

EMFF Operational Programme 2014-2020 Seafood Processing Development Measure

BIM Seafood Technical Services

Inshore Fisheries Conservation Scheme Work Programme Projects

Final Report 2020

BENEFICIARY: BORD IASCAIGH MHARA
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER: IFCS/2020/001
NAME OF PROJECT: Supporting Networking in the Inshore Fisheries Sector
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: 1st January to 31st December 2020

Project Scope

While inshore vessels, typically less than 12m in length, comprise over 80% by number of the Irish fleet, very small numbers of these are represented by the Producer Organisations. It is therefore very difficult for the state agencies to interact with the sector to ascertain their views on issues that might affect them. In the face of known threats to the sustainability of some inshore stocks such as razor clams and the imperative of complying with ECJ Case C-418/04 on Ireland's failure to fulfil its obligations under Directive 79/409/EEC – the Birds Directive (and by extension the Habitats Directive) it was decided to introduce the Inshore Fisheries Forums Initiative. The Inshore Fisheries Forums are intended to be consultative forums, the members of which are representative of 'the inshore sector', i.e. fishermen using fishing boats of less than 12m overall length operating inside the 6 mile limit. There are six Regional Inshore Fisheries Forums (RIFFs): North (Donegal), Northwest (Sligo & Mayo), West (Galway & Clare), Southwest (Kerry & Cork), Southeast (Waterford, Wexford & Wicklow) and Northeast (Dublin, Meath & Louth). These RIFFs aim to provide formal engagement opportunities between inshore fishermen and other marine stakeholders and to bring issues of importance to the sector to the National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF). Each RIFF nominates two members to the NIFF which provides a national platform on which each of the regional forums can interact with each other and with the Department and the marine agencies.

Currently the Regional Inshore Fisheries Forums are facilitated by seven BIM regional staff who are uniquely placed to carry out this role due to their ongoing contact with the inshore fisheries sector through the administration of grant aid, vessel measurement and assistance with vessel registration to name but a few interactions. Further support is provided centrally from BIM to facilitate and support the activities of NIFF. The intent has always been to use the establishment and initial facilitation of the Inshore Forums to build capacity in the sector such that it is ultimately able to take its place at the table with the representatives of the larger vessels in the fleet in establishing robust self-sustaining representative structures for the sector. This has been a slow process, however the development and publication of the Inshore Fisheries Strategy 2019-2023 in 2019 marked a major milestone in charting that path which is expected to require BIM facilitation for at least the duration of the strategy. The RIFFs will complete a renewal process in Q1 2020 which will be complemented with the provision of externally provided governance training to facilitate members to better participate in the Inshore Forums process and engage with those they represent in the sector. Other aspects of the implementation of the Inshore Strategy will be further supported through Project IFCS/2020/002.

Objectives

The Inshore Fisheries Forums are expected to:

- Provide formal engagement opportunities between inshore fishermen and other marine stakeholders and to bring issues of importance to the sector to the National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF).
- Develop and facilitate implementation of policies and initiatives relating to the sustainable management of inshore fisheries within six nautical miles, consistent with national and EU policies concerning fisheries management, sustainable development and protection of the marine environment.
- Develop and facilitate implementation of measures designed to enable local fishermen, other fishermen who rely on local waters for their livelihood, and other persons with an interest to contribute to inshore fisheries management policies.
- Provide input to the development of national policies or positions which concern or affect inshore fisheries management.
- Facilitate the development of management measures for wild bivalve fisheries.
- Facilitate the classification of wild bivalve fisheries.

Budget: €125,000

Achievements/Spend

The issues raised by the Inshore Fisheries Forums in 2020 were dominated by the adverse weather at the start of the year, quickly followed by the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic which began in March and which caused an unprecedented reduction in fishing and income for all inshore vessels due to the collapse in traditional markets due to the widespread closure of food service across Europe. The year concluded dealing with the effects of Brexit going into 2021. Many of the RIFF and NIFF meetings were dominated particularly in the first half of the year with discussions on income supports and the lack thereof and the Covid-19 temporary voluntary tie-up scheme which many fishers were unable to avail of due to the requirements of the scheme.

Despite these difficult challenges and the fact that the RIFFs and NIFF were unable to meet face to face the forums continued to meet remotely despite the technical challenges from March of 2020 via Microsoft Teams to discuss issues ranging from income support to the management of the landing of crab claws, a proposal on v-notching and lobster maximum landing size, the NW Scientific Herring fishery to iVMS and how to handle the increasing number of applications for site surveys for windfarms. The work of the Forums in 2020 is set out in more detail below.

Covid-19

- NIFF met with Minister Creed and other fisheries representative groups over March and April to discuss the dire situation of the fishing industry due to the pandemic and supports for the fishing sector.
- NIFF met Jim O'Toole of BIM jointly with NIFA to discuss possible supports for the sector on 31st April.
- NIFF developed and submitted their proposal on the temporary cessation of fishing activities to DAFM on 1st May 2020 which was based on a West RIFF proposal following their meeting on the same day.
- NIFF met again on 19th May 2020 to gain feedback on the recently announced Covid-19 Temporary Tie-up scheme for approval by the EMFF Monitoring Committee. In conclusion no RIFF supported the scheme as it stood for a variety of reasons.
- In August, NIFF wrote to Minister Dara Callery T.D, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine requesting an urgent meeting to discuss supports for the inshore fishing sector.
- NIFF met on 3rd September 2020 and agreed further actions on income supports for the sector including writing to Minister Humphreys Department of Employment Affairs and Social protection requesting an extension to the closing date for applications to the Covid-19 pandemic payment, discussing the issues fishers had with the temporary tie-up scheme and finally writing to Minister McConalogue requesting an urgent meeting on the issue.
- In preparation for a meeting with Minister McConalogue NIFF prioritized the issues they wished to raise. Each issue had a lead NIFF member with supporting members to develop them into discussion documents and presentations. These included:
 - Winter income supports
 - Maximising the potential use by the inshore sector of inside 6 nm
 - Protecting health and resilience
 - Development of new fisheries
- These issues were discussed at the NIFF final meeting of the year which took place on 9th December 2020 hosted by Charlie McConalogue T.D. Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The NIFF presented their discussion documents to the Minister.

NIFF developed and made submissions on the following:

- Public Consultation on the Seafood Development Programme 2021-2027 on 21st January 2020.
- Public Consultation on Proposal for Revision of Recognition Criteria for Seafood Producer Organisations on 21st February 2020.

- Three joint submissions from the NIFF and NIFA/NIFO to the DAFM during the period of March and April on the unfolding crisis in the inshore sector due to persistent poor weather at the start of the year, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and possible mechanisms to help the sector survive economically.
- Submission on the application for a Foreshore Consent by North Irish Sea Array Windfarm Ltd. for site investigations in March.
- The draft National Marine Planning Framework in April. The majority of RIFFs also made submission to this important consultation.
- Submission to the consultation on the expansion of Ireland's Network of Marine Protected Area. Individual RIFFs also made submissions.

Other issues discussed by NIFF during 2020 included:

- Communications and how to get information out to the wider inshore sector.
- NW RIFF proposal to the QMAC April meeting on quota for Mackerel Hook and Line Fishery following the Minister's offer to increase the current cap of 500kg per landing for line caught mackerel to 750 kg per landing.
- A review of the committees in which NIFF members participated.
- An update on the management of landing of crab claws proposal where the NIFF had issues with the absolute limits proposed. MI undertook to re-examine the proposed limits and come back with a revised proposal for the RIFFs.
- The use of MI iVMS data to identify fishing events and quantify fishing effort with a follow up to the presentation giving a demonstration of an application to identify fishing events and quantify fishing effort.
- Two proposals from the SE and West RIFFs on the introduction on mandatory registration for recreational fishers and temporary suspension of SI No. 31 of 2016 were discussed by the NIFF.
- The Data Collection Framework focusing on the social-economic data that BIM collects for this purpose to the NIFF.
- SE RIFF proposal for the establishment of a RIFF subgroup to advise on the protection of inshore fisheries sector with regard to offshore marine developments such as offshore energy.
- SW RIFF proposal on lobster v-notching and lobster maximum landing size circulated to the RIFFs for comment.
- NW Herring and Celtic Sea Herring fisheries
- WRIFF proposal for grant aid for IT training and electronic hardware for fishers.
- The High Court decision to overturn the ban of vessels over 18m inside 6 nm and subsequent appeal.
- Brexit through a briefing from Minister McConalogue and participation in a number of Government fora.

On the administrative side:

- Five RIFFs completed their renewal process by Q1 of 2020. NE RIFF completed their renewal process somewhat later in Q2 of 2020.
- Governance training took place in January/February for all RIFFs with the exception of the NE RIFF where it took place in June 2020. All RIFFs were extremely positive about the training they received and asked if it could become an annual event.
- Trudy McIntyre retired as NIFF Chair and SE RIFF Chair at the end of July 2020.
- An evening NIFF meeting was held on 30th September 2020 to elect a Chair and Vice Chair of the NIFF and they decided that the Chair and Vice Chair would be a rotating position. Eamon Dixon was elected as Chair and Bernard Whelan as Vice Chair.
- Despite the pandemic 2020 saw the highest number of RIFF and NIFF meetings since the start of the Inshore Fisheries Forums Initiative.
- Kieran Healy took over the role of the NIFF representative to the QMAC from Trudy McIntyre on her retirement.

RIFF Meetings 2020

NE RIFF: Governance training 9 & 10.06.2020, RIFF meeting 11.09.2020

SE RIFF: Governance training 31.01.2020, RIFF meetings 13.02.2020, 28.0.2020, 17.07.2020, 23.07.2020 & 10.12.2020

SW RIFF: Governance training 24.01.2020, RIFF meetings 18.02.2020, 31.08.2020

W RIFF: Governance training 21.02.2020, RIFF meeting 22.02.2020, 11.03.2020, 22.04.2020, 04.08.2020, & 21.10.2020

NW RIFF: Governance training 13.01.2020, RIFF meetings 28.02.2020, 27.04.2020, 28.08.2020, 30.10.2020 & 11.12.2020

N RIFF: Governance training 18.02.2020, RIFF meetings 24.03.2020, 28.04.2020, 11.08.2020 & 07.10.2020

NIFF meetings 2020

03.03.2020, 01.05.2020, 19.05.2020, 03.09.2020, 22.09.2020, 30.09.2020 & 09.12.2020

NIFF Representatives attended the following meetings in 2020

Bilateral meeting with DAFM on SDP 2021-27 held on the 31.01.2020

QMAC Planning Meeting 11.02.2020

QMAC meetings 23.01.2020, 18.02.2020, 21.04.2020, 20.05.2020, 19.06.2020, 18.08.2020, 17.09.2020, 20.10.2020, 18.11.2020 & 10.12.2020

Meeting with Minister Creed on Covid-19 20.03.2020

NIFF & NIFA meeting with Jim O'Toole, CEO BIM to discuss support options for the industry 31.03.2020

QMAC & industry meeting with Minister Creed 21.04.2020

Industry meeting with Minister Creed 29.04.2020

Brexit Meeting 27.05.2020

CSHMAC meeting 07.07.2020, 02.10.2020, 23.07.2020, 28.08.2020

Meeting with new Minister Dara Calleary 22.07.2020

NW Herring Meeting 24.07.2020

Meeting of Fisheries organisations with Minister McConalogue 16.09.2020

Meeting on EU-UK negotiations and preparedness meeting with DAFM 18.09.2020

Meeting on Fisheries dimension of on-going EU/UK negotiations and Brexit 12.10.2020

IFSRP meeting 05.10.2020

Consultative Committee of Stakeholders on Brexit 22.10.2020

Seal group meeting 14.10.2020

SFPA Consultative Committee Meetings 17.06.2020, 09.10.2020 & 17.11.2020

CSH Sentinel Fishery Draw 18.11.2020

SUMMARY OF SPEND:

Total Approved	€125,000.00
Total Eligible Expenditure	€108,904.27
Total Drawdown	€108,904.27
EU – 50%	€54,452.13
Exchequer – 50%	€54,452.13

Report by: Ian Lawler

Date: 11th March 2021



BENEFICIARY: BORD IASCAIGH MHARA
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER: IFCS/2020/002
NAME OF PROJECT: Inshore Fisheries Strategy Implementation
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: 1st January to 31st December 2020

Project seriously impacted by COVID situation, while progress was made no spend was incurred.

Budget: €58,200

Achievements/Spend

A single meeting of the Implementation Group was held on the 6th of October. Items progressed included revision of National Seafood Survey for <12m vessels and the development of an outline syllabus for digital literacy programme.

SUMMARY OF SPEND:

Total Approved	
Total Eligible Expenditure	€0
Total Drawdown	€0
EU – 50%	€0
Exchequer – 50%	€0

Report by: Ian Lawler

Date: 11th March 2021