

BENEFICIARY: Bord Iascaigh Mhara
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER: 16 KGS STS008.1
NAME OF PROJECT: BIM Seaweed Development 2019
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: 1st January - 31st December 2019

Project Scope

Since 2008 BIM has worked on the development of the Irish farmed seaweed sector to include the leasing of a licensed marine hatchery and the funding of the production of seeded collector string (brown weeds *Alaria esculenta* and *Saccharina latissima*) for deployment at licensed marine seaweed sites.

More recently we have looked at the production of red weeds (*Porphyra umbilicalis* and *Palmaria palmata*) in the hatchery both by manipulation of sexual and asexual plants (*Porphyra*) and by vegetative tank culture (*Palmaria*) to increase production. The hatchery has supplied to the licensed sea sites on an annual basis and this demand is set to rise as more seaweed licenses are issued.

The Seaweed Development Programme 2019 aimed to produce 10 kms seeded collector string plus culture to seed 40 kms string for *Alaria*.

In addition, work was carried out on the above-named red weeds. Investigative field work started in February 2019 to identify, locate and map asexual *Porphyra umbilicalis* plants. Neutral spore release was enabled with settlement on nets for culture at sea. Work on sexual plants was carried out to initiate sporulation and development of the conchocelis stage of the life cycle. *Palmaria palmata* was vegetatively grown in tanks to ascertain optimal growth conditions.

Objectives

- 10 kms seeded collector string will be put to sea in 2019 at licensed sites from this project, with potentially a further 40 kms to be produced by industry, depending on an increase in hatchery production capability.
- This will result in potentially 500T fresh weight seaweed production at sea subject to optimal deployment and weather in 2020.
- It is anticipated that the pre-commercial work on the red weeds will result in greater understanding of the growth requirements for *Porphyra* and *Palmaria* with a view to commercialising the production of these valuable species.

Budget

Maximum approved expenditure on the project totaled €201,000 corresponding to the following headings:

- Cartron Point Shellfish Ltd successfully tendered for the programme of work.
- Rental of licensed seaweed hatchery facilities at Bantry Marine Research Station (BMRS) under tender competition

Achievements/Spend

- Harvest of 50T dry *Alaria esculenta* in 2020.
- *Palmaria* tank trials completed / commercial feasibility of tank based *Palmaria* established.
- 10 kms of seeded *Alaria* produced from hatchery along with spores for industry production.
- Industry commit to producing 40 kms of seeded '*Alaria-String*'.
- New stock of asexual *Porphyra* collected and tank/sea trials undertaken in respect of *Porphyra*.

SUMMARY OF SPEND:

Total Approved	
Total Eligible Expenditure	€201,000
Total Drawdown	€201,000
EU – 50%	€100,500
Exchequer – 50%	€100,500

Report: Lucy Watson

Date: May 2020