

## EMFF OP 2014-2020

### Implementation Plan

### Marine Biodiversity Scheme

<b>Operational Programme</b>	EMFF Operational Programme 2014-2020
<b>Priority</b>	Union Priority 1 Sustainable Development of Fisheries Union Priority 6 Fostering the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy
<b>Thematic Objective</b>	TO 6 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
<b>Specific Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ UP1 SO1 - Reduction of the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on the marine environment, including the avoidance and reduction, as far as possible, of unwanted catch.</li> <li>▪ UP1 SO2 - Protection and restoration of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems.</li> <li>▪ UP6 SO1 - Development and implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Measure</b>	Marine Biodiversity Scheme
<b>EMFF Certifying Body</b>	Finance Division, Dept. Of Agriculture, Food & the Marine.
<b>Managing Authority</b>	Marine Agencies & Programmes Division, Dept Of Agriculture, Food and Marine
<b>Specified Public Beneficiary Body</b>	Marine Institute
<b>Grant Rate</b>	100%
<b>EU Co-Financing Rate</b>	50%
<b>Legal Basis</b>	Article 29, 40 & 80 EMFF

## 1. Objective of Intervention

The objective of the Marine Biodiversity Scheme, as set out in section 3.1 of the EMFF OP, is to promote good fisheries and aquaculture management and protect biodiversity in marine habitats. This will support implementation of the CFP and compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives (Natura 2000) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

## 2. Description of the Intervention

Compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives requires ongoing public investment to identify potential risks from fisheries and aquaculture to designated habitats and species in Natura 2000 sites, to mitigate those risks through management or other measures and to monitor and report on these mitigation measures and on the status of protected habitats and species.

The following priority actions for Natura 2000 have been identified for support under Ireland's EMFF OP and will be implemented through this Scheme:

- Supports for Appropriate Assessment and Risk Assessment of fisheries and aquaculture activities in protected sites;
- A system for gathering spatial, temporal and outtake data for fishing by vessels <10m;
- Surveys and habitat mapping in protected sites;
- Programmes for monitoring of habitats and species in protected sites;
- Funding awareness raising mechanism for local structures.

The following priority actions for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) have been identified for support under Ireland's EMFF OP:

- Work on MSFD descriptors which can be addressed using DCF data;
- Evolve fisheries monitoring programmes to collect more data for the MSFD;
- Gear selectivity trials;
- Evaluate fishing mortality biomass against reference points;
- Enhance monitoring and mitigation of fisheries and aquaculture;
- Informatics in support of the CFP.

Measures implemented under the Scheme are undertaken for the protection and preservation of marine biodiversity, for the benefit of the industry as a whole, and to contribute to fulfilment of Ireland's obligations under EU Nature Directives. These measures will be implemented by the Marine Institute. The Scheme will be non-competitive.

### **3. Selection Process**

The selection process for EMFF OP funding under this Scheme will entail submission by the Marine Institute to the Managing Authority of applications for EMFF support for specific projects which will be approved by the Managing Authority having regard to -

- the EMFF Regulation (508/2014),
- Ireland's Prioritised Action Framework for Natura 2000,
- Ireland's Programme of Measures in connection with Case C418/04,
- Ireland's Programme of Measures under the MSFD,
- Ireland's policy objectives under this Scheme, the EMFF OP, the CFP and the IMP.

These projects may relate to a specific action, or may take the form of annual or multi-annual work programmes specifying the actions to be undertaken by the Institute for the year(s) concerned and the budget required for the year(s).

## 4. Support Rates

Measures under this Scheme will be supported at an aid intensity of 100%.

## 5. Eligible Measures

### (1) Appropriate assessment and risk assessment of aquaculture and fisheries

- Appropriate assessments
- Studies to inform the Article 6 assessment processes
- Acquisition and management of data including spatial data relating to the appropriate assessment and risk assessment process

### (2) Monitoring and mitigation of risks posed by fisheries and aquaculture to biodiversity

- Studies to inform the design of biodiversity mitigation measures in fisheries and aquaculture
  - Ecological studies
  - Studies to compare catch composition and by-catch before and after introduction of mitigation measures.
- Monitoring of mitigation measures.

### (3) Improved data provision to assess the impact of fisheries on biodiversity

- Studies, surveys and analysis to assess the impact of fishing pressure on habitats and species.
- Studies, surveys and analysis for mapping of fishing pressures on habitats and species.
- Integrated systems for acquisition of spatial data and catch and effort data in inshore fisheries.

### (4) Restoration and management of habitats and species

- Studies to inform methods for restoration of habitats and species
- Infrastructure or facilities for restoration of habitats and species
- Restoration of specific marine habitats in support of sustainable fish stocks
- Evaluation of biomass and fishing mortality against reference points for key stone species and/or species sensitive to the impacts of fishing.

### (5) Informatics in support of the CFP and ecosystem based management

- Informatics projects to improve management or conservation of marine biological resources.

## **(6) Collection and analysis of data to support the implementation of the MSFD**

- Leveraging DCF data to provide indicators for the MSFD.
- Evolving existing fisheries monitoring programmes to collect additional data in support of MSFD.

## **(7) Spatial fisheries management measures**

- Further profiling of the conservation benefits for the Biological Sensitive Area (BSA) working with regional partners.
- Studies to develop additional spatial measures to support fisheries management and to protect biodiversity.

## **(8) Dissemination of knowledge**

- Dissemination of scientific results of the above listed measures and related outreach.

## **6. Scheme/Programme Output Indicators**

The output indicator below forms part of the performance Framework of the EMFF OP.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Measurement Unit</b>	<b>Target Value 2023</b>	<b>Source of Information</b>	<b>Frequency of Reporting</b>
N° of projects on protection and restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems	Number	50	MI/BIM	Annually
N° of projects on protection and improvement of knowledge on the state of the marine environment	Number	4	MI	Annually

## **7. Document Retention**

In accordance with Article 140 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EC) 1303/2013, the Marine Institute will ensure that all supporting documents regarding expenditure, verification checks, certification and audits on operations for which total eligible expenditure is less than €1,000,000.00 are kept available for the EU Commission and Court of Auditors for a period of three years from 31 December following the submission of the accounts in which the expenditure of the operation is included.

In the case of operations over €1,000,000.00 all supporting documentation shall be kept for a 2 year period from 31 December following the submission of accounts in which the final expenditure of the completed operation is included.

The Managing Authority will inform the Marine Institute of the start date of the period referred to above.

## **8. Monitoring and Reporting arrangements**

The Marine Institute will provide periodic updates to the Monitoring Committee on the progress of this Scheme. These updates will form part of the agenda for meetings of the Monitoring Committee.

The Marine Institute will provide information on the implementation of this Scheme to the Managing Authority to contribute to:

- The compilation of the Annual Implementation Report under article 114 of the EMFF Regulation to be transmitted to the Commission by 31 May each year.
- A Common Monitoring and Evaluation System under article 107 of the EMFF Regulation;
- Data on operations selected for funding required to be submitted to the Commission under Article 97(1)(a) of the EMFF Regulation by 31 March each year.

The Managing Authority will annually present information on the implementation of this Scheme to the Monitoring Committee through the Annual Implementation Report, which will be presented for the Committee's approval.

The Managing Authority and/or the Marine Institute will maintain a website providing details of this Scheme and its progress.

## **9. Information and Publicity**

The contribution of the Irish exchequer and EMFF 2014-2020, will be acknowledged in all brochures, promotional material, press releases, publicity activity, advertisements, signage, applications forms, annual reports, letters of offer, etc., by use of appropriate logo and text references.

The Managing Authority and BIM will ensure compliance with Annex V of Commission Regulation 508/2014 concerning the provision of information on the Operational Programme and the co-funding provided by the Union.