



EMFF OP Monitoring Committee 23rd May 2017

Minutes

Agenda item 1 - Registration

Attendance: (see Appendix A)

Agenda item 2 - Introduction

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed EMFF OP Monitoring Committee (MC) members.

Having established that a quorum was present, the Chair invited MC members to declare any conflict of interest- none declared at that juncture or during the course of the meeting.

The following additional points of business were added to the agenda:

1. Update on Financial Instruments (FIs) – request by EMFF -MA.
2. Information on EMFF Publicity – request by EMFF -MA.

No further points of business were added and the amended agenda was adopted.

Agenda item 3- Minutes of meeting 8 December 2016 –For Adoption

Francis O' Donnell (IFPO) raised an issue about what had been agreed at previous meeting in relation to support for Fish Stock Surveys/Trials under Agenda item 5 – Producer Organisation Scheme 2016. While he had not been present at that meeting, his understanding from his colleagues of what had been agreed was that funding for the Fish Stock Surveys/Trials element would continue into 2016.

The Chair confirmed that there was no agreement for the Producer Organisation Scheme to cover Fish Stock Surveys/Trials and that at the previous meeting, Producer Organisations been advised that the proper avenue for funding for such surveys/trials was through the Sustainable Fisheries Scheme. Ian Lawler (BIM) confirmed the Chair's recollection of events.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the following insertion (in bold) would be made to the minutes:

“Following broad discussion, **it was agreed that the appropriate place for support for Fish Stock Surveys/Trials was under the Sustainable Fisheries Scheme** and agreement was reached to allow the 2016 scheme to be put forward for approval as presented and a meeting could be arranged with the POs for early 2017 to discuss the possibility of reinstating support for that element, subject to approval of the Minister.”

The Minutes of the meeting of 8 December 2016 were adopted with this amendment.

Agenda item 4 – EFF Closure Report (presentation) - For Information

Keith Kelleher (EMFF MA) gave a presentation on the EFF Closure Report, the final report on implementation of the EFF Seafood Development Programme 2007-13, which had already been approved by the Monitoring Committee by written procedure on 30 March 2017. The presentation gave an overview of implementation over the programme period, covering financial data for each of the Priority Axes, investment focus, achievements, and lessons learned. The report was deemed admissible by DG Mare on 5 April 2017, but had yet to be approved by the Commission. Ireland awaited further comment from DG Mare.

Ed Fahy (EP) commented that it was regrettable that a timeframe of one week was given to the Committee in March to comment on the report and that adequate time was needed for Monitoring Committee members to review the report.

Karin Dubsy (EP) asked if it was still possible to forward input to the Managing Authority.

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) confirmed that this was not possible once the national process had been completed (approval by the Committee and submission by the MA). She said that she wanted to reassure the Committee that the final report was quite standardised and followed a Commission template. She drew attention to the difference between an implementation report such as this, which gave facts and figures, and a programme evaluation. She agreed with the EP that the timeframe given to the Committee in March to comment on the report was excessively short and called on the MA to remain faithful to standard procedure. Commenting on the substance of the report, she drew attention to the leverage effect of Ireland's EFF Seafood Development Programme 2007-13. For every €1 of programme funding, there was €2.2 investment, which she said was quite a good result.

Agenda item 5- Ex-ante Conditionalities (Update) – For Information

(Due to a programme change Agenda item 5 was presented after Agenda item 8)

Dr Cecil Beamish (DAFM) briefed Committee members on the updated position regarding the points system for serious infringements of the CFP and related EMFF Ex-ante Conditionality.

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) reminded the Committee of the process regarding Ex-Ante Conditionalities, whereby Ireland's EMFF Operational Programme had been adopted by the Commission with an Action Plan for the implementation of key requirements under the Control and Enforcement Regulation. If the Ex-ante Conditionality was not fulfilled, this could lead to suspension of interim payments by the Commission.

Agenda item 6 – Designation of authorities process (Update) – For Information

Keith Kelleher (EMFF –MA) briefed MC members on the current position regarding the EMFF Designation of Authorities process.

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) drew attention to the need for finalisation of the process as a matter of urgency, emphasising that interim payment claims submitted by Ireland to the Commission could not be paid until the designation of Authorities had occurred.

Agenda item 7 – EMFF Annual Implementation Report 2016 – For Approval

Keith Kelleher (EMFF –MA) gave a presentation on the EMFF Annual Implementation Report 2016 being put forward to the meeting for approval. Following the presentation the Chair invited comments.

Karin Dubsy (EP) raised a concern that there were not enough indicators in the report for data evaluation and implementation. She also raised a concern about Habitats restoration and projects which fell under the Marine Biodiversity Scheme, flagging the issue of the dredging of seagrass, a very important habitat, resulting in zero restoration.

Damien Clarke (EMFF MA) agreed with Ms Dubsy that the indicators in the report did not necessarily give a sufficient picture of implementation. This was a known issue and was common across all Member States. The indicators used are the common indicators for all MS Programmes and are specified by the Commission. Any change to add additional indicators would require an amendment to the programme.

Leonie O’Dowd (MI) addressed the concern on Seagrass. A Marine Institute (MI) report on seagrass had not fully concluded in 2016 due to process involved – fieldwork sampling/data analysis. The report was due in June 2017 and Dr Tully (MI) would provide further information on the matter. Species restoration was covered in Ms O’Dowd’s presentation.

Dr Fahy (EP) liked the report but supported Ms Dubsy’s comments. He queried:

- (a) If it was possible to get a copy of Grant Thornton Decommissioning report. The Chair referred his query to BIM as it was a BIM report.
- (b) If it was possible to buy dormant tonnage? The Chair confirmed that this was not a possibility under the EMFF Regulation.

Dr Fahy (EP) made further reference for the timely circulation of documents to MC suggesting a timescale of 1-2 months for MC review on submissions and faster upload onto the web.

Damien Clarke (EMFF MA) explained that timescales came from MC procedures which had been agreed with the MC. Written procedure was used in rare exceptions. The MA would reflect on what was said.

Richie Flynn (IFA) highlighted the direct correlation between the aquaculture licensing process and progress in the aquaculture sector. He emphasised that continued development was dependent on good markets in salmon and investor confidence. He said that ALAB stating was having difficulty meeting its targets and that there was a continuous stream of appeals which could not be dealt with. He wondered if industry could develop within that framework?

In response, the Chair said that an aquaculture licensing review was currently underway. Regarding ALAB, the Chair pointed out that he could not address the work of ALAB, that the work of ALAB was independent and that he did not understand how EMFF could have a role. Mr Flynn suggested that if it was a question of resources, then the EMFF could have a role. The Chair advised that he had not received any request from ALAB on the matter.

Ms Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) said that the issue of circulation of documents was an internal matter and nothing to do with the EMFF AIR. There was a major change from EFF to EMFF with standardisation of reporting across all Member States. This had now enabled the compilation of reports by the Commission, whereas in the past it had been impossible to do so. In relation to indicators, the MC had to accept that the AIR indicators were not perfect. However she was satisfied that they were enough to understand the EMFF and to have sufficient overview at National level. She encouraged Ireland to find new indicators. However

there was a cost benefits analysis to be weighed up in this process. She made reference to Chapter 3.2 and Tables 4 in the report. In the interests of transparency she hoped that full information would be provided to the MC. Comparing the Irish EMFF AIR report to other Member States, she found it ok and felt the operational programme had had a moderately good start in 2016. She foresaw two major challenges which would require huge action:

- (1) In the prevention of bi-catch under the Landing Obligation – more selectivity and the need to help industry to deal with the challenge.
- (2) The balancing of resources now that decommissioning was not happening and given that there was no possibility for cessation after 2017.

The EMFF Annual Implementation Report 2016 put forward at the meeting was approved.

Agenda item 8 – Schemes (amendments) – For Approval

- **Aquaculture Knowledge Gateway Scheme**

No comments. The amended scheme was approved.

- **Sustainable Aquaculture Scheme**

Karin Dubsy (EP) raised a concern that there was no separate score for environmental preservation and wanted to see a review of scoring. Catherine Morrison (BIM) reassured that all projects under the scheme would have undergone an environmental assessment.

The amended scheme was approved by majority vote, with the disagreement of Mr Fahy (EP) and Ms Dubsy (EP).

- **Seafood Processing Development Measure**

Damien Clarke (EMFF MA) advised the Committee that the Commission had raised some concerns about the proposed amendment (highlighted in yellow) under Section 6 in the document, proposing that supports under the Scheme would be confined to SME enterprises having not less than 25 employees and turnover of not less than €5 million per annum. The purpose of the proposed amendment was to direct very small projects to FLAGS, as the processing scheme was geared towards larger projects and the application process was onerous for micro enterprises. The Commission had concerns that such projects may not be successful in their applications to FLAGS, as FLAGS must prioritise their available funds towards projects that best contribute to their Local Development Strategy. The Managing Authority accepted this concern and proposed to withdraw the paragraph concerned. Instead, small projects would be advised to apply to FLAGS, but would remain eligible under this Scheme should they wish to apply.

The Chair proposed deletion of the paragraph concerned in Section 6 of the document. The Committee agreed.

The amended scheme (excluding the withdrawn paragraph) was approved by majority vote, with the disagreement of Mr Fahy (EP) and Ms Dubsky (EP).

- **Sustainable Fisheries Scheme**

Francis O'Donnell (IFPO) requested an additional scheme amendment to provide for the specific inclusion of Fish Stock Surveys in the Scheme. While he said that it was broadly covered in the scheme, he would like to see it covered more explicitly, as specific surveys would be needed.

The Chair suggested a meeting with PO's on the matter with new proposals if necessary at the next OPMC meeting.

Mr O'Donnell (IFPO) was not in agreement to wait until the next OPMC meeting.

Ian Lawler (BIM) accepted that fish stock surveys were not identified explicitly in the Scheme, but advised that they were eligible under Part A where carried out by BIM.

The Chair advised that he was not prepared to consider an additional amendment on this issue with time for examination by the MA and BIM and time for consideration by the Committee. He advised that there were two options:

- (1) Withdrawal of scheme modifications until later date or
- (2) Put the scheme forward for approval as it stood.

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) advised that if the surveys concerned were being conducted in partnership with a technical body, then it was covered.

Mr O'Donnell (IFPO) outlined that those surveys would be properly vetted surveys not ad hoc surveys by PO's. He gave his understanding of the regulation within an EU Commission context and requested that the entire discussion be recorded in the minutes. He said that he would have to accept that Fish Stock Surveys were in some way covered. He would give it consideration and would be happy for discussions with POs to take place within a month's timeframe.

Karin Dubsky (EP) felt that Section 5 (Selection Process) was unclear and that she had not been given the opportunity for input into scheme.

The Chair noted Ms Dubsky's comments.

The amended scheme was approved.

- **Producer Organisation Scheme 2017**

Francis O'Donnell (IFPO) called on the Chair to arrange a meeting with PO's within a short timeframe.

The amended scheme was approved.

The meeting adjourned for lunch and reconvened at 2pm.

Agenda item 9 – Schemes (Progress Updates) – For Information

Presentations were given by agency experts (see Appendix B) on scheme implementation progress in the areas of Aquaculture, Seafood Promotion, Seafood Processing, Fishing, FLAGs and Data Collection. Due to time constraints, the presentation on the Control & Enforcement scheme did not proceed. Presentations would be forwarded to the MC by email. Following each presentation, the Chair invited questions/comments.

- **Aquaculture**

Ms Dubsky (EP) queried:

- (1) In BIM's red seaweed cultivation project, were the seaweeds local/natives species?
- (2) Re shellfish farming, was the possibility of purchasing trestles open to all?
- (3) Re the modernisation of Mussel farm, she asked if the ropes used were hemp or plastic, stating that mussel farming had much micro litter. As hemp was more expensive to buy than plastic, some operators were purchasing the latter. She proposed national support for operators to purchase more environmentally friendly hemp.

Ms Morrison (BIM) confirmed re (1) the seaweeds were native species (2) applications were open to all operators who are in compliance the terms and conditions of their licences and the Birds and Habitats directive and re (3) in the project applications scoring process, plastic held a lower scoring rate than hemp.

- **New Fishermen Scheme**

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) commented on the low uptake of the scheme, stating that the picture was not uncommon in the EU and asked if there was any prospect of combining a retirement scheme and new fishermen scheme with transfer of skills/licences etc.

Ian Lawler (BIM) said that there were a number of initiatives within FLAGs and Catherine Morrison (BIM) referred to the forthcoming fisheries apprenticeship/mentoring programme.

- **FLAGs**

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) queried how oversubscription was being handled more in terms with articulation of EU funding from other schemes.

Lorcan O Cinneide (IFPEA) queried if there was a specific tranche of funding for productive investments.

Noel McDonagh (FLAGS) said he had serious concerns over FLAGS oversubscription which could lead to some approved projects being scrapped and asked if funding could be secured from the budget for decommissioning. He emphasised that FLAGS had blossomed because local authorities with 100% funding had come on board.

In response Ian Lawler (BIM) stated that the uptake for FLAGS was 60% and because of demand there was a requirement to over commit to spend. It was an issue that needed to be addressed and BIM would be having discussions with MA.

- **V-notching**

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) said she would welcome a review of scheme encompassing the downstream impact of the scheme eg. certification/marketing/natural expansion, as the scheme had been operating for several years.

Agenda item 10 – AOB

- **Update on Financial Instruments**

A short presentation was given by Damien Clarke (EMFF – MA) to inform the MC that an ex-ante assessment had been undertaken by Indecon International economic Consultants. The MA was still considering the report and it would be shared with the Committee within the required timeframe.

- **Information on EMFF Publicity**

Due to time constraints this presentation did not proceed.

The Chair thanked the attendees and concluded the meeting.

Actions arising

- All Presentations to be circulated to MC members by email.
- In the interest of time efficiency for future MC meetings, MC members are invited to email any comments on agenda items to the MA in advance of the meeting.

ENDS

Appendix A

In Attendance

Name	Organisation
Ann Murphy	DAFM (IMT)
Barry Guckian	ERDF MA
Breda Hennessy	EMFF MA DAFM
Cecil Beamish	DAFM
Catherine Morrison	BIM
Conor O'Shea	SFPA
Damien Clarke	EMFF Managing Authority
David Brennan	Salmon Growers Association
David Lyons	NPWS
Declan Coppinger	Bord Bia
Ed Fahy	Environmental Pillar
Felix McKendry	Enterprise Ireland
Francis O'Donnell	IFPO
Geraldine Hinchion	EMFF MA
Ian Lawler	BIM
Isabelle Garzon	DG MARE
Jenny O Leary	Marine Institute
Jim Conway	ERDF MA
John Doyle	Dept of Defence

Karin Dubsky	Environmental Pillar
Keith Kelleher	EMFF MA
Leonie O'Dowd	Marine Institute
Lorcan O Cinneide	IFPEA
Margot Dunne	DPER
Mary Carey	EAFRD MA
Noel McDonagh	FLAGs
Paschal Hayes	EMFF MA (chair)
Richie Flynn	IFA Aquaculture
Sonja Maurus	ERDF MA
Ted Breslin	KFO
Tom Scanlon	BIM

Apologies

Jerry Gallagher	Irish Shellfish Association
Paul Kelly	IBEC

Appendix B

1. Aquaculture – presented by Ms Catherine Morrison, BIM
2. Seafood Promotion - presented by Mr Declan Coppinger, Bord Bia
3. Seafood Processing – presented by Mr Tom Scanlon, BIM
4. Fishing and FLAGS – presented by Mr Ian Lawler, BIM
5. Data Collection – presented by Ms Leonie O’Dowd, Marine Institute