

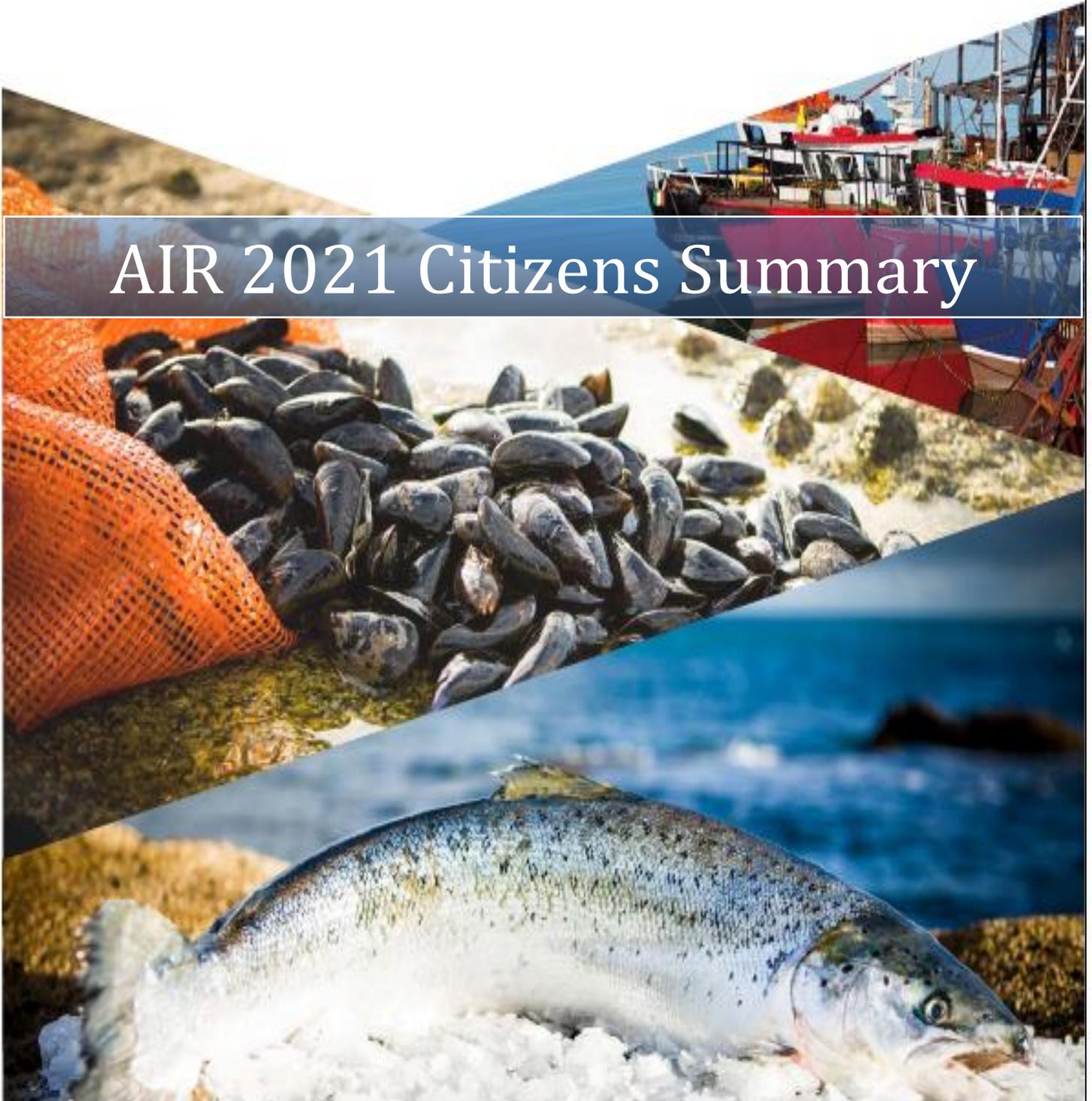


**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



**European Maritime
& Fisheries Fund**

AIR 2021 Citizens Summary



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1. - Introduction

The aim of the Citizens Summary is to provide a summary of the eight Annual Implementation Report (AIR) for the EMFF OP 2014-2020, which reports on the progress achieved under the EMFF OP for the year 2021.

2. - Background

Following approval by the Government of Ireland's of its EMFF Operational Programme and its adoption by the European Commission on 4 December 2015, the Programme was formally launched on 14 January 2016. The Programme is implemented under Regulation 508/2014 (European Maritime and Fisheries Fund). This is the principal source of development funding for the seafood sector until approximately 2023 and provides a range of support measures for fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing.

A modification was made to the Operational Programme in May 2021 to re-allocate funds within Priorities to ensure full drawdown of EMFF funds to Ireland. The revised financial allocations are as follows:

Financial Allocations by Union Priority

Union Priority	EU	National	Total
1 - Promoting environmentally sustainable, resource efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge based fisheries	€32,076,587	€31,979,537	€64,056,124
2 - Fostering environmentally sustainable, resource efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge based aquaculture	€15,791,155	€15,791,155	€31,582,310
3 - Fostering the implementation of the CFP	€69,790,720	€15,133,482	€84,924,202
4 - Increasing employment and territorial cohesion	€6,000,000	€6,000,000	€12,000,000
5 - Fostering marketing and processing	€15,500,000	€15,500,000	€31,000,000
6 - Fostering the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy	€5,334,672	€5,334,672	€10,669,344
7 - Technical assistance	€3,108,845	€3,108,845	€6,217,690
Total	€147,601,979	€92,847,691	€240,449,670

3. – Overview

In 2021 Ireland's EMFF Programme invested a total of €26.82 million in Ireland's seafood sector through 18 schemes. The investment level was very positive and while lower than the 2020 allocation of €32 million, this was to be expected as the majority of funds are already invested in previous years and the Programme is tapering towards its end.

Cumulatively, in the eight years of EMFF Programme implementation up to 31 December 2021, Ireland's EMFF Programme approved grants of €233.9 million to 3,160 projects across all Priorities, which equates to 97.2% of the overall budget available under the Programme. The total expenditure declared by beneficiaries in the same period was €213.9 million, which equates to 89.4% of the Programme budget. Some of the approved projects will continue to spend and to draw down grant aid in 2022/23.

In 2021, approximately 30% of public aid was directed towards capital investment in fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing, while 70% was directed towards knowledge related measures (innovation, studies, services etc).

Fisheries was the largest area of investment in 2021 at €7.3 million, with aquaculture €7.2 million, marketing and processing €5 million, control and enforcement €3.6 million, Integrated Maritime Policy €1.4 million and FLAGS €1.3 million.

There was continued strong interest in 2021 in funding of innovation, research and professional advice projects across fisheries, aquaculture, and processing (€4.77 million).

The 7 Fisheries Local Action Groups provided aid of €1.31 million to 86 projects which ensured that the full budget of €12million was spent over the lifetime of the programme even though the FLAG scheme did not begin project selection until 2016.

Payments under the Covid-19 Aquaculture Support Scheme continued into 2021 with 15 oyster and rope mussel producers being provided aid of €78,400 aid for their Covid related losses in the first half of 2020.

The Marine Institute continued to implement projects in 2021 under the Marine Biodiversity and Blue Growth Schemes which amounted to €2.1million of public expenditure.

As all EMFF funds available for Data Collection were exhausted in 2019, there were no EMFF funds available for 2021 and the approximately €8 million Data Collection costs were funded under the

EMFAF 2021-27. In June 2020, the Sustainable Fisheries Part B scheme, which supports investment on board fishing vessels, was closed to new applications as its funds were exhausted, but approved grants continued to be paid in 2021 where public expenditure of €825,000 was paid to 23 vessel owners. These two areas are early markers of the depletion of funds as the Programme nears its end, and this issue will be much more significant in 2022.

EU funds for control and enforcement investment continued to be suspended by the European Commission throughout 2021 as Ireland was not yet fully compliant with the points system requirements of the Control Regulation. While regulations were enacted in 2020 to implement the points system for vessel owners, primary legislation was required to implement the system for masters of vessels (this legislation subsequently enacted in 2022). Suspended funds reached €24.5 million by end 2021. Ireland anticipates lifting of the suspension in 2022..

In 2020, the European Commission had raised concerns with the Managing Authority about the quality of data for certain result indicators and invited the Managing Authority to carry out a review of certain Priorities with a view to identifying reliable data and incorporating these revised result indicators into this Annual Implementation Report and the Infosys Report. A similar issue was identified in the Programme Evaluation commissioned by Ireland and published in 2020. Significant work was undertaken in 2021 by the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies on Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5 and the revised result indicator data is reflected in this report. Updated indicators reflect enhanced data on private projects, and these indicators will be further revised as enhanced data on the impacts of public projects is developed in 2022. Further work will be carried out in 2022 following on from meetings held with DG MARE to identify potential solutions for other result indicators which will be utilised over the remainder of the programme and its closure.

As mentioned previously the EMFF programme is reaching its end point and funds are becoming depleted to the point that a majority of public facing schemes have now been closed to applications and the EMFF Managing Authority is now in the process of prioritising the remaining funds to ensure full drawdown of EMFF funds to Ireland over the remaining 2022/2023 period.

4. - EMFF Implementation 2021

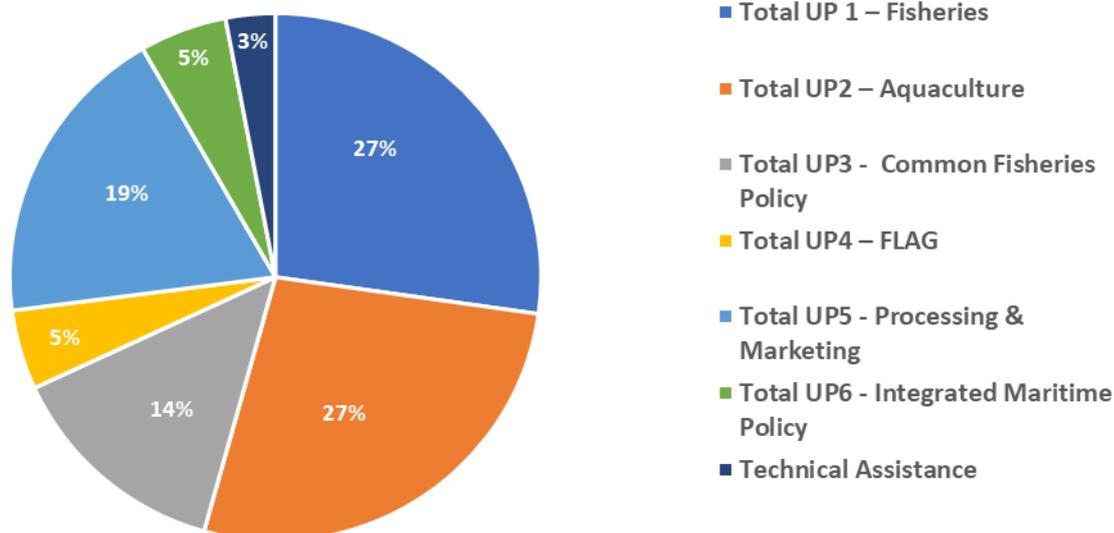
In 2021, 18 schemes were funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme for Ireland. The table below lists the expenditure for 2021 on each of the schemes.

Scheme Name	Public Expenditure
Sustainable Fisheries Scheme	€2,865,884
New Fishermen Scheme	€67,250
Marine Biodiversity Scheme (partial – See UP6)	€731,734
Inshore Fisheries Conservation Scheme	€545,980
Seafood Innovation & Business Planning Scheme	€1,662,628
Seafood Capacity Building Scheme	€1,476
Seafood Training Scheme	€186,051
Control & Enforcement Scheme – Quota Balancing & Sea Fisheries Management systems (partial see UP3)	€1,242,855
Total UP 1 – Fisheries	€7,303,858
Sustainable Aquaculture Scheme	€2,796,378
Knowledge Gateway Scheme	€3,114,903
Covid-19 Aquaculture Scheme	€78,400
EMFF Aquaculture System	€1,280,958
Total UP2 – Aquaculture	€7,270,639
Control & Enforcement Scheme (partial – See UP1)	€3,691,461
Data Collection Scheme	€0
Total UP3 - Common Fisheries Policy	€3,691,461
Fisheries Local Area Development Scheme (FLAGs)	€1,309,306
Total UP4 – FLAG	€1,309,306
Producer Organisation Scheme	€302,661
Seafood Promotion Scheme	€2,006,076
Seafood Processing Capital Investment Scheme	€2,549,165
Seafood Scaling and New Market Development Scheme	€155,635
Total UP5 - Processing & Marketing	€5,013,537
Blue Growth and Marine Spatial Planning Scheme	€903,145
Marine Biodiversity (partial see – UP1)	€523,601
Total UP6 - Integrated Maritime Policy	€1,426,746
Technical Assistance	€808,763
GRAND TOTAL	€26,824,310

2021 Expenditure Claims submitted to EU

Scheme	Total Investment	Grant Aid	EU	National
Sustainable Fisheries	€5,685,974	€3,356,566	€1,678,283	€1,678,283
Inshore Conservation	€237,033	€171,857	€85,928	€85,929
Marine Biodiversity	€1,862,315	€1,862,315	€931,157	€931,158
Young Fishermen	€463,023	€115,756	€57,878	€57,878
Seafood Training	€174,971	€96,228	€48,114	€48,114
Sustainable Aquaculture	€7,796,708	€3,139,929	€1,569,964	€1,569,965
Knowledge Gateway	€4,162,044	€3,920,585	€1,960,292	€1,960,293
Covid-19 Aquaculture	€1,247,575	€1,247,575	€623,787	€623,788
Control & Enforcement	€1,471,895	€1,471,895	€735,947	€735,948
FLAG	€5,659,659	€3,542,097	€1,771,048	€1,771,049
Producer Organisations	€580,445	€358,630	€179,315	€179,315
Seafood Innovation and Business Planning	€1,492,688	€1,365,589	€682,794	€682,795
Seafood Processing	€6,469,145	€1,744,588	€872,294	€872,294
Seafood Scaling & New Market Development	€401,127	€258,240	€129,120	€129,120
Blue Growth & Marine Spatial Planning	€1,833,255	€1,833,255	€916,627	€916,628
TOTAL	€39,537,857	€24,485,105	€12,242,548	€12,242,557

EMFF OP SPEND 2021



5.1 - Union Priority 1- Sustainable Development of Fisheries

Overall experience of the implementation of the EMFF in the fisheries sector under UP1 has been increasingly positive over the duration of the programme. Although some schemes were not fully implemented until 2018 all the schemes have seen increased demand from the sector with the following schemes showing most promise.

- New Fishermen Scheme - There was a welcome improved interest in the Scheme in recent years and this continued into 2021 especially in the Small-Scale Coastal Fisheries fleet (SSCF)
- Sustainable Fisheries Part B - Demand under this scheme was exceptionally strong in 2020. Unfortunately, this scheme was closed to applications in 2020 but payments were still ongoing in 2021.
- Seafood Training Scheme - Increased demand for supports under this scheme continued in 2021.

Up to the end of 2021 total public expenditure of approx. €61.4m has been committed to projects of which approx. €56.4m has been paid which amounts to a 95.9% commitment rate and an 88.0% payment rate when compared to financial targets set out in OP.

Positive progress has been made as regards some output indicators set out in Performance framework. Result indicator data review was carried out in 2021 for UP1. Progress has been made on identifying and validating data with FAME and DG MARE with further work to be carried out in 2022.

In 2021, total public expenditure of approx. €7.304m was spent on 339 projects under 8 separate schemes.

Marine Biodiversity Scheme (Article 40)

In 2021, some €731,734 of public expenditure was invested under this scheme (MBS) under Union Priority 1 for 12 projects. One project had commenced in 2018, three in 2019, and six in 2020 and these were continued in 2021. Two new projects were approved and started in 2021.

Four projects were completed in 2021:

- Fish species occurrence and food-web dynamics in a coastal lagoon,
- Baseline habitat and biodiversity information.
- Evaluation of Biodiversity and habitat mapping.
- Ecological risk assessment for pressures that vary in time and space.

Control & Enforcement Scheme (Article 36).

In 2021 public expenditure of approx. €1.243 million was allocated to support the 2 projects relating to

- Quota Balancing System
- Online communication system to enable online delivery of important fishery documents to Fishers

New Fishermen Scheme (Article 31)

1 project completed under the scheme with public expenditure of €67,250 in 2021.

Sustainable Fisheries Scheme

Part A - Public Interest Projects (Articles 26,27,28,29,37,39,40,41,68)

In 2021, 13 BIM-led projects for the benefit of the seafood sector and public good were supported with public expenditure of €1.47 million. These projects covered a wide range of areas of importance to the catching sector as follows:

- Development and testing of selective fishing gears.
- Advisory Services to the seafood sector.
- Certification and other sustainability initiatives.
- Improving the management of onboard and onshore seafood industry generated waste streams.
- Data and strategic insights to increase competitiveness and address strategic industry requirements.
- Development of a formed bait for the commercial pot fishery for whelk
- An analysis of the labour force of the Irish fishing fleet

- Support to the industry was provided for business and trade issues arising from Brexit

Two projects for the benefit of the seafood sector were completed by the Marine Institute with public expenditure of €156,005. These two projects were for a Bluefin Tuna tracking programme and development of an information sharing network.

Part B - On Board Investments (Articles 32,38,40,41,42,76)

In 2021, 23 Part B projects were supported with public expenditure of €825,487.69.

Projects supported in 2021 included:

- Selective gears
- Equipment to improve hygiene, health and working conditions on board
- Equipment to improve quality on board and add value
- Equipment to improve fuel efficiency
- Engine replacement for vessels under 12 metres
- Gear monitoring equipment and fuel-efficient fishing gears

Part C - Promoting Quality and Added Value Onshore (Articles 42,43,68,69,76)

In 2021, 2 projects received public aid totalling €414,391.35. These projects were infrastructure improvement projects which aim to assist fishermen to meet the challenges of the landing obligation.

Inshore Fisheries Conservation Scheme (Articles 26, 27, 28, 29, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43 and 44)

In 2021, 18 private industry projects were supported with public expenditure totalling €135,158.53. These projects related to onshore refrigeration facilities for individual fishermen.

A total of 92 projects concerning v-notching of lobsters received public aid totalling €330,821.23

In 2021, the six Regional Inshore Fisheries Forums (RIFFs) and the National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF) were supported with public expenditure of €80,000 to hold meetings and improve capacity within the forums. The RIFFs were very active in supporting the work of NIFF, particularly its participation in the Seafood Task Force.

Seafood Innovation and Business Planning Scheme (Article 26 & 27)

In 2021, 11 BIM led projects for the benefit of the seafood sector were undertaken and supported with public expenditure totalling €1.49m. Projects included:

- Centre of Excellence
- Global Knowledge Trawl
- Innovation Advisory Programme
- Innovation Process
- MSC Project – Marine Functional Ingredients
- Whitefish Innovations
- Project Atlantic
- Assessing New Technologies for the Pelagic Sector
- Brexit Seafood Industry Supports
- Process Efficiency Programme
- Green Seafood

In addition, a further 6 projects from seafood enterprises related to new product development and process efficiency were supported under the Scheme with public expenditure totalling €172,628.41.

Seafood Capacity Building Scheme (Article 29)

In 2021, there was one BIM led project under its internal work programme for the benefit of the sector at a cost of €1,476 in public expenditure. The project focused on the European Maritime Day 2021.

Seafood Training Scheme (Article 29 & Article 30)

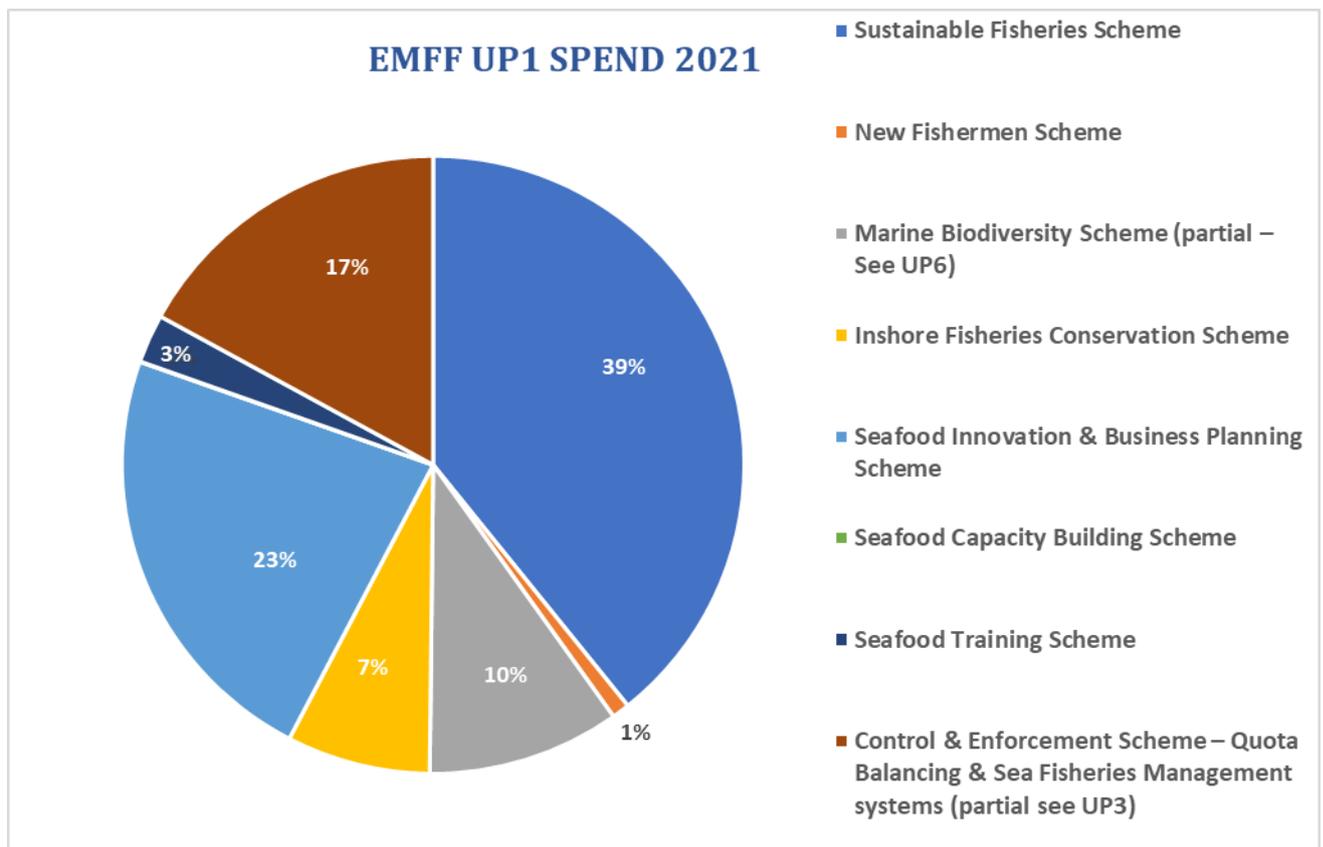
In 2021, 152 applications were approved/paid to support individuals in their training needs and public expenditure amounting to €99,530.36 was allocated as a result

In 2021, 3 BIM led projects for the benefit of the seafood sector were undertaken and supported with public expenditure totalling €86,521.

The three programmes focused on upskilling of junior and mid-level managers to support leaders in the scaling of their seafood business, the development of talent development skillsets and leadership development in the seafood industry.

UP1 – Total Public Expenditure in 2021

Scheme Name	Public Expenditure
Sustainable Fisheries Scheme	€2,865,884
New Fishermen Scheme	€67,250
Marine Biodiversity Scheme (partial – See UP6)	€731,734
Inshore Fisheries Conservation Scheme	€545,980
Seafood Innovation & Business Planning Scheme	€1,662,628
Seafood Capacity Building Scheme	€1,476
Seafood Training Scheme	€186,051
Control & Enforcement Scheme – Quota Balancing & Sea Fisheries Management systems (partial see UP3)	€1,242,855
Total UP 1 – Fisheries	€7,303,858



5.2 - Union Priority 2 - Sustainable Development of Aquaculture

Overall experience of the implementation of the EMFF in aquaculture has been increasingly positive over the duration of the programme. Improvements in the national aquaculture licencing system has meant that more businesses are eligible to apply for funding to develop their farms.

The Sustainable Aquaculture Scheme is the main funding mechanism for the aquaculture sector for the purchase of capital equipment to develop, modernise and enhance the environmental sustainability of their businesses.

The Knowledge Gateway Scheme is concerned with the promotion of knowledge, innovation and technology in the aquaculture sector. Uptake at the start of the programme was slow as the connections between the aquaculture sector and research bodies were not established. Over the last number of years, the research institutions have formed connections with the aquaculture sector through BIM which has increased the uptake for projects under the scheme.

In 2021, the EMFF Programme invested €7.27 million in support of 89 aquaculture projects and through four support schemes under Union Priority Two. This investment was split between supports for capital investment and for innovation/research/advice and Covid 19 support.

Up to the end of 2021 total public expenditure of approx. €29.702m has been committed to projects of which €26.342m has been paid which amounts to a 94.1% commitment rate and an 83.4% payment rate when compared to financial targets set out in OP.

Positive progress has been made as regards one output indicator (productive investments). Result indicator data review was carried out in 2021 for UP2. Progress has been made on identifying and validating data following meetings with FAME and DG Mare with further work to be carried out in 2022.

Knowledge Gateway Scheme (Articles 47, 49, 50, 51, 56 and 68)

The objective of the Knowledge Gateway Scheme is to promote knowledge, innovation and technology with focus on research, new species development, managing diseases, business planning advisory, training, networking and knowledge transfer.

In 2021, two external industry research projects from the aquaculture sector and research institutions were supported under the Knowledge Gateway Scheme with public expenditure of €18,869.74.

Projects under this scheme are generally multiannual in nature. Due to Covid 19 restrictions, 9 grant recipients requested extensions to the completion dates on projects until 2022.

A further 15 internal BIM Work Programme projects with a total spend of €3,096,033 were undertaken by BIM to foster environmentally sustainable, resource efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based aquaculture. Of these projects 6 were advisory services, 5 innovation and 4 communications and promotion.

Project outputs included:

- The analysis of socio-economic effects of aquaculture in selected bays
- Brexit advisory services to the aquaculture sector
- Invasive alien species surveys and risk assessments for aquaculture
- Trialling new technologies in salmonid aquaculture such as freshwater lens and bubble curtain to deal with disease and fish welfare issue.

Sustainable Aquaculture Scheme (Articles 48, 52, 53 and 55)

During 2021, 56 external industry projects were supported under the Sustainable Aquaculture Scheme on which grant aid of €2,796,378.15 was paid. The majority of projects were for building capacity in the aquaculture sector and a small number of projects were related to organic aquaculture certification.

The oyster sector continues to show high levels of investment in capital equipment projects but there is increasing demand from other sectors, including novel species such as seaweed.

EMFF Aquaculture System (Article 51)

In 2021, a project was approved to develop a data management and information system with online aquaculture licence application and tracking functionality and spatial mapping of aquaculture sites and exclusion areas called the Aquaculture System Project, AQUAMIS.

The Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine invested public expenditure of €1.281 million in 2021 for AQUAMIS Phase 1. Work involved the commencement of Aquaculture Licence internal application and exchange of detail with the Marine Institute. Further development work under these activities will be advanced in 2022.

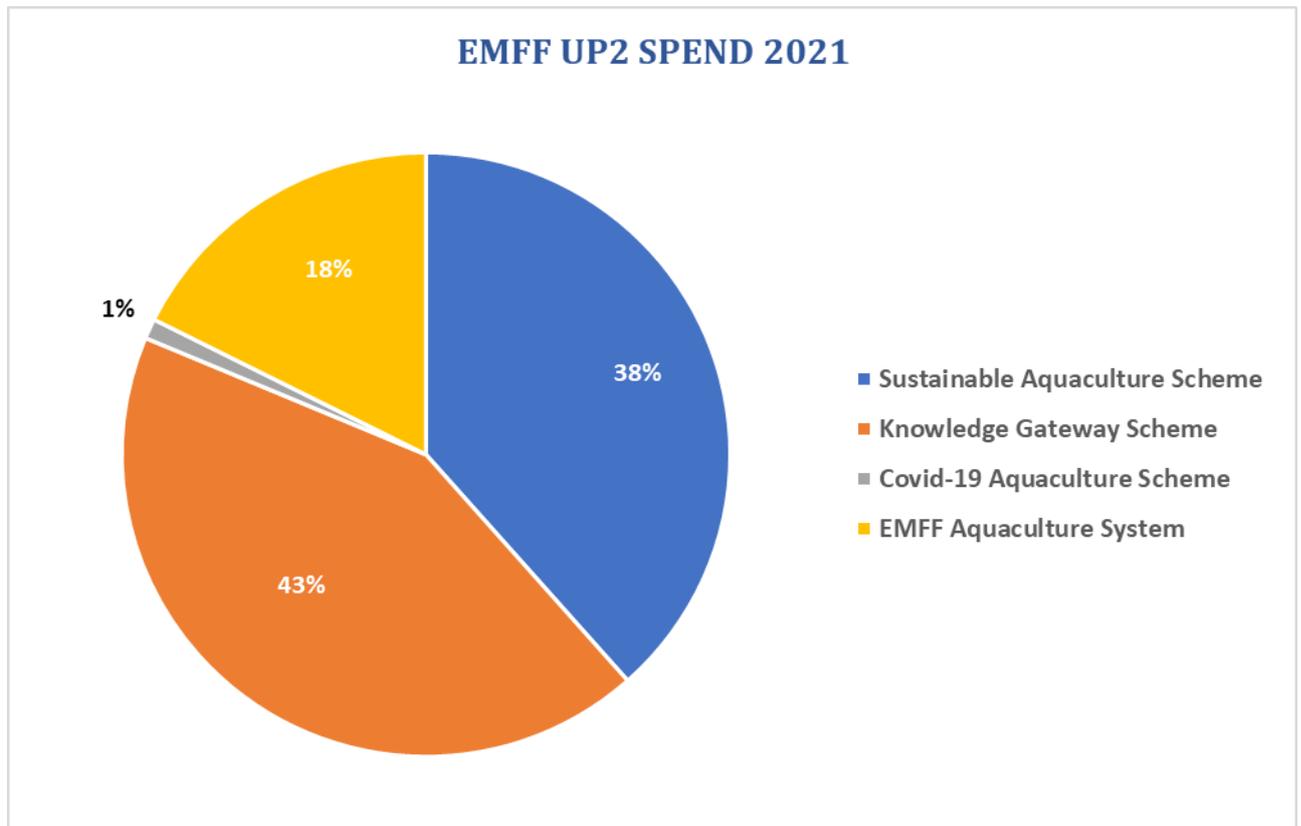
Covid 19 Aquaculture Support Scheme (Article 55)

A new external industry grant aid Scheme titled the Covid-19 Aquaculture Support Scheme was made available to rope mussel and bag and trestle culture 'gigas' oyster farmers only. Eligibility was confined to those enterprises that had stock on site February to June 2020.

For the purposes of the Scheme, producers were classified, and grant payments capped, according to previous production levels contained in their returns over the period 2017-19. During 2021, 16 of the remaining (2020) approved applications aquaculture enterprises were funded with public expenditure support of €78,400

UP 2 – Total Public Expenditure in 2021

Scheme Name	Public Expenditure
Sustainable Aquaculture Scheme	€2,796,378
Knowledge Gateway Scheme	€3,114,903
Covid-19 Aquaculture Scheme	€78,400
EMFF Aquaculture System	€1,280,958
Total UP2 – Aquaculture	€7,270,639



5.3 - Union Priority 3 – Implementing the CFP - (Data Collection and Control & Enforcement)

In 2021, the EMFF Programme provided public expenditure totalling approx. €3.691m in support of 12 projects through one support scheme under Union Priority 3.

Up to the end of 2021 total public expenditure of €84.924 m has been committed to projects of which €76.257m has been paid which amounts to a 100% commitment rate and an 89.8% payment rate when compared to financial targets set out in OP.

As regards output and result indicators positive progress has been made and it is envisaged that output indicator targets will be achieved by the closure of the programme.

[Control and Enforcement Scheme \(Article 76\)](#)

The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority invested € 3.691 million of public expenditure in 2021 across a range of qualifying projects, many of which are multi-annual projects that were progressed or initiated during the year as described below. In 2021, the budget for IT development and quality assurance services provided by DAFM Information Management Technology team was managed by the SFPA.

The projects currently underway by the SFPA include:

- **VALID:** The VALID project sets out the guidelines for a validation system as defined in the Control Regulation (EC) N° 1224/2009 Art.109 and Control Implementing Regulation (EU) N° 404/2011 Art.144-145. Member States are required to develop automated systems and supporting databases for the purpose of validation of data in accordance with the regulation, including cross-checking, analyses and verifications. Phase 1 which completed in 2020 focused on the introduction of an automated crosschecking system for the Irish Control Authorities. In 2021, Phase 2 focused on building a workflow solution to support the assignment and action of crosschecks across the SFPA. This included the development of workflows, dashboards and reports. Phase 2 was implemented in June 2021 and training rolled out to all SFPOs and the FMC in Q3 2021.
- **Compliance Promotion:** Compliance Promotion projects and initiatives continued in 2021. Since 2016, the objective of this project is to raise awareness of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) amongst stakeholders within the Irish Fishing Community. In 2021, the SFPA implemented the Confidential Line campaign to improve compliance by encouraging those working within the sea-fisheries industry as well as the general public to report suspicious or illegal activity to the SFPA.
- **ieInspect:** Enhancements to the existing ieInspect application were completed in 2021 which supported the need to remove paper-based inspections conducted under Annex

XXVII of Commission Implementing Regulation EU 404/2011. This included an upgrade to support new standard message format, UNCEFACT to support inspections for vessels from all Member States and a number of identified enhancements to support the capture of information during an inspection and reduce the time required to complete an inspection electronically.

- **Training and Exchange:** In 2021, EMFF funding provided continued support in the facilitation of regulator training for new SFPOs.
- **NEAFC:** In 2021, EMFF funding provided continued support in the facilitation of regulator training for new SFPOs.
- **ieCatch v3 for NEAFC vessels:** Commission Implementing Regulation 2020/045 requires Member States to complete all necessary technical preparations enabling the utilisation of data exchange formats and data communication systems for transmission of reports and information to the NEAFC Secretary. This includes the ability to exchange fishing logbook data, prior notification data, transshipment declaration data, and landing declaration data and to report on vessel monitoring system data. Development work commenced in 2021 to support this requirement with implementation in 2022.
- **Transportation Inspection Mobilisation:** In accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 404/2011 – Implementing Regulation, Annex XXVII, Module 5 development work commenced in 2021 to provide for the electronic data capture of transport inspection information. This will be implemented in 2022.
- **National Infringements Register:** The SFPA is responsible for the enforcement of sea-fisheries and seafood safety legislation outlined in the SFMJ Act 2006 and the FSAI Act 2009 in conjunction with any related European legislation. EU Regulation 1224/2009 establishes a community control regulatory system, with implementing regulation EU Regulation 404/2011 for ensuring compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy. In 2021, development of the Case Management System to support the enforcement function within the SFPA commenced, providing improvements in the capture and reporting of infringements, and better visibility on case files statuses. This project will complete in 2022.
- **Weighing at Landing:** The Weighing at Landing project supports the requirement to implement processes and infrastructure that meet regulatory obligations by putting in place a system that permits the adequate control prior to transport from place of landing. In 2021, this included implementation of a new weighbridge printer system in Killybegs.

- **Quality Management Systems:** Supported through Ireland’s EMFF Programme, the objective of the Quality Management System (QMS) project is to introduce a formalised system for operational processes and procedures. The QMS also sets out coordinate and direct the organisation’s activities to meet its regulatory requirements, ensuring improved efficiency on a continuous basis. In 2021, the project, implemented the organisation’s quality policy and established a process and procedure for Document Control.
- **Remote Electronic Monitoring** Through Ireland’s EMFF Programme, REM work in 2021 focused on:

- Assessment of options to integrate REM data into control activities to support Ireland in meeting the legislative requirements as outlined in national and EU legislation.
- Identification of potential technical REM solutions to independently verify catch weights and vessel activity, which would support the SFPA’s capability to measure compliance with the Landing Obligation.
- Pilot studies to determine the extent to which verification of fishing net pingers is available to support at sea and land-based inspections.

Data Collection Scheme

Due to the fact that the full budget allocated to Data Collection under the EMFF has been expended all data collection activities carried out in 2021 were supported under the EMFAF 2021-27.

UP 3 – Total Public Expenditure in 2021

Scheme Name	Public Expenditure
Control & Enforcement Scheme (partial – See UP1)	€3,691,461
Data Collection Scheme	€0
Total UP3 - Common Fisheries Policy	€3,691,461

5.4 - Union Priority 4 – Sustainable Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture Areas

Fisheries Local Area Development Scheme

In 2021, the 7 FLAGs paid out public expenditure of €1,309,306.39 relating to 86 external/industry projects. Up to the end of 2021 total public expenditure of €11.883m has been committed to projects of which €11.703m has been paid which amounts to a 99% commitment rate and a 97.5% payment rate when compared to financial targets set out in OP.

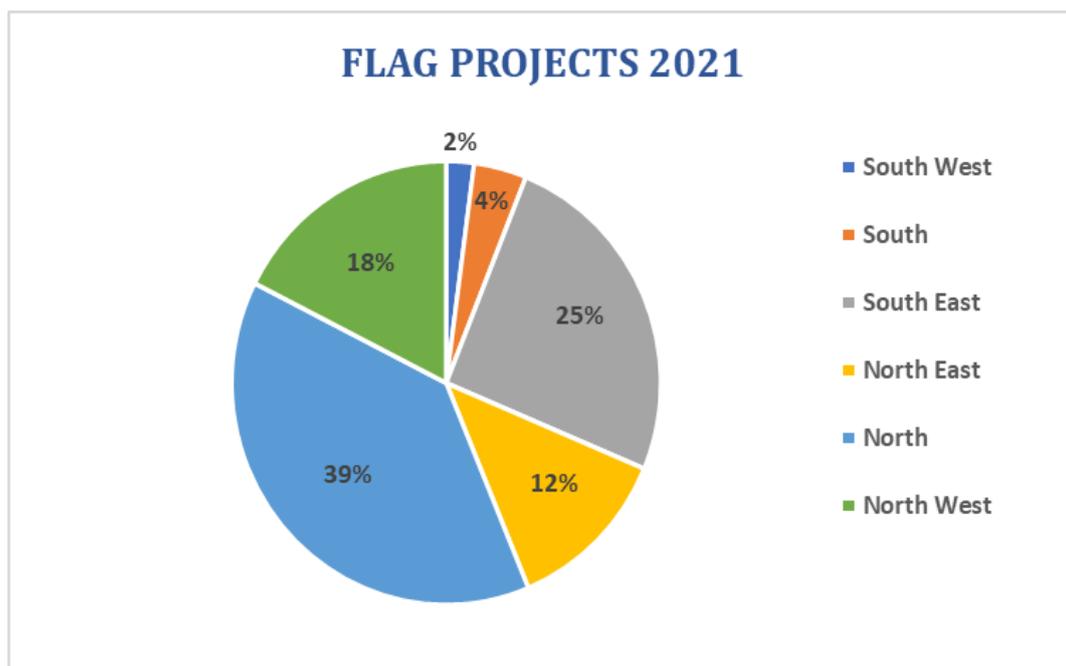
The 7 FLAGs initiated their fifth year of project calls in the early period of 2021 including some deferred from 2020. A small number of projects approved in 2021 will be completed and paid in 2022.

FLAG projects implemented in 2021 included the following:

- Capital investments in micro seafood enterprises
- Marine tourism and marine leisure projects
- Heritage projects

- Small harbour facilities and environmental projects
- Environmental and training projects

UP4 - Total Public Expenditure in 2021		
	Public Expenditure	No. Of Projects
South West	27,277.00	5
South	52,139.00	12
South East	330,552.00	22
North East	162,776.00	7
North	506,482.00	25
North West	230,097.00	15
West	-	0
TOTALS	1,309,323.00	86



5.5 - Union Priority 5 – Marketing and Processing

In 2021, the EMFF Programme supported 36 projects with public expenditure totalling €5.013m through four support schemes

Up to the end of 2021 total public expenditure of €29.683m has been committed to projects of which €29.423m has been paid which amounts to a 96.3% commitment rate and a 94.9% payment rate when compared to financial targets set out in OP.

All output indicator targets have been achieved and even exceeded under UP 5. Result indicator data review was carried out in 2021 for UP5. Progress has been made on identifying and validating data following meetings held with FAME and DG MARE with further work to be carried out in 2022.

These investments supported a broad range of activities, including:

- Promotion of seafood
- Capital investment in seafood enterprises to support value adding investments
- Market development
- Market organisation through Producer Organisations
- Consumer and market research

Seafood Promotion Scheme

In 2021, Bord Bia invested some €2.006m of EMFF funds under its approved 2021 work programme. This Work Programme contributed to funding the following initiatives:

It's international trade exhibition programme for seafood, which comprised a Bord Bia Ireland Pavilion at the following 6 international trade shows:

- Fuzhou International Fisheries Show – June 2021
- Hotelex Chengdu – July 2021
- Guangzhou Fishery & Seafood Expo – September 2021
- China Fisheries Show – October 2021
- Conxemar – October 2021
- Seafood Accelerator pan Asian buyer/supplier event – virtual trade exhibition

As a result of Covid-19 and restrictions around international travel, Irish seafood processors did not exhibit alongside Bord Bia at the 4 trade exhibitions in China. Bord Bia coordinated an Information Stand which was manned by its own local Bord Bia staff. All buyer leads secured at the shows were circulated to relevant seafood processors after each show for follow up. Three Irish seafood processors exhibited on the Bord Bia Pavilion in Conxemar, and 21 Irish seafood companies participated in Bord Bia's Seafood Accelerator Pan Asian virtual seafood trade exhibition.

Bord Bia also utilised its EMFF funds to support five Irish domestic market seafood campaigns in 2021 designed to promote the consumption of Irish landed fish and shellfish amongst Irish consumers. It also used its funding to support the sponsorship of an Irish Seafood Trails television series which aimed to educate Irish consumers about the range and diversity of Irish seafood available from the Irish catching sector and how versatile and easy it is to cook seafood. It also sponsored a seafood cookery slot on the Afternoon Show on RTE1 with cooking demonstrations run by Martin Shanahan featuring a range of Irish seafood species.

Bord Bia has also continued its placement of 'Feet on the Street' (FOTS) resources in Japan in 2021 through its EMFF funds. These additional on the ground resources resulted in the coordination and delivery of 1 national retail promotion in support of Irish pelagic fish in the largest retail group in Japan. It also resulted in the placement of 5 articles promoting Irish seafood in the largest seafood trade publications in the market generating excellent coverage of Irish seafood and the leading exporters supplying the Japanese market. Bord Bia's FOTS resources also facilitated the creation of 10 new seafood advertorials promoting Irish seafood and the translation of titles for 5 new Irish seafood

promotional videos aimed at educating the Japanese trade about seafood from Ireland. In addition, funding through the EMFF assisted in developing a database of more than 100 new trade leads across key markets in the Asian region including Thailand, Japan, Korea and Indonesia.

Bord Bia used its EMFF funds in 2021 to enhance its relationships with existing and new customers of Irish seafood across a range of international markets. A series of in-store, online and foodservice promotions and media/trade influencer events across Asia were coordinated to support and grow Irish seafood exports across these markets. Despite the challenging market environment as a result of Covid-19, Bord Bia successfully managed to coordinate 12 emerging market seafood promotions across China, Vietnam and Japan in 2021

The EMFF funding was also utilised by Bord Bia to invest in the coordination of a series of B2B and B2C campaigns in Asia to raise awareness about Irish seafood in these target markets (China and Japan). A B2B seafood campaign in Japan was coordinated promoting Irish seafood. In addition, a B2B and B2C seafood campaign in China was also coordinated aimed at educating the Chinese trade and consumers about Irish shellfish, its sustainability credentials, its USP's and information about the Irish supply base. Bord Bia also coordinated 6 x B2C seafood campaigns in France and Germany aimed at educating seafood consumers in both market about what makes Irish organic salmon and mussels unique, focusing on their organic and sustainability credentials and the benefits this delivers in terms of eating qualities.

Funding allocated to Bord Bia under the EMFF programme allowed for investment in a total of 10 consumer, trade and market research seafood reports across a range of international markets, assisting the industry to consider investment in branding, marketing, customers and new markets informed by robust and market insight.

Producer Organisation Scheme (Articles 66 & 68)

In 2021, six external industry projects were supported with public expenditure of €302,661,61. Six claims were received from the Producer Organisations in relation to expenditure incurred and eligible under the Scheme.

The grant aid rates involved a mixture of capped maximum assistance at a grant aid rate of up to 65%. Expenditure related to direct staff costs, with other typical costs incurred involving the engagement of consultants to assist in the preparation of the marketing plans and activity reports. Capital items mainly involved upgrading of computer software and equipment. In 2021, formation supports were given to the National Inshore Fishermens Association to assist them in becoming recognised as a Seafood Producer Organisation.

Seafood Scaling and New Market Development Scheme

There was one BIM led project under its internal work programme for the benefit of the sector at a cost of €155,635 in public expenditure. The project focused on Whitefish Strategy Development.

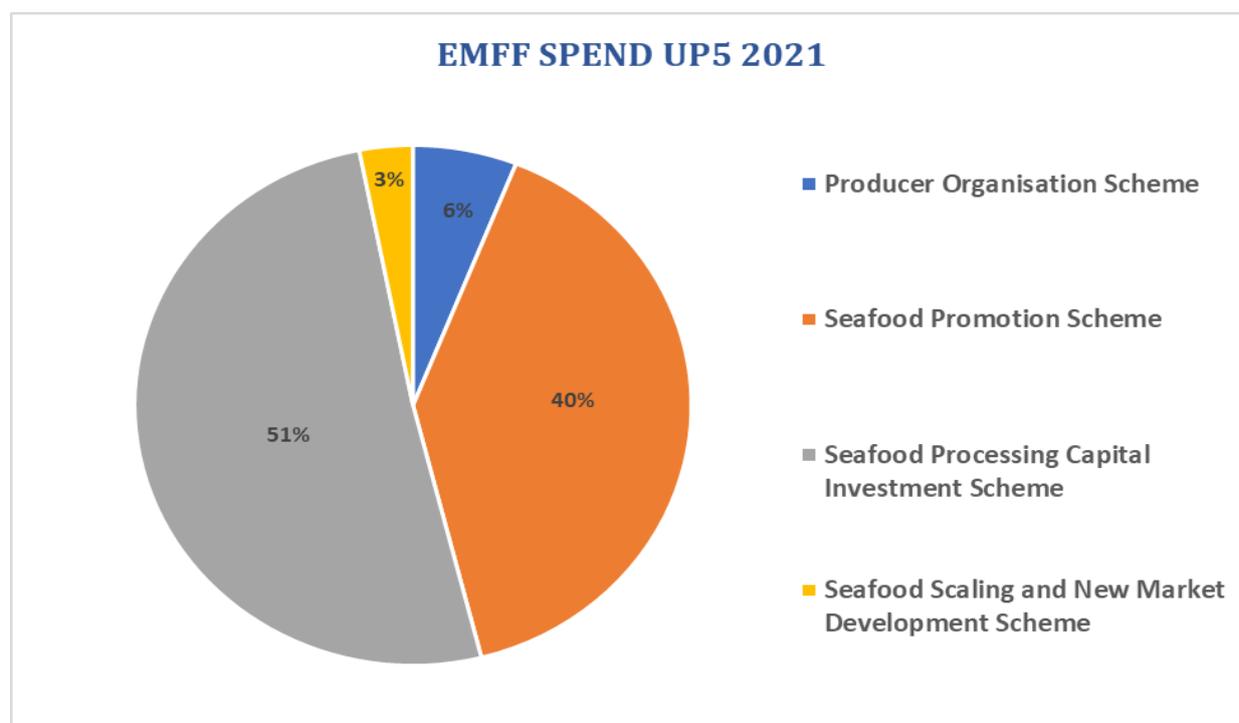
Seafood Processing Capital Investment Scheme (Article 69)

In 2021, 23 external industry projects were implemented and were supported with public expenditure of €2,549,164.58.

The Scheme supports capital investment by seafood processors with the objective of adding value, increasing efficiency and lowering environmental impact. In general, the projects related to fresh whitefish/salmon/shellfish processing and typically involved expenditure on state of the art seafood processing equipment, including fish filleting portioning and packing lines.

UP 5 – Total Expenditure Declared by beneficiaries in 2021

Scheme Name	Public Expenditure
Producer Organisation Scheme	€302,661
Seafood Promotion Scheme	€2,006,076
Seafood Processing Capital Investment Scheme	€2,549,165
Seafood Scaling and New Market Development Scheme	€155,635
Total UP5 - Processing & Marketing	€5,013,537



5.6 - Union Priority 6 – Implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy

In 2021, the EMFF Programme invested €1,426,746 in support of 27 projects through two support schemes under Union Priority 6. Up to the end of 2021 total public expenditure of €10.084 has been

committed to projects of which €9.487m has been paid which amounts to a 94.5% commitment rate and an 88.9% payment rate when compared to financial targets set out in OP. The output indicator target has been achieved and even exceeded under UP 6. As regards the result indicator target some progress has been made in achieving this target.

Blue Growth & Marine Spatial Planning Scheme

In 2021, €903,145 was invested in 16 projects under UP6, Blue Growth and Marine Spatial Planning Scheme.

Marine Spatial Planning projects:

- Two Marine Invasive Alien Species (IAS) projects continued in 2021.
- The development of a National Sediment Sampling and Seabed Imagery Catalogue is ongoing. The project will facilitate increased re-use of multi-programme ground-truthing resources and data.
- To better understand Ireland's intertidal Seaweed Resource distribution, Enterprise Ireland and EMFF co-founded a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) challenge.
- A Socioeconomic Study of Seaweed Harvesting Along the West Coast of Ireland continued in 2021.
- Three projects have received support in the climate area under EMFF:
- Development of a 3-dimensional ocean circulation model called BioCeltic was initiated.
- A literature review of all Zooplankton data collected in Irish waters was completed.
- The Carbon desk study is designed to assess high level changes in ocean carbon in Irish waters. There was limited progress in 2021 due to lack of a suitable contractor/staff member with capacity to conduct study.
- Expenditure on Outreach activities was less than expected in 2021. Project dissemination events were organised through an EMFF online webinar series.

Blue Growth Projects:

2021 saw the completion of 5 projects and one new project started in 2020 as an extension to the data management quality framework.

- The Data Management Quality Framework for Marine Data projects saw the implementation of the IODE-approved data management quality framework for key marine datasets to support the technical and scientific programme for Marine Spatial Planning, MSFD, DCF and other national marine programmes.
- Under the Data Governance for Marine Data project, we see the implementation and monitoring of data governance policy, guidelines and procedures including licensing management and access management.
- The Marine Data Integration Standards and Guidelines project provides recommendations on required data standards across Marine Institute teams to enable secondary use of prioritised data for MSP, MSFD, DCF and other related programmes.

- The Data Sharing Services Framework project coordinates with other organisations to provide integrated access to the wealth of historical marine data from archives held around Ireland.
- The Marine Data Marine Data Analysis and Visualisation Framework Project has developed data analytical capabilities to provide online information services incl. decision support tools with particular relevance to marine spatial planning.
- In 2021, the development of Marine Biomaterials Repository was completed. It provided access to samples and specialised marine data for the National Marine Biodiscovery Laboratory.
- A project Extending the Data Management Quality Framework for Marine Data began in 2021. The internationally approved Data Management Quality Management Framework (systems, processes and procedures) is being extended to additional key marine environmental datasets relevant to MSP, MSFD and DCF.

EMFF Marine Biodiversity Scheme

In 2021, some €523,601 was invested under the Marine Biodiversity Scheme under Union Priority 6 for 11 projects.

3 projects had commenced in 2018 and eight projects in 2019 and these continued into 2021. Although some final reporting still continues, 10 projects were completed in 2021 under the following themes

NATURA fisheries interaction

The project Multidisciplinary digital aerial mapping of the marine coastal environment was completed in 2021 (€65,999) providing estimates of seabird populations and their distribution in the surveyed area.

Support for Implementing NATURA measures (no spend) was completed in 2021 although due to COVID-19 this project was again severely impacted by restrictions.

NATURA Aquaculture interaction

4 projects were funded under this theme.

Appropriate assessment of aquaculture activities in SPAs (€34,602), and Appropriate assessment of aquaculture activities in SACs (€12,177) are investigating the interactions between proposed aquaculture activities and Natura features (habitats and species) in Natura 2000 sites, SPAs and SACs, and prepare advisory products as they relate to licencing and management of aquaculture activities in the sites.

Measure the effectiveness of mitigation measures of managed activities (aquaculture) carried out in Natura sites (€108,390). On foot of a number of licencing decisions taken or pending in Special

Protection Areas (SPAs), it was deemed necessary to carry out monitoring of the effectiveness of the management actions (i.e. mitigation) or to assess the likely impact of the activities on shorebirds in the Natura sites.

Aquaculture and fisheries interactions with SCI bird species - €66,051, has focused upon the assessment of bird resources in Dungarvan Harbour with a view to developing Individual Based Models for some of the more sensitive bird species. This is a multi-disciplinary exercise requiring benthic, ecological, bird monitoring and modelling expertise.

Impact of fisheries on biodiversity and support for MSFD

5 projects were funded under this theme.

Ecosystem data collection on Irish fisheries surveys in support of MSFD, Natura and Habitat mapping-Phase 2 (€74,637) continues exploring the application of ecosystem data collection on fisheries surveys in support of marine mammal and seabird observational data for MSFD, Article 17 Habitats Directive and reporting under the Birds Directive.

MSY proxies for data-limited stocks for key stone species and species sensitive to the impacts of fishing - Phase 2 Capacity building commenced (€60,227), implementing the approaches developed in MYDAS1 and building capacity to apply these approaches nationally and internationally. The project was completed in 2021.

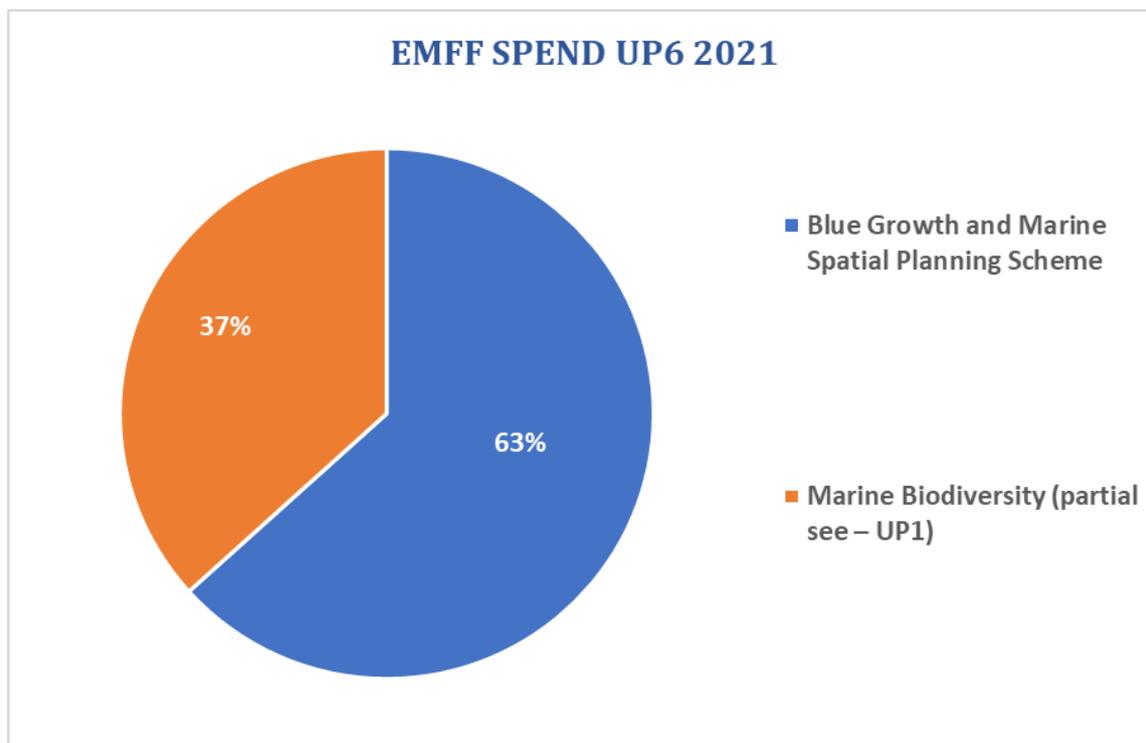
Monitoring the recovery of over exploited deep-water species (€64,000) continued the three day trawl surveys on RV Celtic Explorer. The results are being used to evaluate whether deep-water species are recovering following the decline of the fishery.

MSFD Indicator assessment D1 and D4 fish biodiversity (€4,890), funded a crucial exercise in conducting the D1 biodiversity assessments for the MSFD assessment cycle.

Nephrops and microplastics (€32,626). Several studies have indicated accumulations of plastic microfibers in the gut of Dublin Bay prawns *Nephrops norvegicus* and in the sediments in which they live.

UP 6- Total Expenditure in 2021

Scheme Name	Public Expenditure
Blue Growth and Marine Spatial Planning Scheme	€903,145
Marine Biodiversity (partial see – UP1)	€523,601



5.7 - Union Priority 7 – Technical Assistance

In 2021, total EMFF expenditure on Technical Assistance amounted to € 808,763

Technical Assistance supported:

- Contracted staff resources for implementing bodies, which accounted for most of the costs
- Costs to implementing bodies of additional resources to implement EMFF Schemes and to project manage EMFF projects
- Information and publicity measures
- Administration related to EMFF schemes and related necessary supports

6. - Issues Affecting the Performance of the Programme

While the broad range of measures implemented through the Programme contributed to its success in 2021, a number of positive issues made a notable contribution, as follows:

- While most of 2021 was over-shadowed by the Covid-19 Pandemic, with many seafood businesses negatively impacted, the Pandemic had minimal impact on investment and EMFF supports. Demand for grants to support investment was buoyant across the range of support schemes. One area impacted was the planned support to promotion of Irish seafood through

international Trade Fairs, but the marketing funds concerned were re-invested in other areas, particularly domestic market promotions and this helped producers impacted by export market disruption.

- Towards the end of 2020, a Covid-19 Aquaculture Support Scheme was implemented and paid out supports of approximately €1 million to 114 aquaculture enterprises in the rope mussel and oyster sectors, with further payments paid to applicants in early 2021.
- The final tranche of grant applications to the seven Fisheries Local Action Groups were paid out in 2021, leading to the full budget allocated to FLAGs of €12 million being utilised even though the FLAG scheme not being fully implemented until 2016.
- A very significant investment programme to modernise the use of information technology in support of control and enforcement and of fisheries and aquaculture management continued to be undertaken in 2021 which saw investment of approximately €5 million in this area. These investments are supporting development of a fisheries quota balancing system, an online Fisheries Management System to facilitate communication of important documents to fishers, and an aquaculture data management and information system (Aquamis) with phase 2 to deliver an online aquaculture licence application and tracking facility.
- The EMFF Programme has reached its end point and is now in a position where approximately 96% of available funds have allocated to approximately 3,100 projects. The focus over the period 2022/2023 will be to prioritise the remaining funds to ensure full drawdown of EMFF funds to Ireland.

Issues negatively affecting the performance of the Programme in 2021 included the following:

- By the end of 2021, the amount of payments owing to Ireland in respect of expenditure on control and enforcement and that were suspended by the European Commission increased to €24.5 million. Ultimately, the full €37.2 million allocation to Ireland for control and enforcement investment under the Programme had the potential to be lost to Ireland unless the issues giving rise to this suspension are resolved and the suspension lifted. Progress was finally made on this issue in 2020 and 2021 with the enactment of national regulations giving full effect to the Control Regulation points system requirements in respect of vessel owners. Primary legislation providing for master of vessels was enacted on 15th March 2022 and a commencement order was published in May 2022. .
- As the Programme nears its end and given its successful implementation, funds remaining started to become a constraining factor in 2021. A majority of schemes focusing on private projects within the seafood sector have been closed to applications. This is giving rise to a hiatus in grant aid and pent up investment demand.

7. - Promotion of the EMFF Programme

Managing Authority Information and Publicity Actions

In 2021, Information and publicity actions were again severely curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All major events that were to be the focus of Information and publicity actions were once again cancelled including the Irish Skipper Expo and the Irish Ploughing Championships.

The EMFF migrated to a new EU funds website. This new website, www.eufunds.ie now acts as the main repository of information relating to all EU Funds including the EMFF programme. It will also serve as a tool, for highlighting news events and participant stories to highlight the positive contribution of EU Funding.

The EMFF MA continues to update this site with EMFF related information as required.

The EMFF MA also participated in the following communication activities:

- The EU Awareness Survey – Mar 2021
- Europe Day promotion supplement – May 2021

Press releases were issued during 2021 to highlight particular noteworthy EMFF activities.

- *McConalogue announces €1.8m EMFF grants supporting €4.5m investment in 28 aquaculture enterprises – 05 March 2021*
<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/28086-mcconalogue-announces-18m-emff-grants-supporting-45m-investment-in-28-aquaculture-enterprises/>
- *McConalogue announces 62 grant awards by Fisheries Local Action Groups under the Department's EMFF Programme - 31 July 2021*
<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/40401-mcconalogue-announces-62-grant-awards-by-fisheries-local-action-groups-under-the-departments-emff-programme/>

BIM Information and Publicity Actions

As the primary intermediate body for the EMFF Programme, BIM has been designated tasks by the EMFF Managing Authority to ensure that Programme's objectives and funding opportunities offered by the EMFF are disseminated widely to potential beneficiaries and all interested parties.

BIM maintains a dedicated EMFF Scheme website (<http://www.bim.ie/schemes>) where it provides summary information on each scheme, and access to scheme brochure documents, application forms and key contacts. Further information on the schemes and events supported by the EMFF can also be found on the BIM website at <http://www.bim.ie/news-and-events/>

In administering EMFF grant schemes, BIM requires as part of the letter of offer that beneficiaries acknowledge the EMFF funding received in a number of ways. Where they have a company website, they must acknowledge the EMFF aid in an appropriate section of the website. Where they have business premises, they must display in a public place (such as reception area) an A3 sized poster to a specified format acknowledging the EMFF aid.

The following communications activities also took place in 2021:

- BIM Brexit Webinar Series for Industry: Brexit Customs Briefing- Jan 2021
- BIM Rainwater Harvesting Webinar for Seafood Processors– Mar 2021
- European Maritime Day stakeholder workshop: Reimagining the future of seafood in 2050– May 2021
- Clean Oceans Initiative Webinar – Single Use Plastics Directive – June 2021
- BIM Clean Smoke Technology Webinar– July 2021
- BIM Brexit Webinar Series: Exporting seafood to and through Great Britain from 01 October 2021– Sept 2021
- BIM Aquatech Community Day – Oct 2021