

**BENEFICIARY:** BORD IASCAIGH MHARA  
**PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER:** 19/SSMDS/DI003  
**NAME OF PROJECT:** Domestic Council  
**IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:** 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

### Project Scope

Most of the Irish processing companies active in the wholesaling and distribution of mixed seafoods to the foodservice and retail sectors are not represented by any trade representative organisation. Some are members of general business umbrella organisations such as Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) or The Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME). These organisations generally represent all businesses well when engaging with the various state departments and municipal authorities to discuss concerns they might have with regards to areas common to all commercial activity. However, they do not provide a forum to discuss specific seafood related issues and opportunities.

To date, the Irish seafood sector has largely not achieved scaled operations that are evident across Europe. Confounding factors include low density dispersed rural populations except for Dublin city and to lesser extent Cork city. To assist sectoral growth, enhanced engagement is required between key stakeholders to drive down non-competitive costs, establish synergies and enhance efficiencies. Building trust through round table discussions is key to this.

This project relates to the further development of the initial council group which was established during 2017. This group is focused on addressing key issues including raw material supply, technological developments, common research agendas and potential synergies through collective purchasing.

### Objectives

The objectives for 2019 defined by the council were:

1. Seeking a sectoral resolution on sourcing and retaining staff.
2. Investigate opportunities to access new raw material supply streams.
3. Identify additional add value opportunities from current waste streams.

**Budget:** €50,000

### Achievements/Spend

#### **Staffing issues**

- BIM facilitated a demonstration of the latest whitefish filleting line to Council members as a solution to staffing issues and to enhance operational efficiencies. One of the members has installed a new line with strong indications that by the end of 2020 more investment within this area will be completed.
- Through consultation with members, BIM is also developing a career progression model for filleters and is also providing bespoke professional development of filleters.

#### **Raw material**

- Specific discussions were also facilitated to discuss access to additional raw material from non-Irish vessels and what enablers are required to achieve this. Specific discussions within Project Atlantic are ongoing.

**Additional value from current waste streams**

- BIM facilitated sample distribution of salmon by-products or ‘co-products’ (heads and frames) to Africa and costed the opportunity for stakeholders. BIM also linked closely with the Interreg Food Heroes project and facilitated a suite of processing and sample distribution trials to define value opportunities from a range of by-products.

International reference visits were also arranged for Council members. In Bremerhaven a new cost effective innovation in de-frosting technology was demonstrated and also two large operational plants were visited (Frozen Fish International [www.frozenfish.de](http://www.frozenfish.de) and Deutschesee [www.deutschesee.de](http://www.deutschesee.de)). The group were able to see first-hand the benefits of scale and automation and make their own assessments of what they could implement in their own establishments. The visits also facilitated networking to break down barriers between companies that normally compete.

**SUMMARY OF SPEND:**

Total Approved	
<b>Total Eligible Expenditure</b>	€28,836.53
<b>Total Drawdown</b>	€28,836.53
<b>EU – 50%</b>	€14,418.26
<b>Exchequer – 50%</b>	€14,418.26

**Report by:** John Hackett

**Date:** May 2020

