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Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



Có-mhainithe ag an
Aontas Eorpach
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Seafood Development Programme 2021-27

European Maritime Fisheries & Aquaculture Fund

Summary of Programme

Public Consultation July 2022



Table of Contents

1.1	Introduction	3
1.2	EMFAF Programme Structure	3
	Section 1 – Programme Strategy	4
	Section 2 – Priorities	15
	Priority 1 - Fostering sustainable fisheries and the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources.	15
	Priority 2 - Fostering sustainable aquaculture activities, and processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products, thus contributing to food security in the Union.....	18
	Priority 3 - Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities.	19
	Priority 4 - Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed.....	20
	Section 3 – Financing Plan	21
	Section 4 – Enabling Conditions.....	24
	Section 5 – Programme Authorities.....	24
	Section 6 – Partnership.....	24
	Section7 – Communication and visibility.....	24

1.1 Introduction

Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European parliament and the Council of 7 July 2021 establishes the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) for the 2021-27 EU programming period. It lays down the priorities of the EMFAF, its budget and the specific rules for providing Union funding, complementing the general rules applying to the EMFAF under the EU Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

Ireland is allocated EMFAF funds of €142,369,552, with the Government of Ireland providing co-funding of €116 million. This provides for a total programme of €258.4 million, compared to €240 million under the predecessor EMFF Programme.

Over the past two years, Minister for Agriculture Food and Marine Charlie McConalogue TD has been preparing a draft Programme in accordance with the EMFAF Regulation, involving a series of engagements with stakeholders. This consultation is the final step in that engagement process before the draft Programme is submitted to the European Commission for its adoption by 31 December 2022.

The consultation on the draft Programme is accompanied by a consultation on the related Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report and the related Natura Impact Statement.

Submission may be made to EMFAF@agriculture.gov.ie until 4pm on Friday 26 August 2022.

1.2 EMFAF Programme Structure

The EMFAF Programme is structured as follows:

Section 1 – details the overall context of the strategy at EU, national, regional and local levels (where relevant), linked to the strategic choices that will be made in the programme. The strategy development starting with Table 1A of the programme includes the needs, a SWOT analysis, and justifications of action at the policy objective (PO) level. For each priority, MSs should provide an analysis of the situation in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Pursuant to Article 8 of the EMFAF Regulation, MSs shall endeavour to take into account regional or local challenges, where appropriate. This should also be reflected in the SWOT. The “justification” section of table 1A should highlight the key findings of the SWOT and feed the previous text field of section 1 on the programme strategy.

Section 2 – The overview of section 2 of the programme template contains detailed elements of the intervention logic for all priorities other than technical assistance and should build upon Table 1A in section 1. For each selected specific objective, the MS should define for EMFAF

- the related types of actions – Article 22(3)(d)(i) CPR
- indicators - output indicators (number of operations) and common result indicators and their corresponding milestones and targets
- the main target groups benefitting from the types of actions
- actions safeguarding equality, inclusion and non-discrimination
- indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of territorial tools (if relevant)
- the planned use of financial instruments (if relevant) – Article – 22(3)(d)(vii) CPR
- indicative breakdown of the programmed resources (EU) by type of intervention for EMFAF

[Section 3](#) – describes the financial plan including total EMFAF annual allocation at a Member state level and financial allocation at Specific Objective level and national co-financing rates.

[Section 4](#) – describes horizontal enabling conditions (HECs) described in Annex III of the CPR. Only the four horizontal enabling conditions (HECs) described in Annex III of the CPR are relevant to the EMFAF. The Member State must provide a self-assessment (with justification) indicating whether the enabling conditions are fulfilled at the time of submission of the programme. An enabling condition is fulfilled when all the related criteria are met.

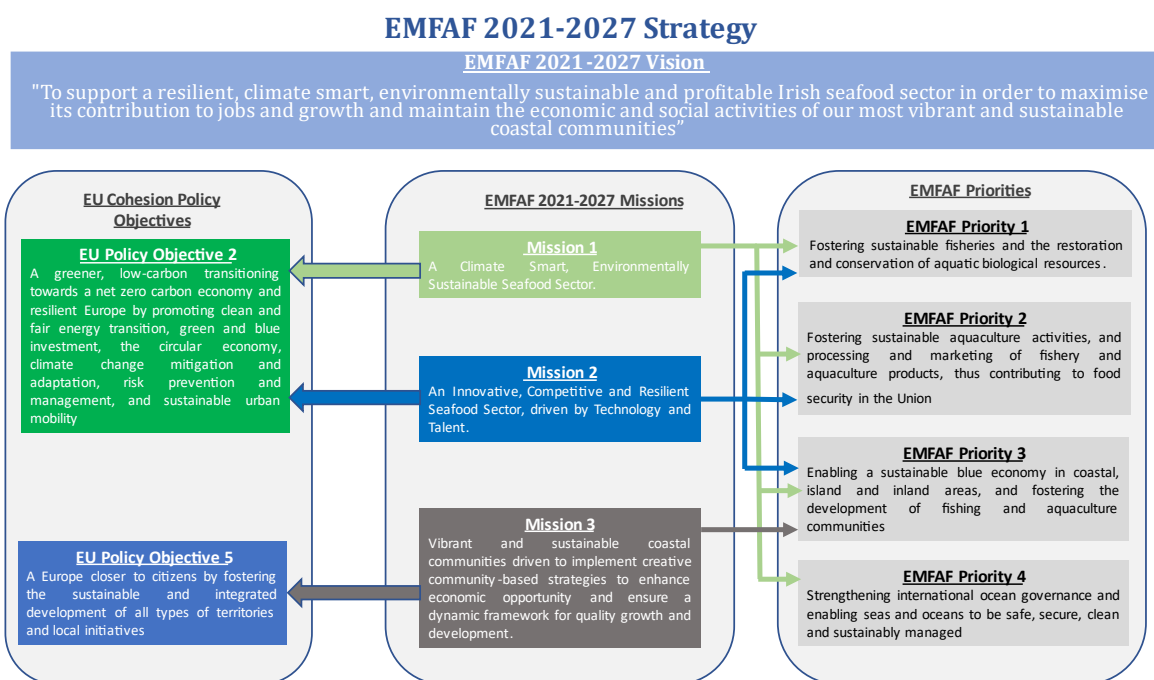
[Section 5](#) – describes the names and contacts information of the programme authorities.

[Section 6](#) - describes the partnership principle in the development of the EMFAF programme in Ireland. This section will be updated on completion of the public consultation process.

[Section 7](#) – Outlines the publicity and information activities to be carried out over the lifetime of the programme.

[Section 8](#) – describes the potential use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs on expenditure declared by the Member State declared to the Commission for reimbursement.

Section 1 – Programme Strategy



As an island nation with over 8,000 kms of coastland and responsibility for one of the largest marine areas in Europe, Ireland’s economy, culture, and society are inextricably linked to the sea. Our marine environment is a national asset that yields multiple commercial and non-commercial benefits in terms of, for example, seafood, tourism, recreation, renewable energy, cultural heritage, and biodiversity. Forty per cent of Ireland’s population lives within 5km of the coast, made up of urban, rural and island

coastal communities, including all our major cities. But it is those in remote coastal communities which are most dependent on the benefits generated by the marine environment and economy. Ireland's coastline is remarkable and a key enabler of regional development, but also a fragile resource that needs to be carefully managed to sustain its character, environment and biodiversity.

The seafood sector is a particularly important element of the coastal economy. Ireland has a rich tradition in fishing and aquaculture, with its coastal communities at the forefront of ensuring the sustainable development of our natural resource while generating significant economic activity and contributing to national, EU and global food security and supply. The total value of Ireland's seafood economy in 2020 was just under €1.1 billion with more than 16,000 people employed directly and indirectly in the industry. Seafood related employment remains high in coastal regions, generating significant socioeconomic value in these areas. The success of the seafood sector has in no small part been due to the support it has received through the EMFF Seafood Development Programme 2014-2020.

Despite the buoyant seafood sector and strong coastal communities and economies, an unprecedented convergence of global and European events threatens its continued development. The COVID-19 pandemic represented one of these key challenges. Key channels to seafood consumer markets were severely restricted with, for example, seafood revenue from the food service sector declining by 54% between 2019 and 2020. The impacts were not only felt by fishers, aquaculture operators and processors, but also by the wider coastal communities as tourism revenue was disrupted by domestic and overseas travel restrictions.

An even greater impact was felt from Brexit and the resulting Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) which has brought a rapid and significant change to the operating environment for the Irish seafood sector. Ireland has been disproportionately affected by this event, with the Irish fleet losing 15% of its annual quota, disruption to trade with the UK, disruption to logistics via the UK land-bridge, and lost links with UK institutions for scientific research and policy development. The effects have not solely been restricted to fishers, but have been damaging to the entire supply chain, including processors, aquaculture operators, ancillary suppliers and the communities in which they operate. In a time where food security is at the fore, Ireland's position as a net exporter of seafood and a key supplier to EU and global markets must be fostered. As a result of Brexit, Ireland established a specific Seafood Taskforce to take account of the impact of Brexit and make recommendations to government to mitigate against these impacts. The Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) will assist in implementing these until the end of 2023, which represents a vital intervention for Ireland. However, the requirement for transformational change extends beyond this period and stakeholders of the Taskforce stressed the importance of the EMFAF programme as a critical intervention for the sustainable development, growth and protection of our maritime resource.

More recently, the invasion of Ukraine has presented a volatile market for fuel and other key inputs and exposed the fragility of the seafood sector to shocks. Furthermore, inflationary pressures are squeezing margins and have the capacity to drive down much needed investment for its development.

While these macro events are affecting all member states, Ireland's position as a small island nation, with a significant maritime resource and physically separated from its EU partners, has exacerbated the effects. Ireland's seafood sector and coastal communities also face more localised challenges and market pressures. Segments of the fishing fleet are aging, as is the workforce and the communities in which it resides, as earnings and opportunities are less attractive for potential younger fishers' career choices. Within the processing and aquaculture segments, there are many shared challenges including lack of economies of scale, ongoing focus on commodity outputs rather than added value products,

limited R&D and technological advancement, reduced market access and poor access to finance. Areas for improvement can also be seen in control and enforcement, data gathering and scientific knowledge. The volatile operating environment for industry and the state's responsibility for protecting the marine environment has led to the focus of the Irish EMFAF 2021-2027 programme being amended to take account of all the challenges that the Irish seafood Sector is going to face over the coming years. These and other challenges are explored in the SWOT analysis conducted in the preparation of Ireland's programme, which provides a base by which to capitalise on the many opportunities for Ireland's and the EU's seafood sector and mitigate threats towards its sustainable development, through targeted investment in the identified areas.

The EMFAF is the main financial source to ensure effective implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and as such the main objectives outlined in the CFP are of paramount importance when developing the programme. The environmental sustainability of fishing and aquaculture activities, reduction of the impact of fishing and aquaculture activities on the marine environment, economically viable and competitive fishing capture and processing industry and land-based fishing related activity, supporting coastal communities for which fishing and aquaculture activities have a direct economic and social impact in those areas, adaptation to climate change and cleanliness of the oceans.

But the EMFAF programme is not just a tool for CFP. In addition to the dynamics of the seafood sector and the need to protect our natural environment and natural resources, there is a strategic and policy imperative which will guide the development of the sector, creates demands on its stakeholders and obligations in the formulation and implementation of the programme. At its core is the EU policy objectives and principles for support from the EU specified in the EU Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) (Regulation (EU) 2021/1060).

Policy Objective 2 of the CPR refers to a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility.

Parallels with this objective can be found at EU and national level, all of which inform the development of the programme. For example, the Regional Sea Basin Analysis of the Western Waters identified multiple environmental challenges for Ireland to meet the objectives of the CFP. The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 outlined actions required to restore the good environmental status of marine ecosystems by focusing on harvesting sustainably and zero tolerance for illegal practices, implementing maritime spatial plans, conserve fisheries resources and reduce by-catch of species threatened by extinction.

The European Commission's Strategic Guidelines for a More Sustainable and Competitive EU Aquaculture (2021) set out a common EU vision for the further development of aquaculture in the EU in a way that contributes to the European Green Deal and builds an aquaculture sector that is competitive and resilient. At a national level, Ireland's draft National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2021-30 (2021) translates the EU Guidelines into an Irish strategic plan for our aquaculture sector. The draft Plan identifies a range of investment needs in sustainability, competitiveness, innovation and climate resilience.

Project Ireland 2040 (2021), Ireland's National development Plan, outlined policy objectives including realising Ireland's island and marine potential. It identified a need for investment to support the sustainable growth and development of the maritime economy, including the seafood sector, and for investment in fishery harbours to enhance and further develop their capacity to optimise the

contribution of our marine resources. More specific strategies such as Ireland's agri-food national strategy, Foodwise 2030 (2021), identified 4 high level missions including climate smart and safe and nutritious food. To achieve these missions, investment is needed to restore and enhance biodiversity and enhance the environmental sustainability of the seafood sector. Investment is also needed to support primary producers in the transition to green and climate friendly technologies, and to enhance the use of technology. Similarly, the Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019) for Ireland was developed to build resilience to the effects of climate change and weather-related events in the agriculture, forest and seafood sectors, reduce any negative impacts where possible, and take advantage of any opportunities.

The other key strategic pillar informing the development of this programme is Policy Objective 5 of the CPR which envisages A Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives.

The Regional Sea Basin Analysis of the Western Waters identified challenges for Ireland which need to be addressed through investment in coastal communities to foster the local development of a sustainable blue economy in coastal areas through enhancing local partnerships, diversification, promoting economic, human, social and cultural assets, and improving environmental protection. Similarly, the Communication on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future provides direction on developing the blue economy in tandem with ocean policy and with an emphasis on European Green Deal objectives, sustainability and protecting biodiversity.

At a national level, the report of the Irish Seafood Task force – Navigating Change (2021) identified the significant impacts of Brexit and the TCA on the seafood sector and coastal communities. The report outlined needs in areas such as training and education, finance, mentoring and technical support and programme administration. Keeping people in these coastal communities by allowing them to upskill, retrain and ultimately keep their skills from a lifetime spent in the marine industry is key. Providing seed funding for new businesses, funding to diversify or expand and enabling capacity development that will allow people to use their skills for new opportunities in the marine sector is paramount to keeping these communities viable in the long term. Project Ireland 2040, Ireland's national development plan, outlined National Policy objectives, including supporting the sustainable growth and development of the maritime economy, particularly in remote rural coastal communities and islands. It identified the need to support coastal communities in developing local strategies to strengthen their role in actions to grow their marine activities or diversify to other activities that will provide growth in these areas.

Vision

Based on the challenges identified for the seafood sector and coastal communities and the policy context, Ireland's Programme requires an ambitious vision to:

"To support a resilient, climate smart, environmentally sustainable and profitable Irish seafood sector in order to maximise its contribution to jobs and growth and maintain the economic and social activities of our most vibrant and sustainable coastal communities"

In order for Ireland to achieve this vision, 4 missions were identified which are intended as a response to medium and long-term structural issues and challenges that have been highlighted in the SWOT

but also taking account of potential possibility of crises that may present themselves over the lifetime of the programme.

Mission 1 - A Climate Smart, Environmentally Sustainable Seafood Sector

1 - Dealing with climate change adaptation and mitigation

Ireland is committed to taking meaningful action to address the significant threat of climate change to ensure the long-term sustainable development of the seafood industry. 2020 was a pivotal year for climate action as Ireland pledged its move to a carbon neutral economy by 2050. This was written into Irish law through the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Acts 2015 to 2021 setting out a programme for government for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% over the coming decade and achieving net zero emissions by 2050. These targets need to find expression in the actions of all segments of the seafood sector.

The EMFAF will contribute significantly to the achievement of these targets over the lifetime of the programme. This includes supports for advisory services, studies and research to reduce carbon emissions, replacement or modernisation of engines of fishing vessels to increase energy efficiency, data collection, evaluation studies and research to tackle climate actions, knowledge sharing, development of process innovation to support operational optimisation in the processing sector, research to quantify the potential of coastal habitats as carbon sinks and improvements to fishing and aquaculture resilience to climate change.

2 – Minimising the impact of fishing/aquaculture activities on the marine environments including implementation of NATURA 2000, MPAs, MSFD and WFD.

Ireland has an EEZ of 488,762 square kilometres, and Irish Government commitments are to expand MPAs to 30% of this area by 2030 in line with EU targets. Approximately 2.4% is currently designated as MPAs which is considerably far from this target. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) as part of the Natura 2000 network of sites make the greatest contribution to this.

The EMFAF will support a considerable number of activities to contribute to the achievement of this goal, indicators on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, implementation of the Water Framework Directive and in accordance with Prioritised Action Frameworks. This will include continued support for the designation and management process of Natura sites and MPAs, development and use of more selective fishing gear, restoration of habitats and species, appropriate Control and Enforcement of fisheries, management measures related to Natura/MPA sites, control of invasive marine species in the fishing and aquaculture sectors, expansion of the Clean Oceans Initiative to address plastic pollution, increased stakeholder awareness of the Natura/MPA network and conservation measures, and improvement of information-sharing across decision-making bodies.

3 – Managing the fisheries/aquaculture resources in a sustainable manner

Considerable work has taken place towards the restoration of EU fish stocks and Ireland has played its part in this through effective fisheries management. However, there is still work to be done in terms of balancing fleet capacity to ensure viability of the fleet, which will be accomplished under BAR, while EMFAF will also address key issues such as by-catch. With maximum sustainable yields governing fisheries, attention must be turned to aquaculture to contribute to increasing volume of production to meet the needs of the EU and beyond. This has to be done in a manner which is sensitive to the environment.

The EMFAF will support improvements to gear and processes to reduce bycatch, interference with protected and endangered species and damage to marine habitats and the seabed. Data analysis and evaluation are core to guiding the policy in these areas and so EMFAF will also support data collection and knowledge generation in respect of protecting our marine resource and its biodiversity. In terms of developing aquaculture, this can only be done in harmony with the environment and EMFAF will support assessment of aquaculture sites, protect biodiversity in these areas while also assisting affected producers.

4 – Reduction of waste in the marine environment and promoting the circular economy.

Marine litter is a significant threat to the marine environment and to the industries and communities which depend on that environment. Seafood production has the capacity to contribute to marine litter, yet also has the capacity, through the right supports, to be a key player in combating it.

The EMFAF programme will support various initiatives aimed at innovating to reduce marine litter and waste through better management of fishing gear and also support initiatives to recover, collect and process marine litter as a resource. In doing so it will create entrepreneurial opportunities within the blue economy and protect the biodiversity within Irish and international waters.

5 – Effective Control & Enforcement

Effective control and enforcement is critical for sustainable fisheries, and while Ireland has made substantial advances in this area, there are ongoing challenges that need to be addressed. This is particularly in relation to resourcing and capacity.

The EMFAF programme will help the control authorities to strengthen the control and inspection procedures with actions to

- Support control supervised weighing on landing, as part of control of post-transport weighing regimen to meet Landing Obligations.
- The formation of an investigations team, as highlighted in the administrative inquiry (C (2019)5666) will be supported by the EMFAF programme through various training programmes and may also be considered to procure and deploy appropriate investigation software, e.g., for analysing trade data or social media posts about such operators.
- Initiatives to support the electronic capture and recording of suspected infringements will also be considered under the EMFAF. The automated crosschecking system (VALID) captures information on suspected and confirmed infringements of various grades of seriousness. The new Case Management System supports the collection of data of infringements detected through methods such as physical inspection.

The EMFAF will also enhance capabilities in this area through investment in integrated technologies and systems, increased capacity and resources for fisheries protection, enhanced food safety measures, interagency and member state cooperation and, through promotion, the development of a culture of compliance and self-regulation among fishers.

6 – Enhance knowledge and data to deal with climate change and impacts on marine biodiversity

The collection of data and development of knowledge is a vital area which Ireland has made a considerable contribution to under the EMFF programme. Ongoing work is required to inform strategy and policy decisions, fisheries management, aquaculture and foreshore licensing, and environmental and biodiversity monitoring to name a few areas.

The EMFAF programme will support a fit for purpose data collection programme in line with new EUMAP legislation, address knowledge gaps through surveys and research, support advisory services across all fisheries areas and build knowledge among the industry and its stakeholders so that the marine environment can be managed in a responsible and sustainable manner.

The combined EMFAF allocation to control and data collection is well above the 15% threshold with approximately 30% being allocated to both actions under the programme.

Mission 2 - An Innovative, Competitive and Resilient Seafood Sector, driven by Technology and Talent

1 - Support innovation in all sectors.

The seafood sector has not kept pace with development in other industries, leaving it more prone to shocks in the operating environment, less competitive and less attractive as a career opportunity for younger generations. Investment is also required in the State's control authorities to maximise the use of digital technology to enhance control and enforcement of the CFP. Innovative approaches are required across all segments of industry and by state bodies to ensure sustainable development and protection of our natural resources.

The EMFAF will provide significant support to addressing this innovation deficit across all segments. Within the fleet, investment will be supported in achieving greater engine efficiency and also in gear and on board technology to minimise fuel use and minimise unwanted catch. This will contribute to sustainability but also to competitiveness. Within the aquaculture and processing segments, there is a need to be more innovative to add value to products, diversify into new products and improve environmental and process efficiency. Capital investment through EMFAF intervention will support greater production efficiency and a lower environmental impact through modernising equipment and processes. It will also support new product development and marketing innovations to support market expansion. These investments will in turn create high-skilled career opportunities for younger generations, enhancing prosperity in more remote coastal communities. Similarly, EMFAF sponsored investment through Community led local development will support innovative enterprises in areas such as seafood tech and ancillary services for the seafood sector. In respect of state agencies, EMFAF will support investment in innovative technologies in respect of data collection and analysis, scientific research, and control and enforcement technologies. The EMFAF programme will allocate more than 7.5% of its budget to innovation projects.

Horizon Europe, the EU research and innovation programme for the period 2021-2027 will give opportunities for collaboration between researchers and other related stakeholders in multinational consortia across Europe. Short and medium-term research and innovation activities funded by the EMFAF should complement and not duplicate the more long-term research and innovation activities under Horizon Europe. EMFAF-funded research and innovation should in particular complement related activities under the Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030.

2 – Promote generational renewal and the health and safety of all seafood sector workers

The demography of the fishing sector has an aging profile. Younger generations are finding careers in fishing less appealing than more lucrative alternative career paths, facing high costs of entry to the sector and are not developing skill sets to supply a strong, dynamic workforce to work the Irish fleet. Similar trends are seen in processing and aquaculture. These trends are borne out in the population profile of the coastal communities in which these operators are based. This presents a considerable challenge to sustainability of the seafood sector as a whole.

EMFAF will address these difficulties through assisting younger fishers in acquiring a vessel, overcoming the high cost of entry into the sector. It will support skills development for fishers to ensure they can operate in a viable yet sustainable manner. It will also provide new opportunities in both aquaculture and processing through diversification, increased value-added and market development, generating careers in R&D and innovation, marketing, and food and environmental science. In terms of the blue economy, EMFAF will support entrepreneurial opportunities, enhancing the career prospects within coastal communities. These interventions will further raise the profile of the sector making it an attractive proposition to younger generations.

Ensuring a safe working environment will also enhance the attractiveness of careers in the sector, and EMFAF will ensure that support is provided to improve health and safety and general working conditions on vessels and with other operators in the seafood space.

3 – Support small scale coastal fisheries

Small Scale Coastal Fisheries are the life blood of many of the most remote coastal communities in Ireland. Despite being the largest segment of the Irish fleet, in terms of vessel numbers, it is fragmented, made up of smaller vessels which are more prone to shocks in the economy and wider global events. The scale on which they operate does not facilitate the economies of scale, capital investment and skills development available in other segments.

EMFAF will offer a suite of measures to support and develop small scale coastal fisheries through assisting younger generations acquire a vessel, capital investment on board their vessel to enhance fish quality and improve energy efficiency, and developing human capital through training, improve access to markets and promotion of seafood through supporting producer organisations, and ensure sustainability of the sector through management of stocks, gathering and assessment of data and investment of control and enforcement. It will also assist fishers in reducing their environmental impact through investment in vessels to reduce carbon footprint, working in partnership with scientists to assess the economic and biological impacts of changes to fisheries, working in partnership with agencies to develop and adopt more selective fishing gear and developing skills and practices to protect our shared coastal resources. EMFAF can also provide supports to members or collectives to implement actions that are consistent with Local Development strategies under Priority 3.[TM1]

4 – Support sustainable economic development and resiliency in all seafood sectors.

The seafood sector has faced a turbulent operating environment, due to Brexit and the TCA, COVID and Russian aggression towards Ukraine. These and other environmental factors have caused a significant number of issues, including reduced quotas and fishing opportunities, increased input costs, reduced access to inputs and markets and decreased profitability. The sector also faces growing challenges from climate change, including increasing storm frequency and severity, warming oceans, changing fish migration patterns etc. Short term measures such as the BAR have been crucial tools in helping the sector adapt and weather these storms. However, longer term transformational change is required to ensure the longevity and sustainability of the sector.

Through targeted investment in the fleet and in fishers, it can restructure to better distribute fishing opportunities, improve efficiency to reduce exposure to input costs and develop skills to facilitate fishers in diversification and better management of their operations, while contributing to the reduction in the environmental impact of fishing activities. Capital investment, training and innovation within the processing and aquaculture spheres will allow operators to do more with less, increase the value-add of their outputs, diversify and reach new markets, thereby increasing profitability and increasing prices on the quay side. The EMFAF will also allow agencies to research, gather data and explore innovation in order to guide the seafood sector to more sustainable growth.

5 – Promote knowledge transfer and the development of lifelong skills (including digital literacy in all sectors).

The Irish seafood sector has been operating close to its traditions, relying on informal knowledge transfer between generations and has been slower to adapt to innovations, market changes and capitalise on opportunities. The workforce demography of the seafood sector, and in particular fisheries, is represented by older age groups who have amassed significant knowledge through their own operations. As the older cohorts leave the sector, there is a risk of this knowledge being lost. At the same time, many older fishers may be slower to adapt to newer technologies. There is a need to develop newer, younger fishers and at the same time up-skill existing fishers to embrace new technologies and new practices. It is also essential to ensure all fishers have the knowledge and tools required to implement climate adaptation practices.

Under the EMFF programme considerable work was done by our State agencies, in collaboration with industry, to develop new fishing processes and gear, explore the commercial potential of underutilised species, diversification in aquaculture and new production methods in processing. This needs to continue to ensure the future sustainability of the sector, and work is required in order to implement the findings of this type of exploratory work in a commercial setting.

Within our State agencies, there has been considerable work carried out in data collection, scientific and environmental research and industry research. Increasing our knowledge of the marine environment will not only protect our natural resources but also allow for operators in the seafood sector to capitalise on opportunities. The continuation of this work is vital to ensuring the management of our oceans and is best leveraged through sharing of knowledge between our State agencies and between member states.

The EMFAF programme will facilitate training, industry collaboration and collaboration with public bodies to ensure seafood enterprises and their workforces have the knowledge and expertise to grow

in an innovative and sustainable manner, and public bodies can effectively contribute to the national and EU body of knowledge on the marine environment.

Mission 3 - Vibrant and sustainable coastal communities driven to implement creative community-based strategies to enhance economic opportunity and ensure a dynamic framework for quality growth and development

1 – Support the CLLD approach to economic development in coastal communities by building capacity and developing greater co-operation between all relevant stakeholders in coastal communities

Community Led Local Development (CLLD) empowers coastal communities to support initiatives to create employment and economic activity to sustain livelihoods in an area-based approach and accordingly has a key role to play in addressing the impacts of the TCA, Brexit, climate change, protection of marine biodiversity, growth of the blue economy and the sustainable growth of the seafood sector in these communities.

This initiative is focused on community-led development to enhance the economic opportunities and social sustainability of Fisheries and Aquaculture dependent areas. Each Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) has, through a process of public consultation, developed a Local development Strategy to support economic activity in their areas. This bottom-up approach ensures that EMFAF funding is directed to areas which are important to those communities.

Seven Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) have been created covering the whole coastline of Ireland. This structure will continue under the EMFAF programme. The achievements of the FLAGs and the work to develop and implement their Local Development Strategies (LDS) cannot be overstated. Over the EMFF period, these seven FLAGs provided supports of €11.8 million for the implementation of 841 projects which led to the creation of 235 FTE jobs and the maintenance of a further 341 FTE jobs.

The EMFAF programme will provide supports to the selected FLAGs to implement their local development strategy. The EMFAF will also provide supports like training, animation, capacity building where required to ensure that FLAGs can implement their LDS in an effective manner.

2 – Support diversification into areas such as tourism and the blue economy within coastal communities

Ireland's Blue Economy is pivoting towards better stewardship of its marine or 'blue' resources, going beyond viewing the ocean solely as a mechanism for economic exploitation but also as a precious natural asset that needs to be protected. By highlighting the close linkages between the ocean, climate change, and the wellbeing of the people, building a sustainable Blue Economy is a key priority. This means better conservation efforts for coastlines and marine habitats, a rise in investments into new technologies and businesses, and commercial and job opportunities across a range of marine sectors. Ireland's extensive marine environment already provides a wide range of ecosystem services in support of fisheries, aquaculture, recreation, and biotechnology.

The EMFAF with its limited amount of funding cannot address all sectors of the blue economy but what it can do is support fisheries and aquaculture communities to expand their activities into other areas of the blue economy. As part of the CLLD approach, coastal communities can take account of the blue economy in the LDS and where required provide supports to community members to diversify into other areas.

Mission 4 – Ensure effective management and implementation of the EMFAF programme

In order for Ireland to achieve the vision and missions described above there is a strong need to ensure that the EMFAF programme has an effective management and control system in place and where required, improvements made to allow for the effective implementation and management of the EMFAF programme over its lifetime. In 2020, the EMFF Managing Authority entered into a contract to evaluate the EMFF Programme 2014-2020. On completion of these evaluations, a number of areas were identified in the EMFF Programme 2014-2020 which merit attention in order to bring about improvements in the delivery of the SDP 2021-2027. Some of the recommendations provided include new technology for grant management, training, effective collection of indicator data, simplification of grant processes, clear communication and publicity strategy.

The EMFAF programme through technical assistance will allow the EMFAF Managing Authority to support actions that allow the recommendations to be implemented over the programme period. The main actions will include:

- The development of a new grant management system which will facilitate online application to support schemes, simplify administration for all implementing bodies and beneficiaries and strengthen reporting requirements and the collection of indicator data.
- Provision of administrative capacity for all implementing bodies to ensure effective management of EU funds
- Provision of training to all bodies in areas such as State aid, procurement, anti-fraud and equality and diversity.
- Supporting the EMFAF communications strategy over the programming period.

Section 1 of the Programme document also contains two tables

- Table 1A SWOT analysis and needs outlines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) process for all seafood sectors and outlined the specific needs required for the sectors.
- Table 1A: Priority justification takes the information from the SWOT to develop the justifications for identifying how the EMFAF will provide support to relevant actions to meet the needs identified in the SWOT process.

Detailed information is provided in both tables on the SWOT, Needs and justification of EMFAF support for all four priorities of the EMFAF programme.

Section 2 – Priorities

This section provides information in tabular format to cover multiple areas under each priority including actions implemented, target groups, indicators, types of operations etc.

The following tables summarise the actions proposed under each EMFAF priority within the programme. Detailed information on other areas can be found in the programme document.

Priority 1 - Fostering sustainable fisheries and the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources.

Specific Objective	Action
<p>Strengthening economically, socially and environmentally sustainable fishing activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to reduce unwanted catches. • Actions to improve the onboard quality and added value of the catch and enhance traceability and certification of seafood. • Actions to support young fishermen, particularly existing crew of SSCF vessels, to enter the sector and facilitate generational renewal. • Actions to improve health, safety and working conditions on board fishing vessels. • Actions to assess the economic and biological impacts of changes to fisheries. • Actions to develop skills (e.g.; digital literacy) and capacity within the sector to engage with critical issues.
<p>Increasing energy efficiency and reducing CO2 emissions through the replacement or modernisation of engines of fishing vessels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions
<p>Fostering efficient fisheries control and enforcement, including fighting against IUU fishing, as well as reliable data for knowledge-based decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Actions to develop a fit for purpose data collection programme.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to collect transversal data and spatial distribution of fishing effort for vessels under 12m. • Actions to address specific data and knowledge gaps for data poor stocks to respond to advisory demands. • Actions to address emerging advisory needs for stock assessment, MSE, mixed fisheries and ecosystem modelling. • Actions to improve sampling efficiencies. • Actions to address specific scientific questions in relation to stock ID, mixing, assessment methods, migration patterns. • Actions to optimise and maximise research survey outputs. • Actions to ensure effective control, enforcement and inspection of all activities. • Actions to develop, implement and integrate improved technologies and development of specialist expertise capacity. • Actions to enhance the awareness of control and enforcement activities among fishermen and all other stakeholders and develop a cooperative system.
<p>Contributing to the protection and restoration of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to enhance dissemination of fisheries data and information to stakeholder including increased awareness of the Natura/MPA network and associated conservation measures. • Actions to address the issue of marine litter and continue and expand the

Clean Oceans Initiative and plastics directive.

- Actions to tackle climate action and equally to prepare for climate change impact on fishing patterns and implement climate action measures around business.
 - Action to increase awareness on marine biodiversity, habitat loss, climate change and environmental impacts.
 - Action to provide continued support for the designation and management process of Natura sites and MPAs.
 - Actions to reduce the use of fishing gear most harmful to biodiversity.
 - Actions to support restoration to improve the status of Habitats Directive Annex IV habitats and species.
 - Actions to support appropriate Control and Enforcement of fisheries management measures related to Natura/MPA site management (SFPA).
 - Actions to manage and control the introduction and spread of invasive marine species by the fishing and aquaculture sectors
 - Actions to increase co-ordination and pace at which new measures for biodiversity protection are implemented within and across sectors and in response to scientific advice through knowledge sharing
 - Actions to improve information-sharing across decision- making bodies to facilitate cumulative impact assessments as required by the EIA Directive and Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directives.
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Priority 2 - Fostering sustainable aquaculture activities, and processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products, thus contributing to food security in the Union.

Specific Objective	Action
<p>Promoting sustainable aquaculture activities, especially strengthening the competitiveness of aquaculture production, while ensuring that the activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to utilise technology and enhanced knowledge to facilitate growth. • Actions to promote the sustainable development of new and existing enterprises. • Actions to reduce, recover, and dispose of marine litter. • Actions to protect biodiversity in marine habitats. • Actions to build public and stakeholder awareness of the importance of the Irish aquaculture sector. • Actions to review and address fragmentation across Irish aquaculture sector. • Actions to coordinate aquaculture’s participation in the National marine spatial planning process. • Actions to reinforce a streamlined and efficient licensing.
<p>Promoting marketing, quality and added value of fisheries and aquaculture products, as well as processing of those products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to differentiate Irish products in order to expand access to high-value, niche markets globally. • Actions to support investment in measures relating to logistics and market access of fisheries and aquaculture. • Actions to support the development of the processing sector by adding value to raw material. • Actions to support the development of operational optimisation in the processing sector.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to build competitiveness, promote economies of scale and employment in the processing sector. • Actions to encourage open access to raw material. • Actions to utilise technology and enhanced knowledge to facilitate growth in the processing sector. • Actions to assist processors in developing existing and creating new markets for Irish seafood. • Actions to support blue bioeconomy and marine biorefinery development in the processing sector. • Actions to develop industry skills. • Actions to support the preparation and implementation of Producer Organisations' production and marketing plans, encourage development of PO's and facilitate formation of new PO's.
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Priority 3 - Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities.

Specific Objective	Action
<p>Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the sustainable development of fishing and aquaculture communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to diversify the income of fishers and coastal community economy. • Actions that identify innovations that can lead to a transition towards smarter growth in coastal areas. • Actions to develop and promote niche tourism

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to build capacity develop greater co-operation between all relevant stakeholders in coastal. • Actions to ensure that Ireland’s coastal resource is managed to sustain its physical character and environmental quality. • Actions to protect and promote the sense of place and culture and the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Irish coastal communities.
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Priority 4 - Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed.

Specific Objective	Action
<p>Strengthening sustainable sea and ocean management through the promotion of marine knowledge, maritime surveillance or coast guard cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions relating to data collection, access and analysis that will deliver on national obligations and measure changes in the marine environment. • Actions to ensure data compatibility. • Actions to improve the understanding of the impacts of human activities and climate change on the marine environment. • Actions that streamline Marine data coordination and processing needs • Actions to enhance data quality to support evidence-based decision making. • Actions to ensure that Irish marine data and knowledge are made available to all relevant stakeholders. • Actions to understand different stakeholder needs and to ensure EMFAF programme outputs are available to developers, stakeholders and end-users in appropriate formats.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to increase cooperation, research collaboration and information sharing at national, EU and international level. • Actions to quantify the potential of coastal habitats as carbon sinks. • Actions to improve understanding of marine activities that could increase resilience to climate change.
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Section 3 – Financing Plan

EMFAF Financial appropriations by year

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
	27,613,863	26,695,226	25,746,588	23,326,226	19,341,754	19,645,895	142,369,552

Total financial allocations by Specific Objective

Priority	Specific objective	Basis for calculation	Union contribution		National contribution	Total
			Union contribution without TA pursuant to Article 36(5) CPR	Union contribution for TA pursuant to Article 36(5) CPR		
1. Fostering sustainable fisheries and the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources	1.1.1. Strengthening economically, socially and environmentally sustainable fishing activities. All operations except those supported under Articles 17 and 19	Public	13,910,898.00	834,659.00	13,100,000.00	27,845,557.00
	1.1.2. Strengthening economically, socially and environmentally sustainable fishing activities. Operations supported under Articles 17 and 19	Public	1,000,000.00	60,000.00	1,000,000.00	2,060,000.00
	1.2. Increasing energy efficiency and reducing CO2 emissions through the replacement or modernisation of engines of fishing vessels	Public	1,000,000.00	60,000.00	1,000,000.00	2,060,000.00
	1.3. Promoting the adjustment of fishing capacity to fishing opportunities in cases of permanent cessation of fishing activities and contributing to a fair standard of living in cases of temporary cessation of fishing activities	Public				

	1.4. Fostering efficient fisheries control and enforcement, including fighting against IUU fishing, as well as reliable data for knowledge-based decision-making	Public	50,000,000.00	3,000,000.00	45,000,000.00	98,000,000.00
	1.6. Contributing to the protection and restoration of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems	Public	4,500,000.00	270,000.00	3,500,000.00	8,270,000.00
2. Fostering sustainable aquaculture activities, and processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products, thus contributing to food security in the Union	2.1. Promoting sustainable aquaculture activities, especially strengthening the competitiveness of aquaculture production, while ensuring that the activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term	Public	16,000,000.00	960,000.00	12,500,000.00	29,460,000.00
	2.2. Promoting marketing, quality and added value of fisheries and aquaculture products, as well as processing of those products	Public	35,600,000.00	2,136,000.00	30,900,000.00	68,636,000.00
3. Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities	3.1. Enabling a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island and inland areas, and fostering the sustainable development of fishing and aquaculture communities	Public	9,000,000.00	540,000.00	6,000,000.00	15,540,000.00
4. Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling seas and oceans to be safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed	4.1. Strengthening sustainable sea and ocean management through the promotion of marine knowledge, maritime surveillance or coast guard cooperation	Public	3,300,000.00	198,000.00	3,300,000.00	6,798,000.00

Section 4 – Enabling Conditions

This section outlines the Horizontal Enabling conditions (HECs) that are required from each Member state to ensure effective management of all EU funds under the control.

There are four HEC's that are applicable to all funds in Ireland and the assessment of the conditions was carried out a national level under the Partnership Agreement between Ireland and the Commission. These HEC's are than applied to all EU fund including the EMFAF programme.

Detailed information is found in the programme document but the four HECs applied are :

1. Effective monitoring mechanisms of the public procurement market.
2. Tools and capacity for effective application of State aid rules
3. Effective application and implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
4. Implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCPRD) in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.

Section 5 – Programme Authorities

This section describes the names and contacts information of the programme authorities.

Section 6 – Partnership.

This section outlines how the EMFAF Programme was developed in partnership with all relevant stakeholders. Detailed information is provided in the programme document. Once the public consultation process is completed this section will be updated to take account of the process and submissions received etc.

Section7 – Communication and visibility.

This section outlines the information and publicity actions to be implemented under the EMFAF programming period.

Communication, visibility and transparency actions will be implemented in accordance with the CPR provisions under article 46-50 and in accordance with the EMFAF Regulation and they will aim at the visibility of the programme and the funding opportunities of the EMFAF.

The need for effective communication has a legal basis in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which guarantees the right of all citizens to be informed about European issues. The MA will respect the integrity of this right by using all appropriate means to communicate to key stakeholders and, in particular, the general public, the opportunities, achievements and impact of the EMFAF Operational Programme in a visible, open and transparent way.

The MA will communicate the role, opportunities, results and impact of the EMFAF in order to contribute to the openness and transparency of the delivery of the EMFAF OP for Ireland.