

## BIM EMFAF Work Programme Project Report 2023

<b>BENEFICIARY:</b>	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
<b>PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER:</b>	23/KGS/STS-BG011-BR116
<b>NAME OF PROJECT:</b>	<b>Invasive Alien Species</b>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> January to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023

### Project Scope

The project is designed to support the aquaculture sector to be proactive on addressing Invasive Alien Species (IAS) to minimise risks and ensure the sustainability of their operations. This was achieved through the retention of an Alien Species Advisor and through the development of a communications plan and system for data sharing to benefit the aquaculture sector and wider marine users. Ongoing support was provided to DAFM and industry to conduct risk assessments and develop biosecurity plans, to address licence conditions, policy and legislative requirements, and work towards minimising impacts linked with aquaculture activities.

### Objectives

- To continue to support monitoring of the status of marine IAS in Ireland.
- To identify key risk areas and address them through development of appropriate biosecurity plans.
- To support DAFM in responding to areas of IAS need.
- To engage and build knowledge of IAS across the aquaculture sector to improve understanding and encourage good practices.
- To share and communicate project data and achievements in the most appropriate manner for the aquaculture sector.

### Outcomes

Together with the IAS & Aquaculture Working Group and industry, BIM developed a Risk Assessment and Biosecurity Protocol for the sector. The Risk Assessment & Biosecurity Plan template has been utilised nationwide for a range of purposes. Individual businesses have used it to address biodiversity targets as part of environmental or organic certification of their activities/products. It has also been used to assess individual movements, and address issues linked to specific alien species.

The protocol sets out actions for Shellfish Aquaculture and Aquatic Plant Aquaculture licence holders to assess IAS risks and to develop and implement biosecurity measures to minimise those risks identified. It follows a consistent six step process and helps direct management actions in relation to alien species for which shellfish movements are a known high-risk vector. A key challenge for the process is identifying what action should be taken by whom in the event of an invasive alien species being found by an aquaculture operator or at an aquaculture facility. To ensure the effectiveness of Biosecurity Plans, it is important that aquaculture operators understand and trust the process and the consequences in the event of a high risk invasive species being confirmed. The response is still evolving and is case specific. To date, there have been more than 20 assessments, two thirds of which relate to business level assessment of general practices and one third for assessments to inform decision-making linked to specific movements.



To ensure the success of risk assessment process, it is important that aquaculture operators and officials are aware of the alien species of concern and whether they are already present in Ireland or likely to arrive in the near future. In many cases non-native species appear similar to native species and identification is difficult. Together with GiMaRIS a number of species ID cards have been produced for Crabs, Tunicates, Molluscs and Bivalve Molluscs.

BIM has facilitated GiMaRIS to deliver workshops for industry groups and officials. Most recently, a workshop on species identification was conducted as part of wider shellfish workshops for oysters in 2023. The workshops are practical and for the most part focuses on how to describe and photograph/draw a species of interest so that when presented with the information, it is easier for a taxonomist to confirm identification.

A summary of the work to support the aquaculture sector in understanding, preventing and managing IAS risks is available at <https://bim.ie/aquaculture/sustainability-and-certification/marine-invasive-species/>

### Summary of Project Spend

Summary of Spend	
Total Approved Costs	€90,000
Total Eligible Expenditure	€86,119
EMFAF Eligible Expenditure	€43,060
Exchequer	€43,060

Project Partners: GiMaRIS

Report by: Grainne Devine

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Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach

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