

BIM EMFAF Work Programme Project Report 2023

BENEFICIARY:	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER:	23/SCBS/DIS-BG011-BR055
NAME OF PROJECT:	Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC)
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:	1 st January to 31 st December 2023

Project Scope

The Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC) is a truck with a modular mobile classroom, which facilitates delivery of an interactive education programme for primary schools around Ireland to educate young people about sustainable Irish aquaculture and the opportunities that exist within the sector. There is a particular emphasis placed on coastal communities, especially those in which aquaculture production is deemed significant.

BIM developed the ARC as part of the agency's contribution to the 'Farmed in the EU' campaign. The ARC is a part of Ireland's efforts to foster social licence for aquaculture under priority 3 (Ensuring social acceptance and consumer information) of the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture (NSPSA). This aligns with the EU Commission's "Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030" specifically the stated objective of "*fostering social acceptance and improved consumer information on EU aquaculture activities and products*".

Objectives

The ARC is an education project designed to travel throughout Ireland to positively engage primary and secondary school students about Irish and European aquaculture and to create awareness about aquaculture in communities, to demystify the industry and to highlight the positive role of aquaculture in terms of healthy food production, social and economic benefit to communities (jobs, economic activity, local products) and the role of aquaculture in providing low carbon and sustainable food to help combat global food insecurity.

The activities of the ARC entails engaging young learners (5th and 6th class) at primary level, and some secondary school outreach aimed at Transition Year and senior cycle students. Opportunities to engage the wider public about sustainable Irish aquaculture are also important in order to raise awareness of aquaculture and its important role in producing low carbon seafood and contributing to the social and economic wellbeing of communities throughout Ireland.

Outcomes

Educational services were delivered to 11,620 users during 2023. This was broken down as 4,845 users at primary level (school visits and online webinars) and secondary level (school visits, school summits Mayo/Waterford) and 6,775 users at a wide range of events focused on supporting marine education at third level institutions, science education and various careers events and marine stakeholder and public events.



Events that that ARC attended included:

- Irish Farmers Association (Aquaculture) Conference
- Irish Skipper Expo
- ATU (Galway Campus) Open Day
- School Summit Munster (SETU)
- School Summit Connacht (Mayo)
- Jobs for the Future (ATU Castlebar Campus)
- Carnival of Science Cork
- Cromane Seafest (Kerry)
- World Oceans Day (Ballycotton)
- Bioeconomy Ireland Week '23 (Mayo)

There was strong engagement with the Irish aquaculture industry with producers visiting the ARC at schools to act as 'special guests' in Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, and Kerry.

The ARC team also engaged the organisers of the Flemish Aquaculture Conference (Halle, Belgium, Oct. 23) and the secretariat of the Aquaculture Advisory Council (Brussels – Oct. 23). The ARC project was presented to a virtual meeting of the Aquaculture Advisory Council during November 2023.

The ARC project was featured as a 'Success Story' by the FAMENET network, the video is available on the Oceans and Fisheries page.

The ARC project video (as shot by the FAMENET team) won an award for 'Best video' during October 2023.

Summary of Project Spend

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Total Approved Costs	€498,934
Total Eligible Expenditure	€494,196
EMFAF Eligible Expenditure	€247,098
Exchequer	€247,098

Report by: Máirtín Walsh

Date: February 2024



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Government of Ireland



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an Aontas Eorpach

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