



EMFF OP Monitoring Committee 26th February 2016

Minutes

Agenda item 1 - Registration

Attendance: (see Appendix A)

Agenda item 2 - Introduction and Update

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members of the EMFF OP Monitoring Committee (MC). The Chair invited the members to declare any conflict of interest - none declared.

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) spoke briefly on the EMFF Programme and of the importance the MC role/task in monitoring of the programme's performance in achievement/fulfilment of its specific targets and objectives over the programme period.

The following additional point of business was added to the Agenda under AOB:

1. An overview/map of how Schemes will work – requested by EP.
2. Commentary on steps of programme – requested by DG Mare.

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

Agenda item 3- Minutes of meeting 26 November 2015 –for adoption

The EP delegates requested the following points for correction:

- Their request for disclosure of results of OP consultation process which had not been published.
- Their minority position against approval of the aquaculture schemes recorded because the NSPA had not yet been published.

Ed Fahy (EP) requested more expansive minutes going forward.

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) concurred and called on MA to report on positions taken and record minutes in summarised form.

The minutes were adopted with above amendments.

Agenda item 4 – EMFF OP Monitoring Committee Rules of Procedure – for Adoption

Ed Fahy (EP) commented on the large volume of material; the lack of sufficient information to carry out the task; that everything was vaguely defined. Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) responded that it was not the role of the MC to duplicate the work of MA. The role of the MC was to be informed of progress, in analysis and giving a perspective on whether the programme was/was not on track. By way of example, she referred to the forthcoming EFF ex-ante evaluation report.

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) queried if “Declaration of Conflict of Interest” item was excluded from the document. The Chair confirmed that the item was included in Section 13 of the document but invited any further suggestions regarding text to strengthen the item. As there were no further comments/suggestions, the Chair put the draft Rules of Procedure to the Committee for adoption.

The EMFF OP Monitoring Committee Rules of Procedure was adopted.

Agenda item 5 – Ex-Ante Conditionalities-update

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) gave an overview of the Ex –Ante Conditionalities requirements of the EMFF Regulation. She stated that General Ex – Ante Conditionalities are specific to all funds. In reference to the EMFF she drew attention to the specific Ex – Ante Conditionalities for fulfilment:-

- (1) Submission to Commission of multi-annual strategic plan for aquaculture.
- (2) Obligations on Data Collection.
- (3) Submission of Fleet Annual Report.
- (4) Implementation of key requirements under the Control and Enforcement Regulation.

Ireland had fulfilled Ex –Ante Conditionalities (1), (2) & (3) and the EMFF Operational Programme was adopted by the Commission with an action plan in relation to Ex – Ante Conditionality (4).

The maximum deadline for Ireland to come into conformity in relation to (4) is 2016. If not met, the Commission may suspend payments under the EMFF.

Dr Cecil Beamish (DAFM) gave an update to the MC on ex-ante conditionality (4). Under Control and Enforcement one of the key EU objectives was to introduce a Points Scheme for serious infringements. There are 2 elements:

1. To have a points system for licence holders – Ireland needs secondary legislation as the points system has been challenged in High Court – no outcome to date.
2. Points system for Skippers – Primary legislation is required and overdue. However, a parliament is needed to address the issue and bring forward new proposals in primary legislation. It is anticipated that a Bill will be presented to the Oireachtas and will be enacted in time.

Sean O Donoghue (KFO) queried aspects of the secondary legislation for the Points System and called on DG Mare to comment. As the matter is now in court and subjudice, DG Mare had no comment and there was no further discussion.

The Chair advised the MC that the update was for information purposes only.

Agenda item 6 – EMFF OP Information and Publicity Strategy

A presentation on EMFF Communications Strategy was given by Keith Kelleher (EMFF MA) giving an overview of the purpose and goals of the strategy, future activities and target groups. He noted that the document is nearing completion and will be placed on the Department's website in due course. He noted that an EMFF website/portal providing information on programming documents, major events, reports etc. was a main priority in 2016 - (3rd Quarter). A screenshot of ESF Website shown to MC as an example. An annual newsletter on EMFF supported projects is also proposed.

The Chair opened discussion to the Floor.

Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) commented that DG Mare was very supportive of the activities outlined in the presentation and called on all MC members to be active players in the communication strategy. She highlighted the importance and power of social media to create interest and embed the communication and promotional activities of the programme to a wide audience in Ireland and abroad.

Karin Dubsy (EP) – welcomed the strategy and asked if it was possible to prioritise the website/portal ie. start with members area and if there was any funding available for promotion on RTE? The Chair explained that it was not possible to prioritise it at this time due to many competing demands.

Agenda item 7-Scheme Selection Criteria – For Approval

The following Schemes were put forward for adoption:

- Aquaculture Knowledge Gateway Scheme
- Sustainable Aquaculture Scheme
- Seafood Processing Development Measure
 - Seafood Processing Capital Investment Scheme
 - Seafood Innovation and Business Planning Scheme
 - Seafood Scaling and New Market Development Scheme
- Sustainable Fisheries Scheme
- Inshore Fisheries Conservation Scheme
- Fisheries Local Development Scheme
- Producer Organisation Scheme
- Seafood Promotion Scheme
- Control and Enforcement Scheme
- Data Collection Scheme
- Blue Growth and Marine Spatial Planning Scheme
- Marine Biodiversity Scheme
- Technical Assistance Scheme

Damien Clarke (EMFF – MA) gave a presentation on changes made since circulation of the documents.

The Chair then opened discussion to the floor.

- Lorcán Ó Cinneide (IFPEA) felt that there was a shortcoming in the definition of “Collective” in the processing document. Pre-existing collectives should not be precluded. He asked for provision to be made to include them. The Chair considered that the pre-existing collectives mentioned should be covered by the definition.
- Sean O Donoghue (KFO) queried the application of the Producer Organisation Scheme to 2014/15 only. The Chair clarified that the priority was to deal with retrospective scheme 2014 -2015 only and it was intended to bring forward a separate scheme from 2016 onwards. Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) commented that EU Commission understood from Irish situation that Production and Marketing Plans (PMP’s) had been approved for 2 years ie. 2014 -2015 and that 2016 onwards had not yet approved. The approval of the EMFF support would be triggered by approval of PMP’s. Sean O Donoghue requested that the document be amended to provide that the scheme for 2016 onwards will follow a similar framework. The Chair proposed a change of wording to Paragraph. 1 (2nd Sentence) to: “The period from 2016 onwards will be addressed through a separate Scheme based on a similar general framework”. This was agreed.
- Jerry Gallagher (ISA) – raised a query on Aquaculture Licensing. Added to AOB.
- Ed Fahy (EP) felt that the objectives of schemes were vague. In relation to the Technical Assistance Scheme, he asked why the support rate for costs incurred by EP was restricted to 50%. Damien Clarke (EMFF – MA) advised that the objectives of all schemes are specified in the Operational Programme as adopted and cannot be altered in these scheme documents. He advised that 50% was the maximum support rate allowed under the EMFF Regulation.
- David Lyons (NPWS) expressed concern that the action concerning invasive alien species identified in the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development was not identifiable in the Knowledge Gateway Scheme and he was worried that it might be dropped. Catherine Morrison (BIM) confirmed that while specific NSPA actions may not be explicitly mentioned in the Knowledge Gateway Scheme, it was intended to progress this important NSPA action through BIM’s work programme under the Animal Welfare and Disease Management element of that Scheme.
- Karin Dubsy (EP) – queried asked what result indicators there were and said she would like more indicators. Damien Clarke (EMFF – MA) advised that the result indicators are established in the EMFF OP and are reproduced in the scheme documents. Karin Dubsy (EP) asked how the composition of project selection Boards is decided and if it was possible to be on the Committee? Damien Clarke (EMFF – MA) advised that the composition of selection boards is specified in the scheme documents. Karin Dubsy (EP) asked how much of the funds under the Marine Biodiversity Scheme will be spent on each element of the Scheme. Damien Clarke (EMFF – MA) advised that like other schemes where funds are ultimately invested will depend on project applications received. However, the EMFF OP identifies Ireland’s priorities for Natura 2000 and for the MSFD and it is reasonable to expect that funds will be directed at those identified priorities.
- Kevin Flannery (FLAGS) queried why the support rate for projects supported by FLAGs is limited to a maximum of 40%. The Chair advised that this rate was provisional for the purposes of this document and appropriate support rates will be established in the coming months.
- Sonja Maurus (SRA) commented that it was important that the sustainability principles set out in Art 8 of the Common Provisions Regulation are reflected in all scheme plans. Damien Clarke (EMFF – MA)

advised that the EMFF OP and all schemes are fundamentally all about sustainability, but that the MA will reflect on whether the principle needs to be referenced explicitly.

- Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) said that DG Mare were supportive of the documents presented. She said that Investment in processing under article 69 EMFF is primarily directed to processing enterprises. Where a collective beneficiary applies, assets acquired would have to remain the property of the collective. She called upon MC members to understand each step of the EMFF programme and emphasised the importance of programme Indicators in keeping programme implementation on track. She asked the MA to make easy to read information sheets available to MC. She stressed that the MA must ensure beneficiaries are aware of conditions, in particular the admissibility of applications and the list of ineligible operations under articles 10 and 11 EMFF.

The Chair advised that schemes would be in a continual process of review through the MC. He asked the MC to approve the scheme implementation plans, with the amendments as presented by the MA and with amendments agreed today. Approval was unanimous.

AOB

1. Ed Fahy (EP) – requested a map of how schemes will work and a spending plan due to large number of schemes in the OP. The MA undertook to provide this following the meeting.
2. Jerry Gallagher (ISA) asked about the timeframe for aquaculture licence determinations and queried the exclusion of operators in Natura 2000 areas from supports. The Chair advised that it was not the role nor competency of the MC to address or answer this issue and that there were other forums in which to do so. Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) said that EMFF supports may not be given to operations that are not in compliance with EU law, such as the Habitats and Birds Directives. Aquaculture sites in Natura 2000 may only receive supports when they have been licensed following appropriate assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Directives.
3. Isabelle Garzon (DG Mare) said that it was important that the MC be made aware of number of forthcoming steps in the EMFF OP. Ireland must designate and notify to the Commission the EMFF authorities (Managing Authority, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority). Where these authorities are within the one organisation, there must be clear separation of functions.

Ireland must approve FLAG local development strategies by November 2016.

With no further issues being raised, the Chair thanked the members and concluded the meeting with a view to meeting again in May 2016.

Actions arising

- Easy to read information leaflets to be made available by MA.
- Spending plan list for Schemes to be forwarded to MC by MA.
- MC comments on documents circulated to be emailed to SDP2014 mailbox in advance of meetings.

ENDS

Appendix A

In Attendance

Name	Organisation
Adrian Antonescu	DG Mare European Commission
Alex Crowley	NIFF
Ann Murphy	DAFM (IT)
Barry Guckian	NWRA (ERDF MA)
Breda Hennessy	EMFF MA DAFM
Catherine Morrison	BIM
Cecil Beamish	DAFM
Conor O'Shea	SFPA
Damien Clarke	EMFF MA DAFM
David Brennan	Irish Salmon Growers Association
David Lyons	Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht - NPWS
Declan Coppinger	Bord Bia
Donal Cronin	DECLG
Ed Fahy	Environmental Pillar
Eibhlín O'Sullivan	ISWFPO
Francis O'Donnell	IFPO
Geraldine Hinchion	EMFF MA DAFM
Hugo Boyle	ISEFPO
Ian Lawler	BIM
Isabelle Garzon	DG Mare
Jerry Gallagher	Irish Shellfish Association
Jim Conway	EMRA (ERDF MA)
Karin Dubsky	Coastwatch Europe

Name	Organisation
Keith Kelleher	EMFF MA DAFM
Kevin Flannery	FLAGS
Leonie O'Dowd	Marine Institute
Lorcán Ó Cinneide	IFPEA
Margaret Stanley	Department of Defence
Michael McGrath	DPER
Noel McDonagh	FLAGS
Paschal Hayes	EMFF MA DAFM (CHAIR)
Patrick Murphy	ISWFPO
Paul Kelly	IBEC
Richard Guildea	NIFF
Sean O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermens Organisation
Sonja Maurus	SRA (ERDF MA)
Teri Smith	Enterprise Ireland
Tom Scanlon	BIM

Apologies

Name	Organisation
Dymphna Keogh	EMFF CA DAFM
Mairéad Ni Oistín	Údarás Na Gaeltachta
Sean Murray	DAFM (RDP MA)