

BIM EMFAF Work Programme Project Report 2022

BENEFICIARY:	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER:	22/KGS/STS-BG010-BR054
NAME OF PROJECT:	Certification Services
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:	1st January to 31st December 2022

Project Scope

Standards and certifications are now a key mechanism for businesses wishing to translate requirements, both product and process specifications, to other parts of the supply chain. There is an increasing global requirement for the use of accredited certification schemes in providing assurances of more sustainable practices in seafood production and more recently for the participation and assessment of accredited certification schemes to global benchmarking initiatives. The production of organic aquaculture has been the success story of the organic movement in Ireland, with organic salmon production leading the way, and known as the world pioneer in the organic salmon sector.

The main goals of this project were:

- Continued alignment of accreditation and GSSI status of BIM's current Certification Quality Aquaculture (CQA) certification schemes, prestigious certification to MSC Scheme and compliance of organic salmon and mussel sector to Organic Certification.
- Maintained premium position in the marketplace.

Objectives

The principal objective of this project is to support the production of high-class farmed Irish seafood and to differentiate aquaculture products in the marketplace through quality, organic and eco certification and labelling.

Outcomes

Seafood certification is key to maintain market access both nationally and globally. The strategy of differentiating Irish seafood through the use of internationally recognised sustainability credentials has been a key objective for BIM in recent years.

BIM continued to maintain the governance and operation management of its ISO 17065 accredited Certified Quality Aquaculture (CQA) Assurance Programme, managed by service provider in line with GSSI requirements, on behalf of the Irish aquaculture sector.

A total of 15 meetings were held relating to the management and operation of the CQA Programme including one Certification Body Review Meeting, two CQA Internal Review Meetings, and 12 Certification Body monthly meetings - reports issued for CQA CB review, CQA Internal Audit, CQA Annual Management Review and minutes of monthly Certification Body meetings.



The accreditation process for new CQA V2 Farm and Processing Standards was completed in 2022. BIM undertook a technical review of the CQA standards and procedures associated with the Scheme, a periodic requirement that owners of accredited certification schemes must undertake. This review was undertaken by the CQA TAC and ensures that certification remains relevant to industry best practice, market requirements and policy. The finalised versions of the CQA Standards were formerly submitted to INAB for accreditation review in early December 2021. Minor items for clarification by INAB were responded to in May/June 2022 and witnessed audits took place in October 2022, with status of Accreditation extension for V2 ready for decision.

Certification Body Auditor training was undertaken in May 2022 along with industry CQA workshops in June 2022 for mussels and salmon to assist with adoption and implementation of the new updated standards (all certificate holders opted to convert to V2 Implementation during 2022 audit cycle). Certification audits were completed by the Certification Body for all 32 CQA certified companies to retain CQA, and Eco certification.

The Standard development process followed the CQA Procedures and minutes from meetings confirm that it has been actively reviewed via the committee process. A TAC Meeting and an OC meeting were held in December 2022.

The BIM CQA Farm Standard (Version 1.1) also continued to retain the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) recognition during 2022. GSSI issued a new version of the GSSI benchmark tool in July 2022 and the formal re-benchmarking application process of CQA Standard V2 was completed in October 2022.

BIM holds MSC certification for both Rope and Bottom grown mussel sector in Ireland. This centralised certification represents an innovative approach to the certification process and provides best value for money for the whole industry. During 2022, Ireland's Bottom Grown Mussels & Ireland's Rope Grown Mussels continued to retain (MSC) Certification. There are currently 37 MSC Certified Rope Mussels Members and 47 Bottom Mussel Members (Combined ROI & NI).

For aquaculture products, organic certification has been a great success story and command premium prices. 2022 saw increased competition in this market with several new entrants from the UK, Norway, and Iceland. Organics remain a key market segment for Irish aquaculture with BIM assisting companies to achieve and retain accreditation to EU Organic Standards. The use of organic certification has been a great success story for Irish farmed salmon and their products command premium prices within the farmed Atlantic salmon sector globally. Irish fish farming companies were assisted to achieve and retain accreditation to EU Organic Standards for salmon and mussels.

Summary of Project Spend

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Total Approved Costs	€216,713
Total Eligible Expenditure	€216,564
EMFAF Eligible Expenditure	€108,282
Exchequer	€108,282

Report by: Vera Flynn
Date: February 2023



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