

Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPS)

Project Outline:

In 2022, it is proposed the FIPs will continue to be supported with funding to cover administration, research and development work required to support the implementation of the individual FIP workplans to improve the competitiveness of the fisheries. The FIPs will be chaired by an independent facilitator and provide advisory services which will support further deepening of the cooperation between scientists and fishers, the promotion of social dialogue and knowledge sharing of fisheries science, social sustainability and supply chain sustainability demands. BIM will provide secretariat and technical support to the process.

In addition to providing fora for participatory discussions between key stakeholders they will help industry to develop and implement a roadmap for change, particularly in the light of full implementation of the Landing Obligation, Brexit, the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy, and in line with the objectives of the EMFAF as well as increasing evidence based approach to responsible sourcing and sustainability reporting from major retailers to demonstrate their evidence based approach to sustainability.

Work will also continue with the Marine Institute to identify and provide data through voluntary programmes and participation in observer schemes. FIP members will continue to participate in other BIM trials on food safety, fish quality and technical trials (e.g., alternative bait trials) as they progress during 2022. Additionally, to address data gaps in the fish stock assessment process, self-sampling programmes carried out by the industry have been identified as one way of helping to provide an important data source for the improvement of existing stock assessment models. This has been discussed at length with the Marine Institute during 2021 and information has been provided on the Albacore tuna and prawn fisheries. The intention is to extend this to other fisheries in close partnership with the MI Fisheries Liaison Officer in 2022.

Additionally, Fishery Progress launched a Human Rights and Social Responsibility Policy in 2021. The objective of the policy is to help FIPs reduce the risk of human and labour rights abuses and to provide a common framework for reporting on social performance in fisheries. All FIPs reporting to Fishery Progress are required to comply with the policy according to the phased implementation timeline outlined in the policy. Addressing this across the Irish FIPs will be a critical part of the workplan in 2022.

Finally, building on the relationships formed in clusters across supply chains of FIP members in 2021 through BIM's Sustainability Improver Programme, further work to develop collective sustainable sourcing business strategies is planned in 2022. The objective is to increase the six FIP business clusters to eight clusters involving fishing vessels, fishermen's co-ops, processors, and Irish and international retailers during 2022. This will address the increased demand for digitalisation to strengthen chain of custody across the supply chain and will also identify emerging data points that will successfully deliver on the sustainability reporting as well as the sustainability sourcing requirement for seafood. This includes data points relating to carbon emissions, where there is an increasing demand to develop comparable metrics and communicating these in the supply chain.

Project Objectives:

- 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.
- Facilitate industry self-sampling programmes to complement on board observer programmes.
- Undergo social sustainability to evaluate the social performance of Fishery Progress reported FIPs.
- Act as a steppingstone to BIM's single sustainability standard under development.
- Progress Irish fisheries to MSC certification where there is a commercial benefit in the market.
- Provide a means to communicate the value a sustainable Irish seafood sector across the supply chain from catch to consumer and support the adoption of a single BIM sustainability standard as a promotion tool.
- Help to differentiate "Irish FIP" product (within the programme) in the marketplace and capitalise on emerging technologies to enhance the traceability and trust around Irish seafood.

Expected Benefits:

- Maintaining access to key markets for Irish seafood through fully operational FIPs that provide a platform for the demonstration of sustainability credentials of Irish fisheries.
- Differentiation of FIP caught fish in the marketplace.
- Improvements in fishing practices through the uptake of selective gears and as means to encourage active participation in data collection programmes.
- Ensure linkage of FIPs with Certification programmes, Origin Green and other marketing initiatives.
- Provision of industry self-sampling programmes on FIP member vessels to complement on board observer programmes.
- Address social performance in FIPs to be able to report in more detail on the social responsibility efforts of the FIPs.

Projected Cost: €160,000