

BENEFICIARY: BORD IASCAIGH MHARA
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER: 19/SFS/STS003.9
NAME OF PROJECT: Fishery Improvement Projects
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: 1st JANUARY -31st DECEMBER 2019

Project scope

Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) are a vehicle to drive change within the fisheries sector to aid implementation of the landing obligation, improve data collection and ensure economic viability through securing and enhancing market access. They offer a mechanism to bring together an alliance of fishermen, seafood buyers and suppliers, to talk through the challenges from the landing obligation faced in a specific fishery or fisheries, identify data needs, agree on a set of priority actions that should be undertaken to improve the fishery, and then oversee an action plan. These stakeholders work together to improve a specific fishery by pressing for better policies and management, while voluntarily changing purchasing and fishing practices to reduce problems such as illegal fishing, bycatch, and habitat impacts. The FIP works through key organisations and individuals, talking through the management of the fishery and the challenges that it may face, identifying data that needs to be collected, agreeing on a set of priority actions that should be undertaken to improve the fishery, and then overseeing an action plan.

FIPs link to BIM's sustainability initiatives and certification programmes and feed into Bord Bia's Origin Green programme. They are closely aligned to one of DAFM's Statement of Strategy Strategic Goals of "delivering a sustainable, growth driven sector focused on competitiveness and innovation driven by a skilled workforce delivering value added products in line with market demands".

Each FIP includes designing and executing a stakeholder engagement plan to successfully agree on areas on development for each FIP with the relevant stakeholders of those FIPs. These are required to be detailed and recorded in specific technical workplans cognisant of fisheries science and management and environmental impacts that are acceptable to the industry, science and external scientific review of the NGOs such as Fish Source and Fishery Progress and Fish Source. These workplans must also include a benchmark against the MSC principles and scientific indicators.

Objectives

The key objectives of the FIPs are:

- Maintain access to key markets for Irish seafood through fully operational FIPs that provide a platform for the demonstration of sustainability credentials of Irish fisheries.
- Increase competitiveness of Irish seafood in domestic and international markets by demonstrating sustainable management of key fisheries
- Implement a change management policy in the key Irish fisheries through improvements in fishing practices and encouraging active participation in data collection programmes.
- Facilitate discussion between key stakeholders on issues relevant to key Irish fisheries.

- Test digital technologies and cloud-based technologies to monitor food safety and onboard quality as well as creating and delivering customer value of seafood emanating from participants in the FIPs through enhanced traceability.
- Progress Irish fisheries to MSC certification where required by the market.

Budget

The projected budget for this project was €162,000, which was drawdown.

Achievements/Spend

During 2019, the Irish FIPs continued to act as platforms for the demonstration of the sustainability credentials of Irish fisheries and based on feedback from processors involved have helped to maintain access to key markets for Irish seafood, both domestically and globally. Additionally, a review of digital technologies and cloud-based technologies was completed in 2019. Such technologies provide a means to increase the traceability and provenance of Irish seafood caught and processed by FIP members. This information potentially can be used to enhance the sustainability credentials of FIP caught product. A pilot project testing the most appropriate digital solutions including block-chain technology will be carried out during 2020.

The following actions were undertaken under the respective FIPs:

Brown Crab

- Collaborated on an alternative bait in the whelk fishery project.
- Data collection programme, in collaboration with the Marine Institute
- Testing of digital traceability systems in two crab processors

Prawns

- The FIP Secretariat attended the Irish Research and Science Partnership chaired by the Marine Institute.
- Supply of biological data and samples to the Marine Institute from various prawn fisheries.
- FIP member vessels participated in BIM Selectivity trials

Whitefish covering hake, haddock, whiting, megrim and monkfish

- MSC Pre-assessments were haddock and whiting.
- FIP member vessels participated in gear trials with BIM
- FIP members participated in the BIM pilot studies with digital traceability systems.

Albacore Tuna

- Limited self-sampling and recording of cetacean bycatch data during 2019 tuna season

SUMMARY OF SPEND:

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|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Total Approved | |
| Total Eligible Expenditure | €162,000 |
| Total Drawdown | €162,000 |
| EU – 50% | €81,000 |
| Exchequer – 50% | €81,000 |

Report: Catherine Barrett

Date: February 2020

