

BIM EMFAF Work Programme Project Report 2022

BENEFICIARY:	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER:	22/SFS/ESS-BG009-BR027
NAME OF PROJECT:	National Fishermen's Development Group (NFDG)
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:	1st January to 31st December 2022

Project Scope

BIM in conjunction with the Producers Organisations and Inshore Fishermen's Forums (NIFF and RIFFS) set up a stakeholder forum, the National Fishermen's Development Group (NFDG), for the catching sector during 2017. The NFDG is an industry initiative, set-up to provide a forum for fishermen to discuss practical and operational issues, which are often not discussed at Producer Organisation level. The NFDG provides an information conduit between the representative organisations and the catching sector. It discusses issues such as financial management, safety at sea, working conditions and conservation. It assists in the development of tools to aid fishermen such as user-friendly guides to explain regulations or apps to allow for the recording of working time at sea. Its establishment has been well received by industry but was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. An independent chair/facilitator assisted the Group and secretarial and technical support was provided by BIM. Experts from other agencies and service providers (BIM, MSO, SFPA, Financial services, Pensions experts) to the catching sector participated where relevant in 2022.

During 2022, the NFDG continued to facilitate constructive discussion both amongst the group as well as with Government agencies and service providers dialogue on technical, operational and practical pertaining to the catching sector. Direct feedback was provided to the Producer Organisations and the NIFF/NIFA on issues impacting on the day-today operation of the catching sector.

Objectives

The main objective of the NFDG is to provide a mechanism to allow dialogue between practising fishermen on a range of "grassroots" issues relating to fishing operations. Specifically, the NFDG aims to provide a platform to:

- Facilitate discussion between fishermen on technical, practical and business issues that impact on the day-today running of fishing vessels.
- Facilitate the provision of expert advice on relevant issues including on new and existing rules and regulations.
- Allow fishermen to share information and experiences with new technology and innovations that can improve fishing.
- Promote a positive image of the Irish fishing industry.

Outcomes

The NFDG continued to provide direct feedback to the Producer Organisations and the National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF) and Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum (RIFF) on issues impacting on the day-today operation of the catching sector.



Four hybrid meetings during 2022, discussing a range of topics including:

- Development of a register of fishermen, proposed by the Group in 2020.
- Discussions on the issues associated with non-EEA workers and changes to the current permit scheme as well as BIM's labour force study.
- Development of a "Fishermen's Handbook" providing information on Basic Seamanship, Rules of the Road, Navigation Lights and Buoys etc. It aims to raise the awareness of safety at sea and promote training.
- Development of a fishery for live caught prawns including a trip by several members of the Group to France to observe the fishery in the ports of Guilvinec and Loctudy. Follow-up work was carried out during the early summer to collect samples which were sent to the French market.
- Participated in self-sampling work on board Irish vessels in the tuna and prawn fisheries.
- Discussions on the issue of Offshore Renewable Energies (ORE) and the impact on fishermen.
- Participation in a workshop on the Single Use Plastic Directive and recycling of fishing gear.

At the last meeting of the Group held in December 2022, the future of the NFDG was discussed with the membership. The general consensus was that while progress had been made on certain issues since 2017, given the current challenging environment the catching sector was operating in and the number of other representative groups in place, it was better to disband the NFDG.

Summary of Project Spend

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Total Approved Costs	€30,000
Total Eligible Expenditure	€21,151
EMFAF Eligible Expenditure	€10,575
Exchequer	€10,575

Report by: Dominic Rihan

Date: February 2023



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an Aontas Eorpach

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