

EMFF OP 2014-2020

Implementation Plan

Sustainable Fisheries Scheme

Operational Programme	EMFF Operational Programme 2014-2020
Priority	Union Priority 1 Sustainable Development of Fisheries Union Priority 3 Control & Enforcement Union Priority 5 – Marketing and Processing
Thematic Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TO 3 enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises. ▪ TO 6 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
Specific Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UP1 SO1 - Reduction of the impact of fisheries on the marine environment, including the avoidance and reduction, as far as possible, of unwanted catch. ▪ UP1 SO4 - Enhancement of the competitiveness and viability of fisheries enterprises, including of small scale coastal fleet, and the improvement of safety or working conditions. ▪ UP1 SO5 - Provision of support to strengthen technological development and innovation, including increasing energy efficiency, and knowledge transfer. ▪ UP3 SO2 Provision of support to monitoring, control and enforcement, enhancing instituting capacity and the efficiency of public administration, without increasing the administrative burden. ▪ UP5 SO1 - Improvement of market organisation for fishery and aquaculture products. ▪ UP5 SO2 - Encouragement of investment in the processing and marketing Sectors.
Scheme	Sustainable Fisheries Scheme
EMFF Certifying Body	Finance Division, Dept of Agriculture, Food & the Marine.
Managing Authority	Marine Agencies & Programmes Division, Dept Of Agriculture, Food and Marine
Intermediate Body	Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)
Grant Rate	40% - 100%
EU Co-Financing Rate	50% / 90%
Legal Basis	Articles 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 37, 38, 39 , 40, 41, 42, 43, 68, 69, 76 EMFF

1. Objective of Intervention

In accordance with the Strategy for Sustainable Development of Fisheries specified in section 3.1 of the EMFF OP, the objective of this Scheme is facilitate storage and other facilities in certain ports as needed to support the landing obligation and to contribute to CFP implementation through helping fishermen avoid juvenile, depleted and choke stocks through development of a change management process and deployment of more selective fishing methods and other means to support individual change management plans. The Scheme aims to assist the seafood sector make the structural adjustment necessary to implement the CFP Landing Obligation.

The Scheme also aims to reduce the impact of fisheries on the marine environment by promoting good fisheries management, protecting biodiversity in marine habitats, conserving and re-build stocks and supporting efficient design and implementation of conservation measures and regional cooperation under the CFP.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this document;

'Project Approvals Board or PAB' means a project selection committee convened by the Managing Authority and comprised of representatives of the Managing Authority (chair), BIM, Marine Institute, Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority and Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

'BIM Service Project' means a project undertaken directly by BIM on behalf of the sector as a whole and approved by the Managing Authority.

'Change Management Plan' means an approved plan setting out how parties to the Plan will seek to make changes to fishing gear or methods, handling, storage, delivery, or sale to reduce or eliminate catch of juvenile, depleted or choke stocks and to maximise quality and efficiency in handling and sales in order to promote sustainability and maximise returns for operators.

'Collective' project means a project implemented by:

- (a) A fishermen's co-operative;
- (b) A Producer Organisation;
- (c) An organisation of fishermen recognised by the intermediate body;
- (d) One or more of (a) to (c) in partnership with another entity; or
- (e) A grouping of two or more bodies recognised by the intermediate body as a collective beneficiary;

on behalf of and for the collective interest of its members.

‘Producer Organisation (PO)’ means an officially recognised body established by fishery or aquaculture producers in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the Common Organisation of the Markets in Fishery and Aquaculture Products (CMO Regulation).

‘SSCF or Small Scale Coastal Fisheries’ means fishing carried out by fishing vessels of an overall length of less than 12 metres and not using towed fishing gear as listed in Table 3 of Annex I to Commission Regulation (EC) No 26/2004.

3. Description of Intervention

The 2013 reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy includes a landing obligation whereby, by 2019, all catches of species subject to catch limits must be brought and retained on board, recorded, landed and counted against our national quota. The single biggest adjustment in European fisheries policy since the introduction of quotas over 30 years ago, the ban on discarding will require significant change for the sector including increased mesh size and other technical measures designed to reduce unwanted bycatch and the capture of undersize fish and shellfish (prawns).

The landing obligation came into force in January 2015 for pelagic fisheries and extends to demersal fisheries in 2016 with all commercial fisheries due to be included by 2019. The principal objective of the policy is to encourage new practices that lead to reduced catches of juvenile and/or over quota species with the ultimate aim of improved fisheries sustainability.

This scheme is specifically designed to assist all those directly involved or soon to be involved in implementing the landing obligation. This includes fishermen, organisations of fishermen, fishermen’s co-operatives, and processors. Particular attention is paid to the promotion of operations which integrate producing, processing and marketing activities of the supply chain, or which consist of innovative processes or methods. This scheme will also support the processing of unwanted catches. Finally, the scheme will assist those in the wider seafood sector, including those not directly affected by the landing obligation, to achieve the goals of the Common Fisheries Policy, by:

- Facilitating the transition to a sustainable exploitation of living marine biological resources;
- Reducing the impact of fishing on the marine environment;
- Improving the added value and quality of unwanted catches landed from commercial stocks in accordance with technical measures and/or using methods with low impact on the environment;
- Improving the hygiene, health and working conditions of fishermen operating such vessels;
- Increasing the quality, control and traceability of the products landed;
- Contributing to environmental protection and improving safety and working conditions.

Projects supported under this Scheme will:

- Contribute to the gradual elimination of discards and by-catches;
- Facilitate the transition to exploitation of living marine biological resources (in accordance with Article 2(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013);
- Develop or introduce new technical knowledge that reduces the impact of fishing activities on the environment, including improved fishing techniques and gear selectivity;
- Aim to achieve a more sustainable use of marine biological resources and coexistence with protected predators.

4. Project Types

The scheme will support the following Project Types:

(A) Public Interest Projects

Projects shall be carried out by, or in collaboration with, BIM or such other scientific or technical body as may be recognised by BIM for the purposes of this Scheme.

1. Environmentally Friendly Fishing Gear & Methods (Article 39)

In order to foster the gradual elimination of discards, to reduce the impact of fishing on the marine environment, and to facilitate the transition to a sustainable exploitation of living marine biological resources, this scheme will support the participation by vessels or groups of vessels in approved operations that:

- Contribute to the gradual elimination of discards and by-catches;
- Facilitate the transition to exploitation of living marine biological resources (in accordance with Article 2(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013);
- Develop or introduce new technical knowledge that reduces the impact of fishing activities on the environment, including improved fishing techniques and gear selectivity;
- Are aimed at achieving a more sustainable use of marine biological resources and coexistence with protected predators.

2. Change Management, Partnerships & Advisory Services

In order to promote social dialogue, to support best practice, to foster the transfer of knowledge, to stimulate innovation in fisheries, to improve the overall performance and competitiveness of operators, and to promote sustainable fisheries, this scheme may support:

- Networking and exchange of experiences and best practices between stakeholders (Article 29(1)(b));
- The provision of professional advice on environmental sustainability, with a focus on limiting and, where possible, eliminating the negative impact of fishing activities on marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystem (Article 27(1)(b));
- The provision of professional advice on business and marketing strategies (Article 27(1)(c));
- The creation of networks or associations between independent scientific and technical bodies and fishermen concerning data collection and management activities. Activities may include studies, pilot projects, dissemination of knowledge and research results, seminars and best practices (Article 28).

3. **Innovation** (Article 26)

In order to stimulate innovation in fisheries, this scheme may support projects aimed at developing or introducing new or substantially improved products and equipment, new or improved processes and techniques, and new or improved management and organisation systems at local levels, including at the level of processing and marketing. Such projects shall be carried out by, or in collaboration with, a scientific or technical body recognised by the Managing Authority and that body shall validate the results of such operations.

4. **Conservation Measures and Regional Co-operation** (Article 37)

In order to ensure the efficient design and implementation of conservation measures under Articles 7, 8 and 11 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 and regional cooperation under Article 18 of that Regulation, this scheme may support projects concerning:

- The design, development and monitoring of technical and administrative means necessary for the development and implementation of conservation measures and regionalisation.
- Stakeholder participation and cooperation between Ireland and other Member States in designing and implementing conservation measures and regionalisation.

5. **Marine Biodiversity** (Article 40)

In order to protect and restore marine biodiversity and ecosystems in the framework of sustainable fishing activities, with the participation of fishermen, this Scheme will support projects concerning:

- The collection of waste by fishermen from the sea, such as the removal of lost fishing gear and marine litter (Article 40(1)(a));

- Increasing environmental awareness, involving fishermen, with regard to the protection and restoration of marine biodiversity (Article 40(1)(g)).

6. **Energy Efficiency** (article 41(1c))

In order to mitigate the effects of climate change and to improve the energy efficiency of fishing vessels, this scheme will support studies to assess the contribution of alternative propulsion systems and hull designs to the energy efficiency of fishing vessels.

7. **Certification** (Article 68(1c))

Support for the certification and promotion of sustainable fishery products, at sea and ashore, including products from small-scale coastal fishing, and of environmentally-friendly processing methods.

(B) On Board Investments

In order to foster the gradual elimination of discards, to reduce the impact of fishing on the marine environment, to facilitate the transition to a sustainable exploitation of living marine biological resources, to mitigate the effects of climate change and to improve the energy efficiency of fishing vessels, this scheme will support:

1. Investments on board that improve hygiene, health and working conditions provided that those investments go beyond the requirements under Union or national law (Article 32);
2. Innovative investments on board that improve the quality of fishery products (Article 42 (1b));
3. Investments on-board that add value to fishery products, by allowing fishermen to carry out the processing of these catches (Article 42 (1a));
4. Investments on board, in equipment that has demonstrably better size-selection, or, demonstrably lower impact on the ecosystem or on non-target species, than the standard gear or other equipment permitted under Union law, or under relevant national law adopted in the context of regionalisation and that:
 - Improve size or species selectivity of fishing gear. (Article 38 (1a))
 - Eliminate discards by avoiding and reducing unwanted catches of commercial stocks, or that deals with unwanted catches to be landed in accordance with Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. (Article 38 (1b))
 - Limit and, where possible, eliminate the physical and biological impacts of fishing on the ecosystem or the sea bed. (Article 38 (1c))

- Protect gear and catches from certain mammals and birds protected by Council Directive 92/43/EEC or Directive 2009/147/EC. Aid is granted provided that it does not undermine the selectivity of the fishing gear and that all appropriate measures are introduced to avoid physical damage to the predators (Article 38 (1d)).

5. Investments on board:

- In equipment aimed at reducing the emission of pollutants or greenhouse gases and increasing the energy efficiency of fishing vessels (Article 41(1a)).
- On energy efficiency audits (Art. 41(1b)).

Support under this heading shall only be granted to owners of fishing vessels registered on the Irish Register of Sea Fishing Boats. Beneficiaries will be limited to one grant under this heading over the programming period.

6. Engine Replacement:

The replacement or modernisation of the main or ancillary engines of fishing vessels with an overall length of 24 metres or less.

Support under this heading will be subject to the following conditions

- Support is restricted to owners of fishing vessels registered on the Irish Register of Sea Fishing Boats and belonging to fleet segments that are identified as balanced with fishing opportunities in the most recent Irish Fleet Annual Report submitted to the European Commission¹.
- Beneficiaries will be limited to one grant under this heading over the programming period.
- For vessels up to 12 metres in overall length, the new or modernised engine may not have more power in kW than the current engine.
- For vessels between 12 and 18 metres in overall length, the power in kW of the new or modernised engine must be at least 20 % lower than that of the current engine;
- For vessels between 18 and 24 metres in overall length, the power in kW of the new or modernised engine must be at least 30 % lower than that of the current engine.
- Support shall be paid only after any required reduction of capacity in kW has been permanently removed from the Union fishing fleet register.

Engines being replaced must have been officially certified in accordance with Article 40(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009. For fishing vessels not subject to a certification of engine power, support under paragraph 2 of this Article shall only be granted for the replacement or modernisation of main or ancillary engines in respect of which the

¹ A Fleet Report is submitted by Ireland each year to the European Commission in accordance with article 22 of the Common Fisheries Policy (Regulation 1380/2013). This Report analyses by DCF segment the balance between the fishing capacity of Ireland's fleet and its fishing opportunities. The report seeks to identify structural overcapacity by segment and estimate the long-term profitability by segment.

consistency of engine power has been verified in accordance with Article 41 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 and which have been physically inspected to ensure that the engine power does not exceed the engine power established in the fishing licenses.

7. Traceability

The costs of purchase and installation on board of the components, including computer hardware and software, which are necessary to ensure the traceability of fishery and aquaculture products, as referred to in Article 58 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 (article 76(2)(c)).

(C) Promoting Quality and Added Value Onshore

In order to foster the gradual elimination of discards, to reduce the impact of fishing on the marine environment, and to facilitate the transition to a sustainable exploitation of living marine biological resources, this scheme will support:

1. Investments to improve the infrastructure of first-point-of sale entities. Such investments will address the challenge of the landing obligation, including the quality, control and traceability of products landed by vessels affected by the landing obligation. In addition they will promote facilities for waste and marine litter collection and add value to under-used components of the catch (Article 43). Support will not cover the construction of new ports, new landing sites or new auction halls. Limited to collective actions;
2. Investments onshore that add value to fishery products, by allowing fishermen to carry out the processing, marketing and direct sale of these catches (Article 42 (1a));
3. Measures that find new markets and improve the conditions for the placing on the market of unwanted catches landed from commercial stocks and fishery products obtained using methods with low impact on the environment including the presentation and packaging of these products (Article 68(1b));
4. Investments that support the processing of catches of commercial fish caught in fisheries subject to the landing obligation that cannot be used for direct human consumption, for example production of crab-bait, compost etc (Article 69(1)(c));
5. The costs of certification of sustainable fishery products, at sea and on land, including products from small scale coastal fishing, and of environmentally friendly processing methods (article 68(1)(c));
6. The costs of purchase and installation on land of the components, including computer hardware and software, which are necessary to ensure the traceability of

fishery and aquaculture products, as referred to in Article 58 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 (article 76(2)(c) EMFF).

7. Investments by registered Cooperatives and seafood processors, who are registered with the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority as ‘Sales Notes webservice users’, in the re-development or purchase of software (including licences) to support communication with the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority’s ‘Sales Notes’ system, for the following specific purposes (article 76(2)(b)):

- To enable registered web-service users upload bulk sales notes data from their internal IT systems directly to the IFIS database;
- To provide a secure web service via SSL client certifications;
- To upgrade the version of the security protocol of their client application to TLSv1.1 or TLSv1.2.

5. Selection Process

BIM Service Projects

For BIM Service Projects, the selection process will entail submission by BIM 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 policy objectives under this Scheme, the EMFF OP and the CFP.

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 BIM for the year(s) concerned and the budget required for the year(s).

Industry and Public Projects

Projects from fishing vessel owners, collectives, and SME processing enterprises and from public bodies (excluding BIM) will be selected for funding as follows.

Step	Description	Carried Out By
1. Call for proposals	BIM will invite applications under Parts A, B & C.	BIM
2. Eligibility Check and evaluation	To ensure compliance and to assess validity. <u>Applies to Parts A, B & C</u>	BIM
3. Assessment / Appraisal	To assess project potential of projects under Parts A and C.	BIM or external evaluators as appropriate
4. Project Selection by BIM	BIM will select projects for funding under Part B and under	BIM

	Part C5, C6 and C7.	
5. Project Selection by PAB	To select projects for funding under Part A, C1, C2, C3 and C4	Project Approvals Board
6. Grant Offer	BIM will issue letters of offer awarding EMFF funding. For BIM led projects, the Managing Authority will approve funding. <u>Applies to Parts A, B & C</u>	BIM / Managing Authority

6. Selection Criteria

For BIM projects under Part A, selection criteria are as specified in section 5.

For Type B projects, where an application is based on a list of specified items, project approval will be dependent on the application meeting the mandatory criteria of the scheme.

Public projects (excluding BIM) under Part A and Projects under Part C will not be based on a list of eligible items specified by BIM. These proposals for funding will be subject to technical evaluation by BIM against the following selection criteria:

(A) General Assessment (Weighting 15%)

1. Background & relevance of project
2. Clarity of Objectives
3. Adequacy of methods
4. Outcomes Anticipated
5. Key Performance Indicators

(B) Project Management: (Weighting: 15%) – where relevant to project

1. Composition of the project team
2. Evidence of clear management structure
3. Co-ordinators experience managing similar projects
4. Allocation of tasks & responsibilities amongst project team
5. Data and information management plan and dissemination strategy for results

(C) Consistency of Objectives: (Weighting 30%)

1. Relevance of the project
2. Appropriateness
3. Innovation
4. Benefits
5. Impacts

(D) Investment Potential & Value for Money (Weighting 40%).

1. Scale: a full cost breakdown of the proposal.
2. Cost Effectiveness:
3. Value for Money
4. Downstream Benefit
5. Cost Benefit

Following evaluation by BIM, projects will be selected for funding by the Project Approvals Board.

7. Support Rates

BIM Service Projects will be 100% funded.

BIM may award supports under **Part B** in accordance with the table below. Effective from the date of circulation of this Implementation Plan to the Monitoring Committee, support to any individual vessel under Part B over the course of this Programme will be a maximum of €150,000. By way of exception, any vessel that has already been approved for grant aid in excess of this amount will be capped at the approved amount.

Part	Vessel Owner (other than SSCF)	SSCF	Collective
B1, B2, B3, B5,	40 – 50% Note 2	60%	N/A
B4	40 – 50% Note 2	70%	N/A
B6	30%	30%	N/A
B7 Traceability	50%	80%	N/A

BIM or the Project Approvals Board (as appropriate) may award maximum supports under **Parts A and C** as follows.

Part	Collective	Vessel Owner	SME Seafood Processors	Public body
A1, A3, A5, A6	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%
C1	50%-75% Note 2	N/A	N/A	N/A
C2	50%-60% Note 3	40-50% Note 1 SSCF 70%	N/A	N/A
C4	50%-60% Note 3	N/A	30%	N/A
C5 Certification	60%	40 – 50% SSCF 70%	N/A	N/A
C6 Traceability	60%	N/A	50%	N/A
C7 Sales Notes	60%	N/A	50%	N/A

Notes

Note 1	The 50% rate applies to applicants (vessel owners) with an approved Change Management Plan.
Note 2	The Project Approvals Board will determine the intensity of public aid between 50% and 70% of the total eligible expenditure on the basis of criteria set out in article 95 and the applicant's participation in the change management process.
Note 3	The Project Approvals Board will determine the intensity of public aid between 50% and 60% of the total eligible expenditure on the basis of criteria set out in article 95(3)(a) and the applicant's participation in the change management process.
Note 4	The Project Approvals Board will determine the intensity of public aid between 50% and 60% of the total eligible expenditure on the basis of criteria set out in article 95(3)(a) and the applicant's participation in the change management process. Capped at €250,000 per collective beneficiary in any 2 year period.

8. Scheme Output Indicators

The output indicators below are included in the EMFF OP. The output indicator for measures under article 38 forms part of the performance Framework of the OP.

Art.	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Target Value 2023	Source of Info.	Frequency of Reporting
26 -27	N° of projects on innovation, advisory services and partnerships with scientists	#	35	BIM	Annual
28	N° of projects on innovation, advisory services and partnerships with scientists	#	50	BIM	Annual
29	N° of projects on promotion of human capital and social dialogue, diversification and new forms of income, start-ups for fishermen and health/safety	#	205	BIM	Annual
32	N° of projects on promotion of human capital and social dialogue, diversification and new forms of income, start-ups for fishermen and health/safety	#	100	BIM	Annual
37	N° of projects on conservation measures, reduction of the fishing impact on the marine environment and fishing adaptation to the protection of species	#	4	BIM	Annual

38	N° of projects on conservation measures, reduction of the fishing impact on the marine environment and fishing adaptation to the protection of species	#	126	BIM	Annual
39	N° of projects on conservation measures, reduction of the fishing impact on the marine environment and fishing adaptation to the protection of species	#	20	BIM	Annual
40	N° of projects on protection and restoration of marine biodiversity, ecosystems	#	52	BIM	Annual
42	N° of projects on added value, quality, use of unwanted catches and fishing ports, landing sites, actions halls and shelters	#	110	BIM	Annual
43	N° of projects on added value, quality, use of unwanted catches and fishing ports, landing sites, actions halls and shelters	#	6	BIM	Annual
68	N° of projects on marketing measures and storage aid	#	7	BIM	Annual
69	No of Projects on processing	#	100	BIM	Annual
76	N° of projects on implementing the Union's control, inspections and enforcement system	#	10	BIM	Annual

9. Procedure for dealing with appeals

In every case, an applicant may appeal a decision by an Investment Committee or a Project Approvals Board to refuse grant aid. All appeals must be made in writing to the Intermediate Body who will refer the appeal to the Independent Appeals Officer appointed for this purpose

10. Document Retention

In accordance with Article 140 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EC) 1303/2013, BIM and final beneficiaries 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 BIM of the start date of the period referred to above.

11. Monitoring and Reporting arrangements

BIM 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.

BIM 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 BIM will maintain a website providing details of this Scheme and its progress.

12. 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 specifying certain requirements concerning the provision of information on the Operational Programme and the co-funding provided by the Union.