

BIM EMFAF Work Programme Project Report 2023

BENEFICIARY:	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER:	23/IFCS/STS-BG011-BR101
NAME OF PROJECT:	Supporting Networking in the Inshore Fisheries Sector
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:	1 st January to 31 st December 2023

Project Scope

The Inshore Fisheries Forum Initiative provides a platform for the sector to engage with state and other actors that have an interest in the inshore space and seeks to develop the capacity of the sector to not only sustain but enhance its contribution to coastal communities.

The intent has always been to use the establishment and initial facilitation of the Inshore Forums to build capacity in the sector such that it is ultimately able to take its place at the table with the representatives of the larger vessels in the fleet in establishing robust self-sustaining representative structures for the sector. However, this has been a slow process and inshore organisations have only been recognised as Producer Organisations in recent years, IIMRO in 2021 and NIFA in 2023. The development and publication of the Inshore Fisheries Strategy 2019-2023 in 2019 marked a major milestone in charting a path and required BIM facilitation for at least the duration of the strategy. The RIFFs completed a renewal process in Q1 2020 which was complemented with the provision of externally provided governance training to facilitate members to participate in the Inshore Forums process and engage on behalf of those they represent in the sector. The value of this progress became apparent in the full role played by the NIFF in the Seafood Task Force established to mitigate the effects of Brexit in 2021 and the full participation of members of both the RIFFs and the NIFF in the Seafood-ORE Working Group and its subgroups throughout 2022 and 2023. The development of a census of the inshore sector made great progress in 2023 following the initial work conducted in the last quarter of 2022 which looked at the existing data on the inshore sector, identified data needs and gaps, provided a baseline profile and initial specification. The Inshore Census was rolled out in Q3 2023 assisted by it being a requirement to participate in the Brexit Inshore Fisheries Business Model Adjustment Scheme ensuring good returns. The data collected will be worked up in early 2024 and used to underpin the development of a new Inshore Strategy 2024-2027.

Objectives

This will be achieved by the Inshore Fisheries Forums addressing the following issues:

- Participating in the implementation of the Inshore Fisheries Strategy specifically:
 - Assisting in the development, proofing, and rollout of the Inshore Census
 - Advising on and proofing the development of online training content
- Develop and facilitate implementation of policies and initiatives relating to the sustainable management of inshore fisheries within six nautical miles, consistent with national and EU policies concerning fisheries management, sustainable development, and protection of the marine environment.
- Provide formal engagement opportunities between inshore fishermen and other marine stakeholders and to bring issues of importance to the sector to the National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF).



- Provide input to the development of national policies or positions which concern or affect inshore fisheries management, particularly the ongoing introduction of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Framework and the Seafood Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Working Group.
- Facilitate the development of measures designed to enable local fishermen, other fishermen who rely on local waters for their livelihood, and other persons with an interest to contribute to inshore fisheries management policies.
- Facilitate the development of management measures or wild bivalve fisheries.
- Facilitate the classification of wild bivalve fisheries.

Outcomes

NIFF meetings

- NIFF held their first meeting on the 17th February 2023 in Galway with the marine agencies. The NIFF discussed the inshore census, the new Spurdog fishery, hook and line mackerel and marketing report, the public consultation on Herring Management policy, Seafood-ORE Working group and related project proposals etc.
- NIFF held a second meeting on the 6th December 2023 where there was a discussion on the NIFF and RIFF process and if it should continue, equal representation of the inshore sector on National Committees, the mackerel hook and line allocation, NW Herring review and the NWHAC, preparation of a public consultation on restrictions of vessels over 18m trawling inside 6 nm, inshore decommissioning scheme, zero TAC for pollack, the Spurdog fishery, ORE concerns and the new control regulations.

Additional Inshore Support Scheme

- The Brexit Inshore Fisheries Model Adjustment Scheme was launched in June 2023 to provide assistance to inshore fisheries in adjusting their business operations as a result of Brexit.

Inshore Census

- The Inshore Strategy Implementation Group of which NIFF is a member met on the 4th May 2023 to discuss the Inshore Census roll out and to obtain feedback from industry on the draft list of questions that could be addressed and the best way to ask these questions. There was a follow up meeting on the 23rd May to look at the revised list of questions following feedback from industry (NIFF & NIFA) and follow up calls with ISIG members and the provider to fine tune the questions before the census took place. It was decided that the best way to roll out the Inshore Census and get optimum return was to make the completion of the Census one of the conditions of the Brexit Model Inshore Adjustment Scheme. Over 800 returns of the Census were received through the Scheme. The results from the Inshore Census will be key to the development of a new Inshore Strategy.

Offshore Renewable Energy

- NIFF and RIFF members continued to attend and actively participate in the 10 meetings of Seafood-ORE Working Group chaired by Robert McCabe which made great progress in 2023. During 2023 a number of subgroups of the Seafood-ORE were also set up to discuss and draw up guidance documents on impacts, activity, data, co-existence and related issues and dispute resolution mechanisms. Various NIFF and RIFF members participated fully on these subgroups which reported to the Seafood-ORE Working Group at each monthly meeting. A member of the NIFF and NW RIFF presented the idea to the Seafood-ORE WG for an app to obtain data on inshore fishing activity.



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Ministerial meetings

- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, held a meeting on the 19th April 2023 with the inshore representative organisations (NIFF, NIFA and IIMRO) to discuss their issues of most concern such as 1) Financial supports for the inshore sector, 2) Brown crab working group, 3) Mackerel Hook and Line, 4) Spurdog fishery, 5) North RIFF & NIFF request for review of NW Herring Policy 6) Update on 6nm appeal. NIFF raised the issues of the Mackerel Hook and Line, NW Herring policy and their impact of ORE & MPAs will have on the inshore sector with the Minister.
- Meeting of fishing industry representatives with the Minister on the 19th July 2023 where the ICES advice on a 0 TAC for Pollack for 2024 was of great concern to the inshore sector.
- Sustainability Impact Assessment meeting with the Minister and fishing industry representatives held on the 17th October 2023. The NIFF representative again expressed concerns about how vital Pollack was to the inshore sector.
- Fishing industry meeting with the Minister on brown crab markets was held on the 28th November 2023.

Letters to the Minister

- The NIFF wrote to Minister McConalogue on the 23rd March 2023 expressing their concern on learning that the Court of Appeal had struck down Policy Directive No.1 of 2019 which allowed for the introduction of a restriction on fishing within 6nm limit for all vessels over 18m in length. They requested that everything is done to reinstate this important Policy Directive for the inshore sector. At the NIFF meeting held on the 6th December 2023, DAFM confirmed that a new public consultation was being prepared and the data supporting this consultation from the Marine Institute and BIM was being updated. It is hoped that the new public consultation will be launched in the first quarter of 2024.
- North West Herring (Via South, VIIb, c) Fishery
Further to the NIFF and North RIFF request to Minister McConalogue in August 2022 for a review of NW Herring Policy, a public consultation took place in February 2023. Following the public consultation, the Minister wrote to the NIFF and North RIFF setting out a decision regarding the limited review of the 2012 Herring Management Policy and a recommendation to establish the North-West Herring Advisory Committee and invited NIFF to participate. As both the NIFF and North RIFF sat on the North West Herring Stakeholders Committee they felt they should each have a seat and wrote to the Minister again on 11th October 2023 in this regard. Further discussions with DAFM are continuing.

Challenges in progressing a number of issues meant the six RIFFs met less frequently than in previous years with a total of two NIFF and 14 RIFF meetings being held. There was extensive engagement with the Seafood ORE Working Group with nine meetings and 15 sub-group meetings attended by RIFF and NIFF members. A further 35 meetings on various issues including quota management, MPAs, NW Herring and Celtic Sea Herring were also attended. A major project was the inshore census which was rolled out to industry in Q3 and saw an excellent response rate with over 800 received. This will deliver a comprehensive, fit for purpose profile of the inshore sector that can be used to support it in its interactions with State and non-State actors in the inshore space and underpin the development of a new Inshore Fisheries Strategy in 2024.

Inshore Fisheries Forums meetings 2023

National Inshore Fisheries Forum meetings: 17.02.2023 & 06.12.2023

RIFF Meetings

North RIFF meetings: 02.03.2023 & 12.12.2023



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North West RIFF meetings: 09.03.2023, 03.03.2023, 21.09.20.23 & 14.12.2023

South East RIFF meetings: 15.02.2023, 20.03.2023, 31.05.2023, 13.09.2023 & 25.10.2023

South West RIFF meetings: 18.10.2023

North East RIFF: 27.01.2023

West RIFF: 12.04.2023

Seafood-ORE Working group Meetings 2023 attended by RIFF and NIFF representatives:

17.01.2023, 27.02.2023, 04.04.2023, 03.05.2023, 14.06.2023, 18.07.2023, 11.09.2023, 24.10.2023 & 13.12.2023

Subgroups of the Seafood-ORE Working Group where NIFF and RIFF members participated:

Guidance document subgroup – 23.02.2023 & 24.03.2023

Fishing Activities subgroup – 23.05.2023 & 29.06.2023.

Impacts subgroup – 03.04.2023 & 14.09.2023

Data subgroup: 03.07.2023, 04.09.2023 & 09.10.2023

Co-existence and related issues subgroup: 17.08.2023, 21.11.2023 & 14.12.2023.

Dispute Resolution Mechanism subgroup: 28.08.2023, 25.09.2023 & 13.10.2023.

Quota Management Advisory Committee; meetings attending by John Menarry: 16.01.2023, 16.02.2023, 21.03.2023, 21.04.2023, 18.05.2023, 22.06.2023, 20.07.2023, 18.08.2023, 18.09.2023, 20.10.2023, 17.11.2023 & 11.12.2023

Spurdog subgroup meetings: 07.03.2023 & 16.03.2023

Inshore Representative Organisations (NIFF, NIFA and IIMRO) meeting with Minister: 19.04.2023

OREDP II Advisory Group meetings: 26.01.2023 & 27.06.2023

EMFF & EMFAF Monitoring Committee Meetings: 28.03.2023 & 29.11.2023

Inshore Strategy Implementation Group Meeting to discuss Inshore Census: 04.05.2023 & 23.05.2023

Fishing industry meetings with Minister: 14.01.2023 & 19.07.2023, brown crab market 28.11.2023 and Sustainability Impact Assessment: 17.10.2023 & 05.12.2023

Alternative Whelk Bait Project update meetings: 10.02.2023, 21.04.2023, 09.06.2023 & 07.09.2023

Irish Fisheries Science Research Partnership (IFSRP) Meeting: 13.02.2023

Meeting of the MMO (GB) and fishing industry representatives on MPAs: 22.02.2023



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Celtic Sea Herring Management Advisory Committee (CSHMAC): 07.06.2023, 19.06.2023 & 22.08.2023

Launch of Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA): 13.07.2023

DECC presentation on Co-existence study: 06.10.2023

North West Herring Advisory Committee: 14.09.2023, 27.09.2023 & 13.10.2023

Brown Crab FIP meeting: 22.09.2023

Summary of Project Spend

Summary of Spend	
Total Approved Costs	€60,000
Total Eligible Expenditure	€60,000
EMFAF Eligible Expenditure	€30,000
Exchequer	€30,000

Report by: Denise Maloney & Ian Lawler

Date: February 2024



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