies, public owners of fishing harbours, companies active in fishing harbours, fishery associations, processing industries, trade associations, producer's organizations, associations of companies and non-profit associations, county boards, the Swedish Board of Fisheries, external consultants.

Budget and expenditure

- Year 2001 approved SEK 90.4 million, disbursed SEK 4.5 million;
- Year 2002 approved SEK 111.5 million, disbursed SEK 82.5 million;
- Year 2003 approved SEK 111.8 million, disbursed SEK 86.3 million.

Duration

The current program runs for the period 2000-2006. There is a proposal but not yet adopted for a new program period, European Fisheries Fund 2007-2013

Number of recipients

- Estimated numbers of recipients:
 - Fishers 500,
 - processing industries 200,
 - aquaculture companies 100,
 - others 200

Other relevant information

In order to gauge its effectiveness, the program shall be the subject of *ex-ante*, mid-term and *ex-post* evaluation designed to appraise its impact with respect to the objectives of the program and to analyse its effects on specific structural problems.

The purpose of *ex-ante* evaluation is to provide a basis for preparing the development plans, assistance and programme complement of which it shall form part. Such an evaluation has taken place.

The mid-term evaluation has examined, in the light of the *ex-ante* evaluation, the initial results of the assistance, their relevance and the extent to which the targets have been attained. It shall also assess the use of the financial resources and the operation of monitoring and implementation.

Ex-post evaluation shall cover the utilisation of resources and the effectiveness and efficiency of the assistance and its impact and shall draw conclusions regarding policy and social cohesion. It shall cover the factors contributing to the success or failure of implementation and the achievements and results, including their sustainability.