

BENEFICIARY: BORD IASCAIGH MHARA
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER: 19/KGS/STS003.10
NAME OF PROJECT: Marine Stewardship Council certification for Irish Mussels
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: 1st JANUARY -31st DECEMBER 2019

Project Scope

Marine Stewardship Council certification is the world's most recognised benchmark for sustainability in fisheries. The MSC Fisheries Standard is based on the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) code of conduct for responsible fisheries. The Standard is developed in consultation with a range of people and organisations around the world, including government academics, researchers, the fishing industry and NGOs.

Certification to the MSC standard may provide enhanced reputation, better visibility; improve dialogue with stakeholders, a pathway for improvements, protected livelihoods, and access to new markets, secure markets and promotional opportunities. A central certification for the whole industry represents an innovative approach to the certification process and provides best value for money for the whole industry. For the seabed cultured mussel sector continued certification is required to ensure access to high value markets and is a key partner to Origin Green for their sector.

For rope mussels, the scope will include all operations from the collection of seed through on-growing to the harvesting of marketable mussels. The certification will provide access to high value markets and allow the product to compete with Scottish rope grown mussels.

Objectives

Irish Rope Mussel producers are looking to retain the value of this important commodity by assuring product sustainability, thus securing additional market potential. Achieving MSC certification for the Republic of Ireland's Rope Grown Mussel sector will demonstrate a sustainable fishery, enhanced product reputation, new market access, job security, conceivable price premiums and product promotion.

The key objectives of this projects:

- Achieve & maintain Marine Stewardship Council certification for the Republic of Ireland's Rope Grown Mussel sector.
- Conduct an Assessment of the Rope Grown Mussel sector for the Republic of Ireland to the Marine Stewardship Council Standard (MSC) Certification Scheme.
- Compile & devise Rope Grown Mussel MSC application.
- Administer the RGM scheme for cycle one.
- RGM Scheme Maintenance years 2-5.
- Manage BGM certification process.
- Maintenance of Bottom Mussel Surveillance Audits

Budget

Maximum approved expenditure on the project totaled €55,000 corresponding to the following headings:

- Conduct initial Assessment of the Rope Grown Mussel sector for the Republic of Ireland, to the Marine Stewardship Council Standard (MSC) Standard
- Compile the RGM MSC Application
- Maintain RGM scheme for yrs. 2-5 (Surveillance Audits)
- Maintenance of Bottom Mussel Surveillance Audits

Achievements / Spend

Key achievements by way of a detailed approach for the implementation of MSC based certification and assessment methodologies, included:

- Stakeholder consultation meetings (x4)
 - Cork Attendees - DAFM, BIM, SFPA, SAI Global
 - Bantry Attendees - Regional Client List, BIM, SAI Global
 - Westport Attendees - Regional Client List, BIM, SAI Global
 - Donegal Attendees - Regional Client List, BIM, SAI Global

Certification models, steps in assessment and strategy for ensuring that the assessment is conducted according to realistic timelines in an effective, quality consistent manner, comprising of:

- Compilation of Full Assessment Criteria
- Assembly of Assessment team
- Data acquisition / Information gathering
- Site visits
- Scoring phase
- Preliminary draft report
- Peer review draft report
- Preparation for announcement
- Public comment draft report
- Final report & decision
- Public certification report
- Handling of any objections
- Certificate awarded
- Certificate maintained

SUMMARY OF SPEND:

Total Approved	
Total Eligible Expenditure	53,532.70
Total Drawdown	53,532.70
EU – 50%	26,766.35
Exchequer – 50%	26,766.35

Report: Vicky Lyons

Date: March 2020