



Supporting the development of Irish aquaculture through strategic support

BIM's Aquaculture Work Programme 2025-2027



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
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Introduction



BIM's strategy 'Turning the Tide' guides everything we do to support and grow Ireland's seafood sector.

 Our mission	 Our vision
To help the Irish seafood sector grow in value – sustainably and across the whole supply chain, from catch to consumer.	We will work closely with the sector to make real change – quickly and effectively – so Irish seafood stays strong and sustainable. This vision drives new goals and fresh ways of working together.

Supporting national goals

From 2025 to 2027, BIM's work will also support four inter-related objective areas that are set out in the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030 of which there are fifty six actions.

Each action has a designated lead agency, BIM being the designated lead on thirty two of the actions and will support the other agencies as follows; Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, Marine Institute and Bord Bia on the remaining goals as appropriate. These priorities reflect what the sector needs most now: practical help, clear outcomes, and long-term impact.

1. Strengthen leadership & competitiveness

We're helping to make better decisions faster – by supporting local leadership, building business capability, and rolling out tools like AQUAMIS and coordinated marine spatial planning.

2. Lead the green transition

We're supporting the shift to more sustainable, lower-impact production – helping producers scale organic farming, raise environmental standards, reduce waste, and meet market expectations.

3. Build trust & community connection

We're making it easier for people to understand, support, and value aquaculture – through public engagement, transparent data, and better links between aquaculture, communities, and coastal economies.

4. Drive innovation & skills

We're investing in R&D, skills, and training so the sector can stay ahead – supporting innovation in farming methods, products, and people, from new entrants to future leaders.

How this supports national goals

Our 2025–2027 work programme contributes directly to the delivery of NSPSA 2030, ensuring aquaculture in Ireland is:

- **More competitive** – through supporting better licensing, spatial access, and new markets
- **More sustainable** – with higher environmental standards and green innovation

- **More accepted and understood** – with better public engagement and traceability
- **More innovative and skilled** – through knowledge-sharing, training, and investment

Together, these efforts help lay the foundation for a stronger, more resilient Irish aquaculture sector – one that's ready for the future.

Source: National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030



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Where Ireland's aquaculture stands today



Irish aquaculture in 2024: a sector of strength and strain

Aquaculture continues to play a vital role in Ireland's coastal and rural communities. In 2024, aquaculture created 1,835 direct jobs, mostly in small, family-run farms. The wider seafood economy supported nearly 17,000 people. These producers are the backbone of the sector, farming high-value species such as salmon, oysters, and mussels in some of Europe's cleanest waters.

In 2024, the industry produced **38,456 tonnes** of farmed seafood – up 8% on 2023 – and reached a **record €210 million** in sales value. A strong recovery in salmon farming was the primary driver, with output up **49%**, reversing two years of decline and helping to offset challenges in the shellfish sector.

Aquaculture contributed **€73 million in Gross Value Added (GVA)** to the Irish economy – an important measure of the sector's economic footprint. GVA represents the value created by aquaculture businesses after deducting the cost of inputs like feed, fuel, and labour. It's a clear indicator of the sector's role in generating local and national economic activity.

However, sector performance was mixed. Rope mussel and oyster producers faced a tough year, impacted by seed shortages, falling prices, and stricter buyer specifications in key markets.

Total employment declined by **6%**, with most job losses in part-time and seasonal roles within shellfish farming.



Export-focused, but exposed

Ireland exported **70% of its total aquaculture production** in 2024 – around 27,000 tonnes. **France remained the leading destination**, particularly for salmon and oysters (51%), but its share of total exports fell by 7%. Sales to the **Netherlands (21%)** and the **UK (up 47%)** grew, while exports to **Southeast Asia** (mainly oysters) held steady at 3%.

This export focus has supported sector growth, but it also introduces vulnerability. Market concentration, tighter quality and certification demands, and price volatility – especially for standard-grade shellfish – are putting pressure on producers.

Many small and mid-sized farms lack the scale or resources to adapt quickly.

Data Sources: Annual Aquaculture Report - Findings of the National Seafood Survey 2025, Kontali Edge, FAO & Eurostat, BIM 2024 Business of Seafood Report



Species Snapshots



Salmon

Salmon farming had a standout year in 2024. Output rose by **49%** to **13,877 tonnes**, and sales value increased by **46%**, reaching **€138 million**. This growth reversed recent declines and created **41% more jobs** in salmon farming.

About 68% of farmed salmon was exported – primarily to **France (32%)**, other **EU countries (29%)**, and **global markets (6%)**. While overall pricing fell by 3.5%, Ireland's organic certification and quality standards continue to differentiate the product in a competitive European market.



Key Insight: Ireland's salmon production represents approximately 0.6% of global production, underscoring its role as a premium niche supplier. Global leaders like Norway (1.5 million tonnes) and Chile (700,000 tonnes) continue to dominate in volume, but Ireland's recovery aligns with softening trends in some larger producing nations. This creates an opportunity to deepen penetration in higher-margin markets such as Germany and France and to explore value-added processing and sustainability-led branding to further enhance differentiation.

Data Sources: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings of the National Seafood Survey 2025, Kontali Edge, FAO & Eurostat, Seafood News



Oysters

Ireland produced 9,268 tonnes of Pacific oysters in 2024 – down 4% from 2023. Sales value dropped 6%, and employment fell by 10%.

Exports accounted for 81% of total oyster production, with France receiving 70% of exports and 57% of national output. However, unit prices in France dropped by 13%, and standard-grade product is becoming more difficult to sell. In contrast, sales to the UK grew by 19%, and Southeast Asia now represents 10% of export volume, with unit prices nearly double those in Europe.

Ireland remains a mid-sized player globally but is one of the top three oyster producers in Europe yet still is just 10% of France's 2023 production, which exceeded 90,000 tonnes. Several traditional European producers, including Denmark and Portugal, have experienced steep production declines in recent years, while Ireland has maintained relatively consistent volumes.

This positions Ireland uniquely: strong in output compared to most of Europe but with a high dependency on export markets and growing exposure to price volatility, particularly in France. In contrast to other producers focused on commoditised volumes, Ireland has an opportunity to build differentiation through provenance, grading, traceability, and branding – key to accessing premium channels and buyers in higher-value markets.



Key Insight: Ireland's reliance on the French market is a growing risk. To protect and grow value, we need to expand direct access to premium buyers – particularly in European markets – and invest in branding, grading, and traceability that connects product quality directly with Ireland. For small producers, breaking past the logistical barriers of island access is key to competing on a larger stage.



Mussels

Total mussel production in 2024 was approximately **13,575 tonnes**, made up of **9,479 tonnes of rope-grown** and **4,096 tonnes of seabed-cultured mussels**. Rope mussel production fell by 16%. Seabed mussels rose 13%, but only due to the sale of reserve stocks – not a sign of long-term recovery.

Around **60% of mussels were exported**, mainly to the **Netherlands (88% of seabed mussels)** and **France who are both significant European producers themselves**. While volume to export markets grew slightly, **average unit prices fell**, and profitability weakened across both segments. Domestic demand remained strong, with **41% of rope mussels** sold in Ireland – the highest local share of any farmed species.

In 2023, global mussel production exceeded 1.9 million tonnes, with just three countries – China, Chile, and Spain – accounting for over 70% of that volume. China alone produced more than 777,000 tonnes, followed by Chile (396,000 tonnes) and Spain (155,000 tonnes), with other major European producers including France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Ireland is a small producer globally – but that's a strength. Instead of competing on volume, Irish farms can stand out for quality, sustainability, and local identity. With a strong focus on quality, provenance, and environmental stewardship, Irish mussel producers are well placed to meet growing consumer demand for traceable, sustainably sourced seafood – particularly in higher-value markets.



Key Insight: There's untapped potential in southern European markets like Spain and Italy, but product quality and marketing must align. The shortage of wild seed also signals a clear need for investment in alternative sources of seed, better use of data to inform husbandry decisions and biosecurity.



Trout

In 2024, Ireland produced 500 tonnes of rainbow trout, generating approximately €3 million in sales. Nearly half of this output was exported to the UK, with the remainder serving the domestic market.

The segment saw significant investment in infrastructure, including a shift from pond to raceway systems, resulting in a 38% increase in enclosed production volume. Employment rose, with land-based finfish units reporting a 48% increase in FTEs.

While trout remains the most commercially developed non-salmon finfish species, its growth is constrained by limited market size and low consumer awareness.

Smoked and portioned trout products are growing in popularity. Producers focused solely on whole fish may miss out on **higher-margin, convenience-led product formats**.



Key Insight: Trout has stable production and export potential. Future growth depends on increasing domestic demand and targeting high-value buyers in nearby markets.



Emerging & Other Species

In 2024, Ireland produced 2,153 tonnes of other and emerging aquaculture species, valued at €10.9 million across 36 production units. This includes king scallop, Manila clam, lumpfish, European perch, seaweed and native oyster.

Total output rose by 2.4% due to increased smolt production, a drop in smolt unit sales value led to an overall revenue decline of 9.6%. Seaweed production fell by 7% to 496 tonnes, though more units became active, showing continued interest in this early-stage segment.

Other species, including scallop and clam, remain limited in output, with only early signs of potential emerging at this stage. Hatchery support, restocking, and niche market development will be key to unlocking future growth.



Key Insight: Emerging species remain small but offer long-term value through diversification and innovation. Focused support can help develop their commercial potential.

Looking ahead

Irish aquaculture showed both resilience and fragility in 2024. The sector's strengths – clean waters and organic production – remain powerful assets. But rising costs, seed shortages, labour pressures, and over-dependence on a few markets threaten its long-term stability.

To support sustainable growth, the next phase must focus on:

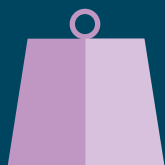
- Smarter, **value-led export diversification**
- **Stronger branding** and premium positioning for Irish aquaculture
- Investment in **hatchery innovation**, biosecurity, and grading technology

- Support for **scaling, skills development**, and infrastructure for small and mid-sized producers
- Broader adoption of digital and data-driven tools – from precision feeding and environmental monitoring to traceability and farm automation

BIM's upcoming work programmes are designed to support these priorities – helping producers grow more resilient businesses, access new markets, and protect what makes Irish aquaculture unique. Let's take a quick look at how the sector performed in 2024.

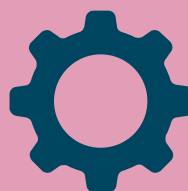
Data Sources: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings of the National Seafood Survey 2025, Kontali Edge, FAO & Eurostat

2024 Sector Snapshot



Total Output
38,456 tonnes

+8%



Production Units
278

-2%



Gross Value Added (GVA)
€73 million

+48%



Employment
1,835 people

-6%



% Exported
70%



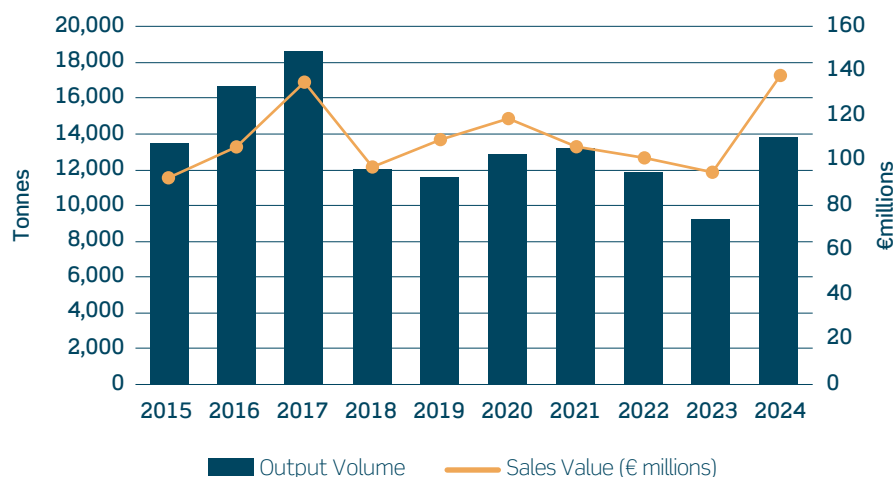
Sales Value
€210 million

+24%



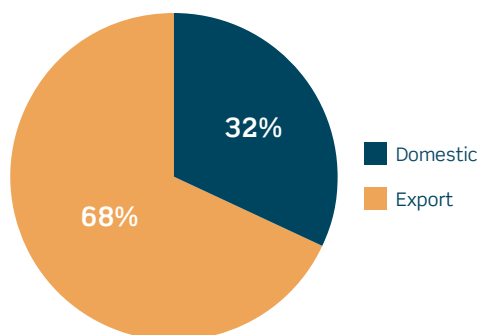
Salmon

Production Output & Sales Value Trend



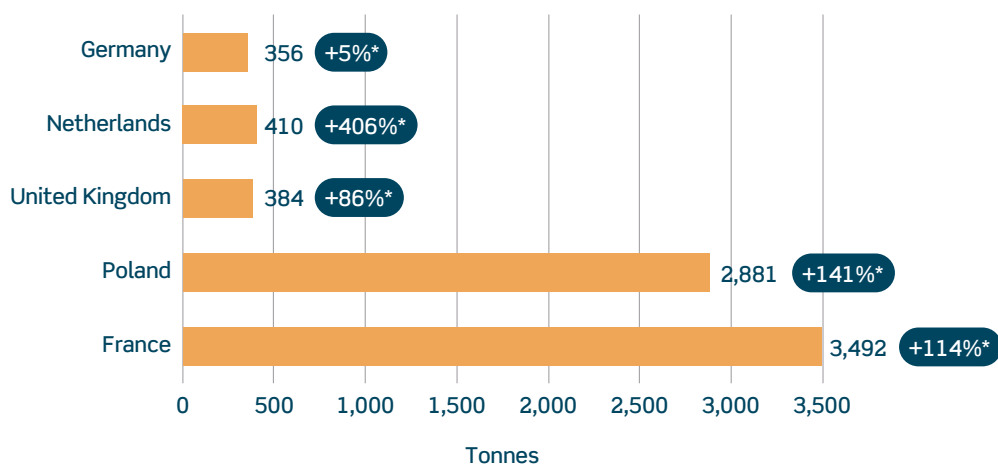
Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025

2024 Production Output Market Split



Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025

2024 Top Export Markets by Sales Volume

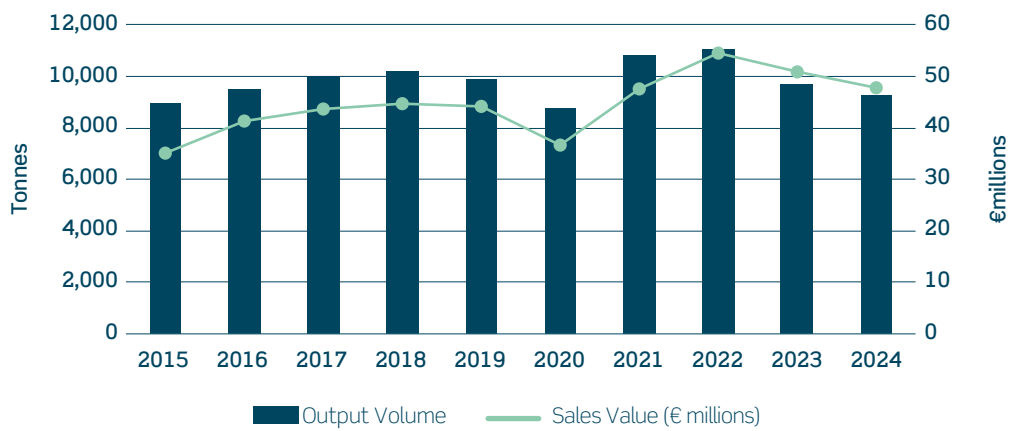


Source: Eurostat
*% Change yr/yr



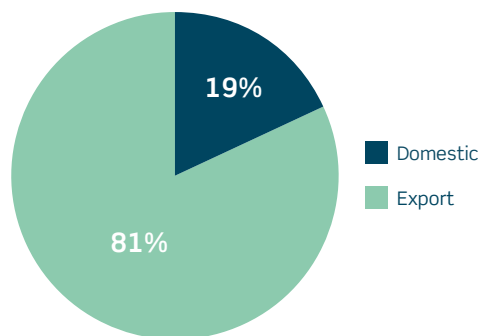
Oysters

Production Output & Sales Value Trend



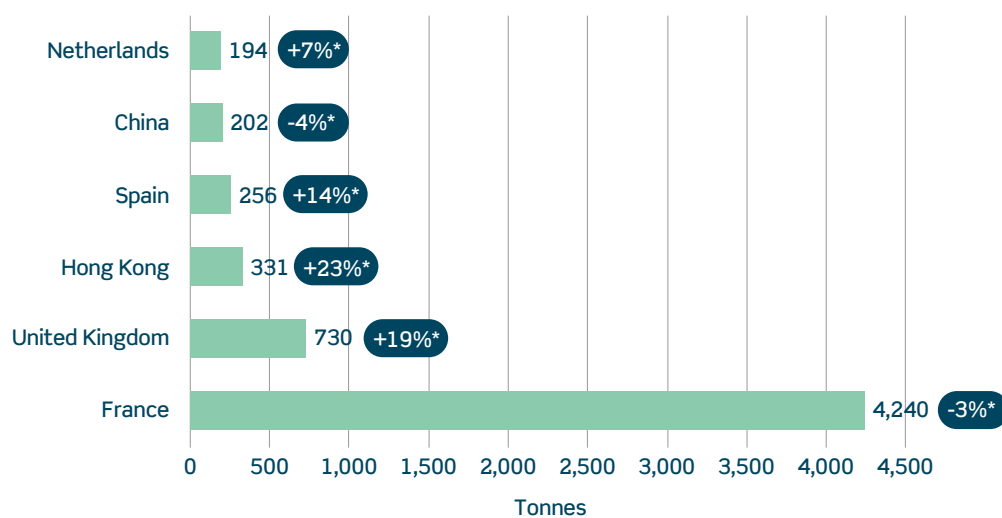
Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025

2024 Production Output Market Split



Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025

2024 Top Export Markets by Sales Volume



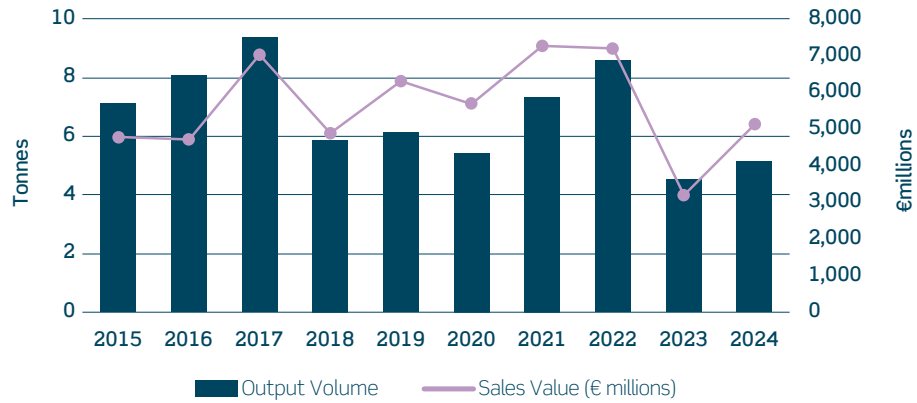
Source: Eurostat
*% Change yr/yr



Mussels

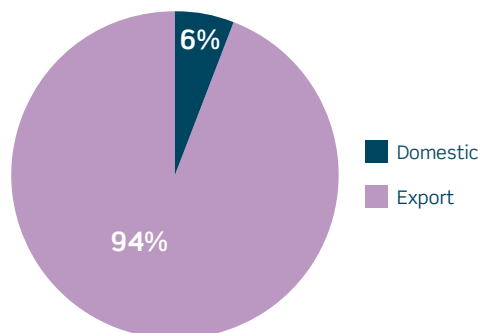
Bottom Mussels

Production Output & Sales Value Trend



Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025

2024 Production Output Market Split

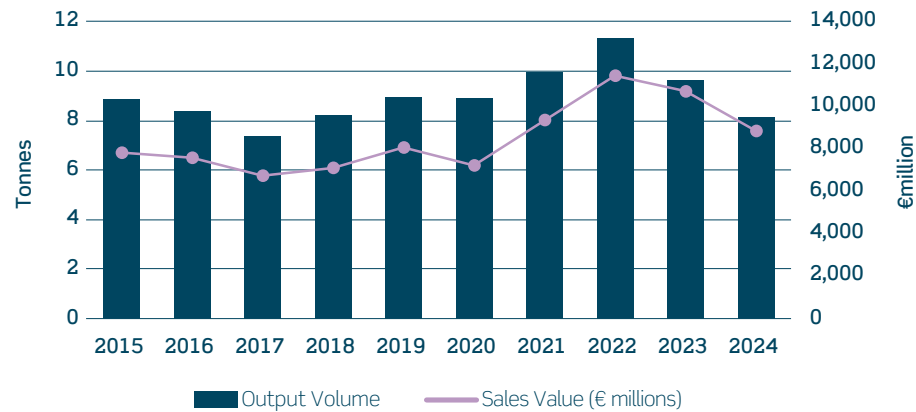


Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025



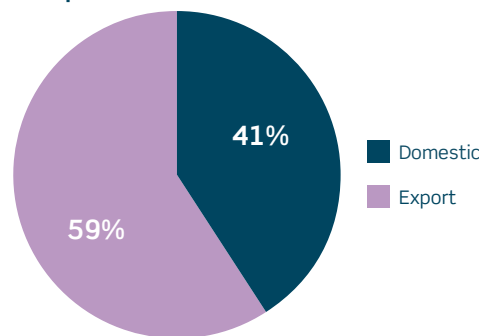
Rope Mussels

Production Output & Sales Value Trend



Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025

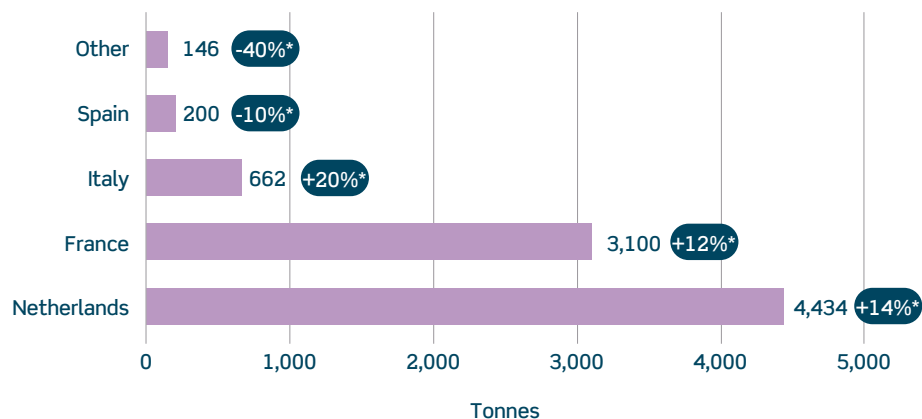
2024 Production Output Market Split



Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025

All Mussels

2024 Top Export Markets by Sales Volume*

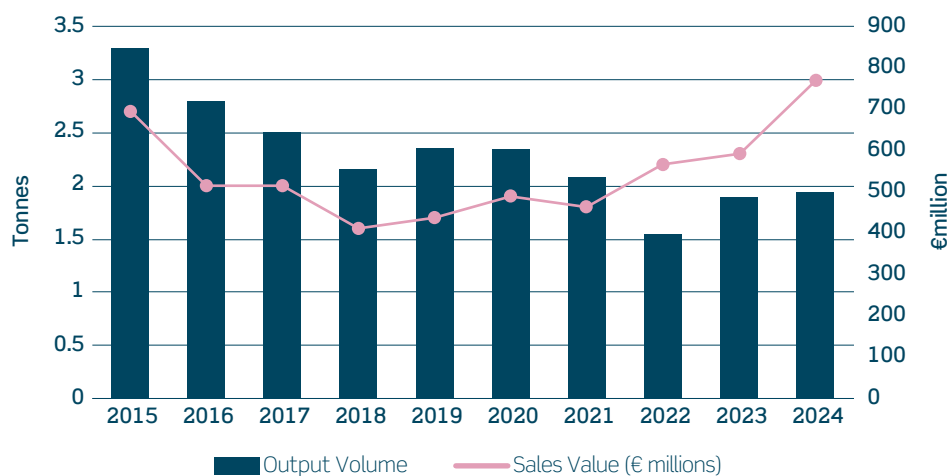


*Based on Eurostat data – The majority of Bottom Mussels continue to be exported to The Netherlands / % Change yr/yr



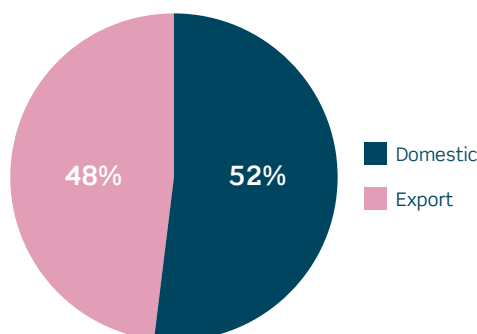
Trout

Production Output & Sales Value Trend



Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025

2024 Export Market Split (Production Output)



Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025



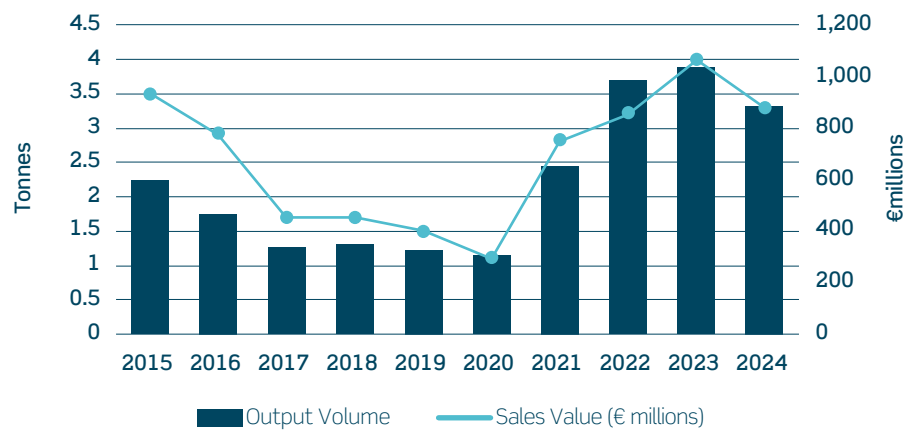
Non-Salmon finfish production primarily supplies a home market, although **48% of a total output of 500 tonnes** was **exported to the UK** in 2024.

Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025

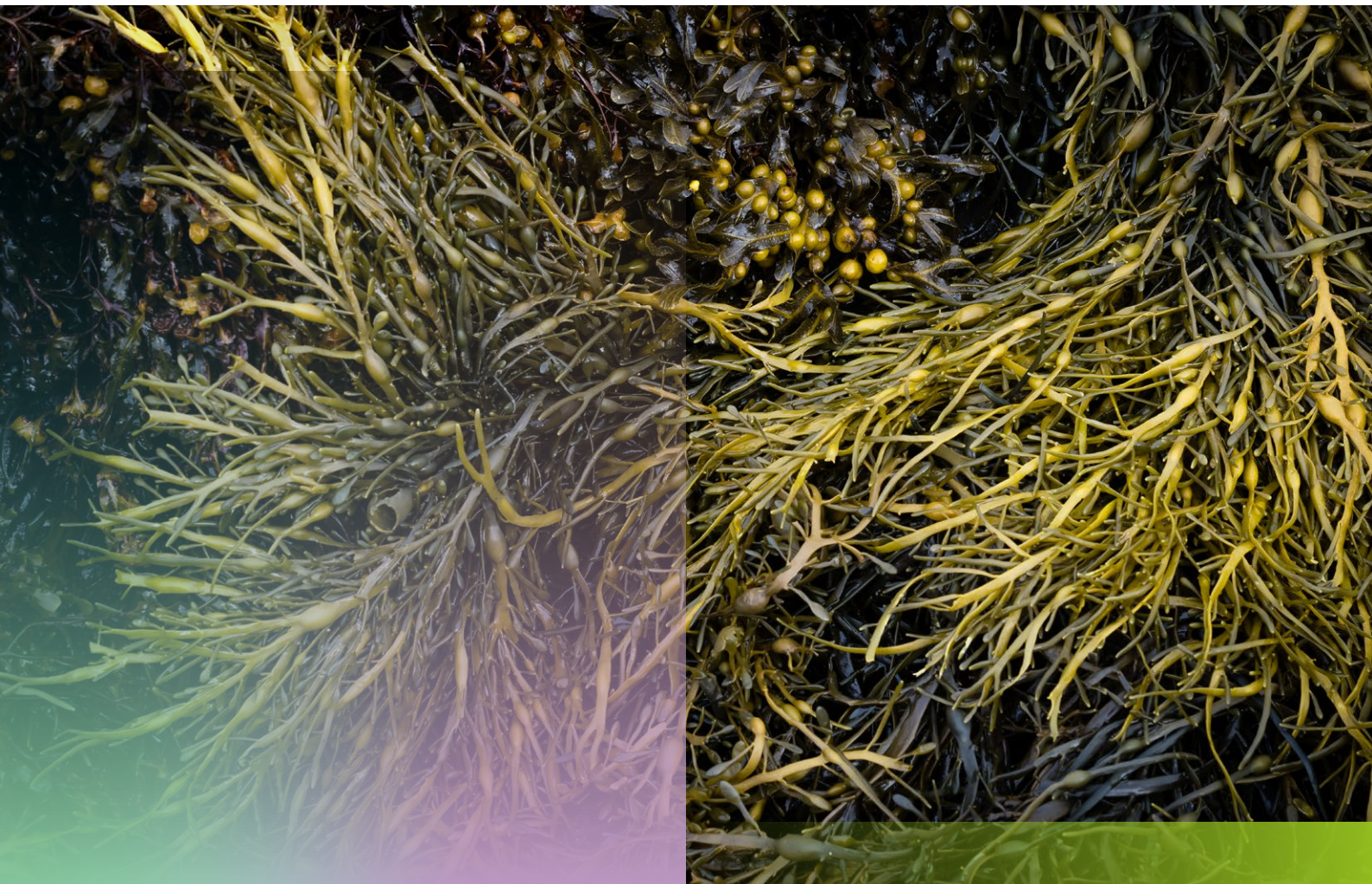


Emerging & Other Species

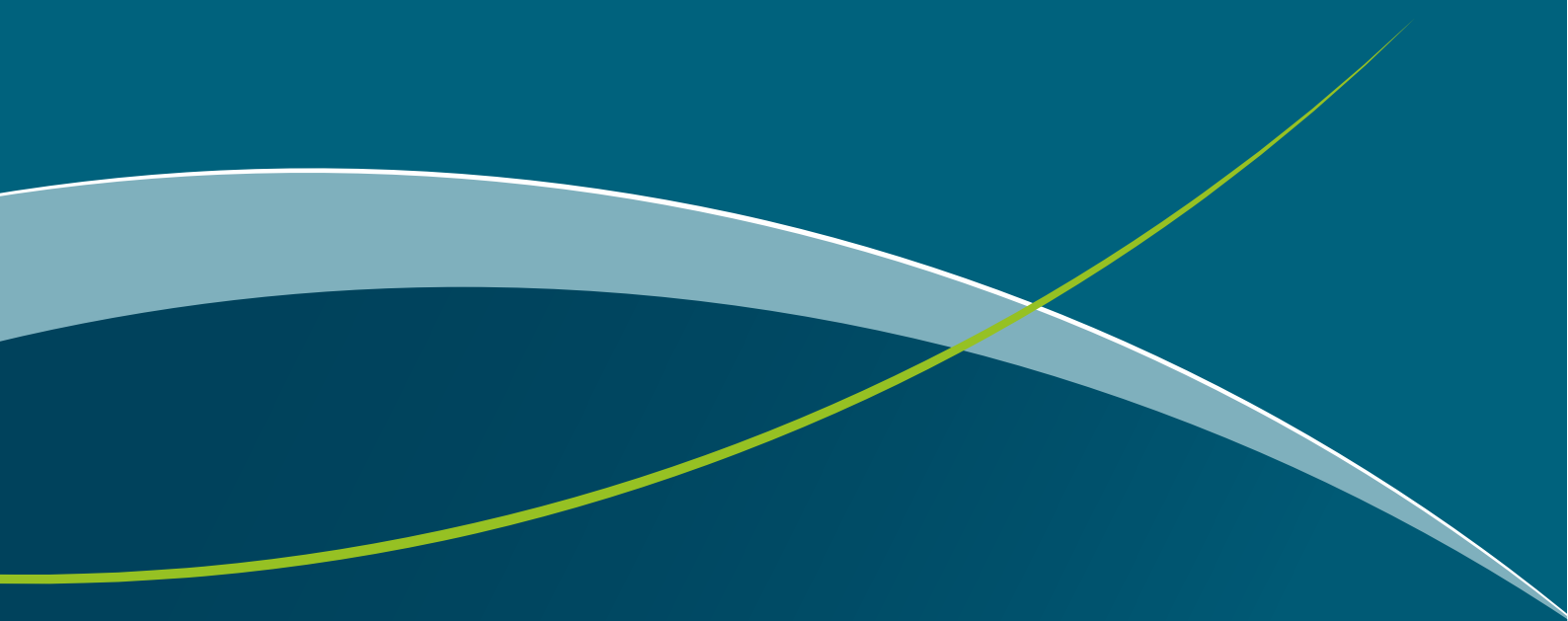
2024 Production Output Market Split



Source: Annual Aquaculture Report – Findings from the National Seafood Survey 2025



2 The strengths and challenges behind the sector





The unique features that shape the sector

Most farms are small, locally run businesses, often passed down through families. This strong link to rural and coastal communities brings many local benefits – but also some challenges.

For example, small size and traditional ways of working can make it harder to grow, compete, or adapt quickly to changes. Complex licensing rules, pressure to meet higher environmental standards, and reliance on exports add to the strain.

To understand where support is needed, we need to look at these challenges more closely.



Small scale

Most Irish farms are small and based in coastal communities. That's good for local jobs, but it also means:

- It costs more to produce each tonne of seafood on a small farm
- Less money to invest in new tools or technology
- Less power when negotiating with key buyers

Still, the sector is already finding ways to work smarter. Producer groups (like the Irish Oyster Packer Group), digital tools, and better training are helping farmers grow without losing what makes them local.



Fragmentation

There are lots of producers working independently. That makes it hard to:

- Work together on pricing or marketing
- Build shared infrastructure
- Access certifications for premium markets

The good news: Initiatives such as the Irish Salmon Producers Group – a strategic partnership to help small producers achieve greater impact and bargaining power are showing what's possible when people team up. Given our size and scale more strategic partnerships need to happen.



Traditional business models

Many businesses are run by families and follow long-standing ways of doing things. That experience is valuable – but can sometimes slow change. Challenges include:

- Limited use of digital tools
- Difficulty planning for the future and navigating succession
- Struggles to attract new talent or invest
- A loss of momentum or agility in decision making

The goal is to keep local knowledge while adding new skills, digital tools, and long-term plans.



Complex licensing system

Growth and scale in aquaculture will remain constrained without a fit-for-purpose, responsive licensing system. Obtaining or renewing a site licence is widely recognised as a persistent challenge – one that limits producers' ability to respond to new market opportunities and innovate. While BIM is not responsible for the licensing process, it acknowledges the critical importance of resolving this issue. Many of BIM's current programmes are designed to support producers as they navigate these constraints. In line with Ireland's National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development, BIM will continue to play a proactive and constructive role in supporting efforts by the relevant authorities to reform and improve the licensing system, given the urgency and strategic significance of the issue.



Environmental and community pressure

There's more public focus now on how seafood is farmed. Given Ireland's scale we are more sensitive to this issue. Coastal farms are close to communities and sensitive marine areas. To keep support, we need to:

- Show we farm responsibly
- Share data and engage locally
- Stay ahead of environmental standards



Reliance on exports

We sell most of our seafood abroad. That brings opportunities – but also risk. We're exposed to:

- Lower-cost global competition
- Shifting regulations
- Growing certification demands
- Logistical hurdles for small producers getting to market

To stay strong, Ireland needs to:

- Explore new markets
- Focus on premium, branded products
- Keep investing in quality and traceability



Signs of progress

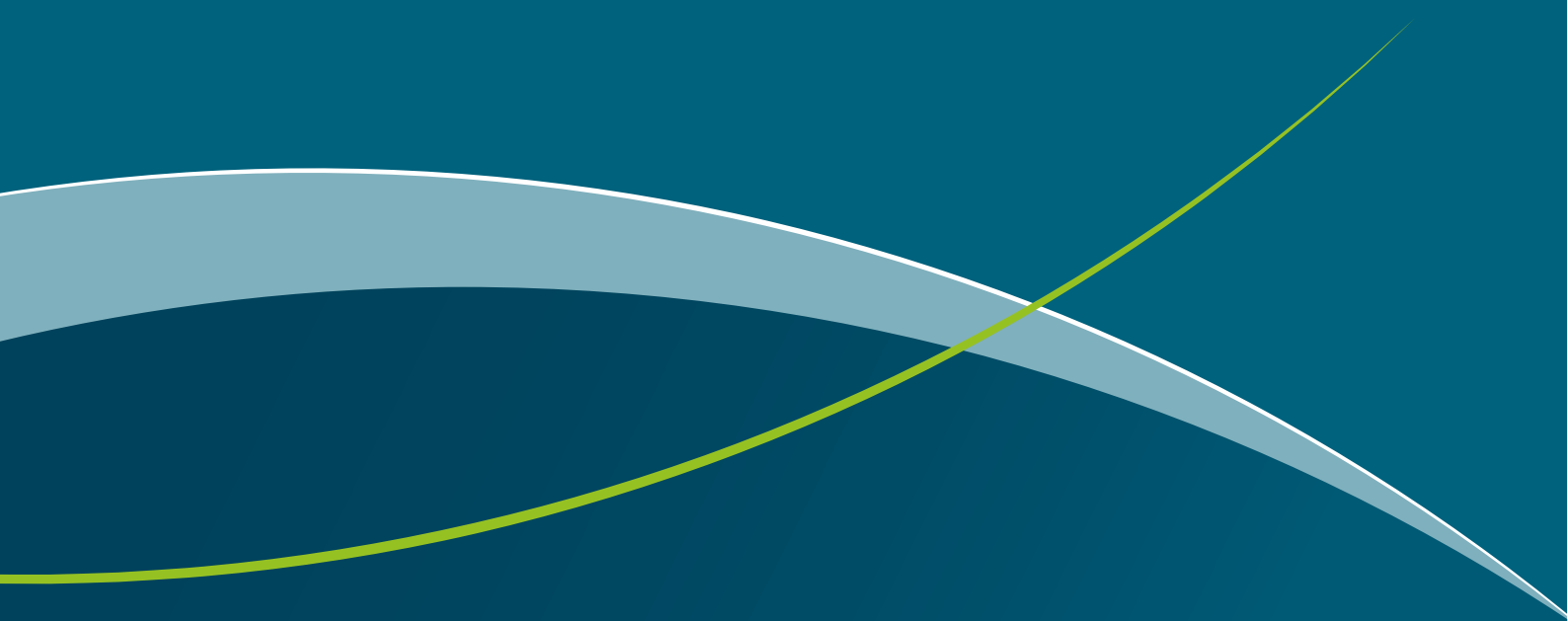
Despite the challenges, many producers are leading the way:

- **Funding:** New supports like the EMFAF grants and the Blue Revolution Fund are helping businesses grow.
- **Tech:** Startups like Aquamonitrix and producers like Bradan Beo Teoranta and Carlingford Oyster Company are using sensors and data tools to lower costs, inform husbandry decisions and improve product quality
- **Partnerships:** Groups like the Irish Oyster Packer Group are working together to improve how they farm and sell.

These are real examples of how Irish aquaculture can grow stronger, smarter, and more resilient – while staying rooted in local communities.



3 What's driving global demand for farmed seafood





The forces reshaping the sector

The world wants more seafood – and aquaculture is stepping up to meet that demand. But it's not just about producing more; it's about doing it better, faster, and more sustainably. The following trends are shaping what producers need to think about today:

1. More people want seafood

Global seafood consumption hit 162 million tonnes in 2021, and it keeps rising. Why? More people, more urban living, and more interest in healthy, protein-rich foods. As wild fish stocks level off, aquaculture is filling the gap. Ireland is known for quality and sustainability – and that helps us stand out, especially in premium markets. But we'll need to grow carefully to protect that reputation.

2. Big buyers want fewer, bigger suppliers

Supermarkets and seafood brokers want to deal with fewer suppliers – ones who are big, certified, and reliable. That puts pressure on smaller Irish farms. The answer? Work together. Shared logistics, producer groups, and certification programmes can help smaller producers stay competitive and keep access to large buyers.

3. Rising costs for feed and energy

Feed is the biggest cost in finfish aquaculture – and it's getting more expensive. So is energy and labour. For small farms, this hits hard. Producers can cut costs by using smarter feeding systems, optimising resource use and maximising fish health, welfare positively influencing survival rates.

4. Climate and disease risks

Producers are facing changes in algal communities, parasites, and water temperature. Farms will need early-warning systems, sensors, and better ways to prevent and manage welfare – especially as water quality and temperature change.

5. Certification is now a must-have

Being certified as sustainable (ASC, organic, etc.) is no longer a bonus – it's frequently a basic requirement. Small producers may struggle with the cost and time it takes to get certified – but it's often essential to sell into high-value markets. But they can lead to higher prices and better market access. BIM with funding support from EMFAF are helping farms get there.

6. Smart tech is changing everything

From AI to real-time monitoring, new tools are making aquaculture more efficient and precise. BIM's Aquaculture technical team routinely trial new equipment and processes to assess suitability for use by Irish producers. Such demonstration trials de-risk investment for commercial operators. BIM's Aquatech Innovation Studio and the Blue Revolution Fund support both start-ups and traditional farms to adopt and develop new technologies. As part of these work programmes, BIM collaborates directly with farms to trial new solutions on site, helping to prove what works in real conditions. The challenge is making it easier for smaller farms to access and benefit from these innovations.



7. Export markets are volatile

In 2024, Ireland exported 70% of total production, an increase of 7.2% versus 2023. That means we're vulnerable to things like Brexit, tariffs, currency shifts, and changing global tastes. To reduce this risk, producers are looking to new markets (Asia, Middle East), premium products, and value-added seafood. Digital tools can help producers spot demand shifts and adjust volumes or routes faster.

8. It's hard to find skilled people

It's tough to get and keep skilled workers – especially in rural areas, a global issue but Ireland is particularly sensitive to it. Jobs in science, tech, and business are growing in importance. Attracting young people and passing on knowledge will be key to building a strong future workforce.

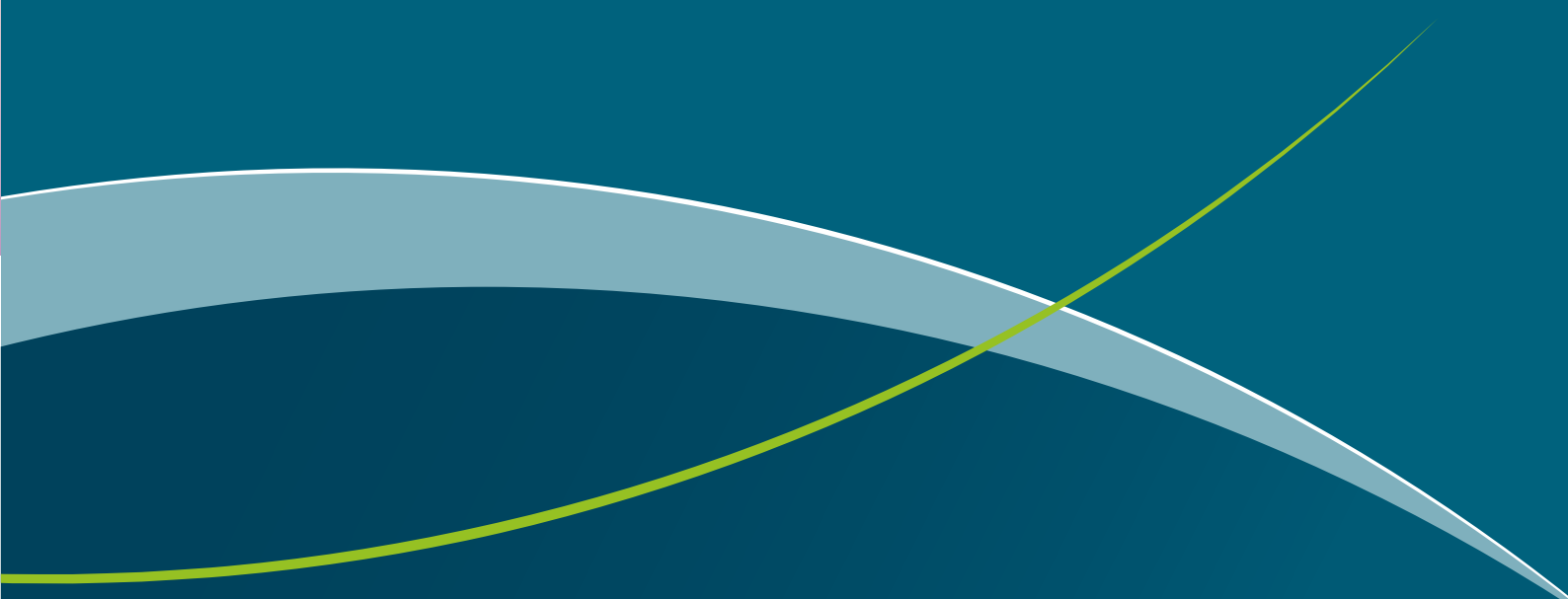
9. Retailers have the power

Retailers are setting stricter rules – on sustainability, price, and delivery. Producers must meet these demands while standing out through quality, certification, and storytelling. It's more important than ever to build strong relationships with buyers – and team up with other producers to boost negotiating power.

Sources: FAO (2022). The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)

Link: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc0461en/cc0461en.pdf>; Rabobank (2021). *Seafood Trade Flows and the Power of Retail Consolidation*. Rabobank (2022). *Aquafeed Market Update*. FAO SOFIA (2022) Chapter on Climate and Aquaculture, Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) – Market Trends Reports. Hatch Blue Reports on Aquatech Innovation, BIM *Business of Seafood Report (2023/2024)*, OECD-FAO *Agricultural Outlook (2023–2032)*. BIM *Human Capacity Development Plan*. Seafish (UK) Market Insight Reports <https://www.seafish.org/insight-and-research>, McKinsey & Company (2021). *Future of Retail in Seafood*

4 Strategic opportunities and development areas





Pathways to growth and resilience

The global aquaculture sector is changing fast. Ireland needs to build on its strengths – and fix what’s holding the sector back. That’s where these four themes come in. They are practical ways to tackle real problems and take advantage of the opportunities.

Each theme links closely to the issues raised by producers and expert contributors and groups that contributed to the development of the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development, 2030. They reflect how the sector operates today – and where it must evolve to stay competitive:

1. Market led growth & reputation

Focuses on getting more value from what we produce, telling a better story, building a stronger brand, and finding new markets

2. Resilient, sustainable supply

Looks at how we deal with disease, climate change, access to production sites and other risks – so we can keep producing reliably and protect public trust.

3. Innovation and cost competitiveness

Helps us stay in the game by cutting costs, adopting new technology, and sharing resources.

4. Talent, capability & future readiness

Makes sure we have the skills, people, and planning needed to run modern aquaculture businesses and grow the sector.

These four themes are at the heart of BIM’s 2025–2027 aquaculture work programmes. They help connect the big picture – global market changes, environmental pressures, and technology shifts – with on-the-ground support for producers. Each section that follows breaks down what’s possible, what’s already happening, and what comes next.





Theme 1 – Market led growth & reputation

Irish aquaculture has a strong foundation. We're known for clean waters, organic salmon, and responsible practices. But to grow, we need to move beyond selling in bulk and start standing out in global markets where buyers want more than just good product – they want strong provenance, a great story, proven standards, and consistent, reliable delivery.

What's the challenge?

- Heavy reliance on exports makes us vulnerable to shifting prices, rules, and demand.
- Given the fragmentation of our industry, we don't always tell the story of our quality and sustainability coherently and consistently enough.
- Smaller producers struggle with branding, marketing, and breaking into new markets.
- Buyers increasingly expect certified, traceable, and responsibly farmed seafood.
- Many small producers face logistical barriers in getting fresh products to market efficiently – especially into premium or distant markets – limiting their competitiveness and profitability.

Where are the opportunities?

- **Strengthen the Irish seafood brand** – Lead with quality, traceability, and sustainability to stand out in premium markets. Continue to reinforce and evolve this pedigree as there are competitors beginning to emerge to challenge our position here.
- **Diversify what and where we sell** – Grow sales of mussels, oysters, trout and other species. Find new markets like Asia and the Middle East.

- **Build local demand** – Domestic seafood sales rose 9% in 2024 to €515 million. There's room to grow through public awareness and stronger retail and foodservice partnerships.
- **Make certification easier and more valuable** – BIM and other agencies are helping more producers get certified to reach more lucrative markets.
- **Explore shared logistics solutions** – Collaborate on cold chain infrastructure, regional hubs, and coordinated distribution to help smaller producers reliably access high-value markets.

What's already underway?

- **Seafood Certification Programme** – Helping producers meet international standards.
- **Fish Welfare Workshops** – Supporting high animal welfare practices.
- **Taste the Atlantic** – Building awareness by connecting aquaculture to food tourism and Irish culture.

Section 5 of this document will outline how these opportunities are being put into action through BIM's dedicated work programmes.



Theme 2 – Talent, capability & future readiness

A strong aquaculture sector depends on the people who run it. But many producers face staffing issues, skills shortages, and a lack of new entrants. Many farms still run on informal systems – which makes it harder to plan, pass on the business, drive growth and innovation or apply for grants. Many businesses are still run by older generations, and younger people often don't see aquaculture as a career option. Without action, we risk losing valuable knowledge – and missing opportunities to modernise.

What's the challenge?

- Ageing workforce and difficulty attracting younger people.
- Gaps in digital, technical, and business skills.
- Not enough training pathways, and a lack of awareness of careers in aquaculture.
- Many businesses still rely on informal management, which limits planning, succession, and access to funding.
- **Support professionalisation** – Help family-run businesses modernise their management, plan for succession, and build long-term resilience.
- **Encourage coordination** – Strengthen producer groups and cooperatives to share knowledge, reduce costs, and access new markets.

Where are the opportunities?

- **Make aquaculture an attractive career** – Promote the sector through education, outreach, and new career pathways like apprenticeships.
- **Improve training and upskilling** – Offer flexible, hands-on training in key areas like farm operations, digital tools, sustainability, and finance.
- **Human Capacity Development Plan** – A roadmap to build a stronger, more skilled workforce.
- **Higher Diploma in Aqua business Review** – Updating existing qualifications to match industry needs.
- **Aquaculture Apprenticeship** – A proposed hands-on training route into the sector.
- **Aquaculture Remote Classroom** – Promoting aquaculture in schools and coastal communities.

Section 5 will look at how Irish aquaculture can build supply resilience and manage environmental risks.



Environmental and biological challenges are increasing. Changing weather, rising temperatures, and diseases like sea lice and shellfish viruses threaten the stability and future of Irish aquaculture. Producers need reliable tools, better planning, and more secure seed and spat supplies to maintain strong, consistent production.

What's the challenge?

- Climate change is increasing risks from storms, harmful plankton, and shifting settlement patterns.
- Maintaining access to production sites through smart site identification and optimisation of production on a sustainable basis.
- Disease outbreaks can reduce yields and threaten certification status.
- Many shellfish producers still rely on wild spat and unpredictable natural cycles.
- Organic standards limit the use of antibiotics and chemicals, raising the bar for disease prevention.

Where are the opportunities?

- **Improve disease resilience and fish welfare** – Invest in better feeds, non-medicinal treatments, early warning systems, and health monitoring tools.
- **Secure spat and seed supply** – Use better data and monitoring to help farmers plan and adapt. Invest in hatcheries and restoration.
- **Adapt to climate change** – Use cleaner energy, manage invasive species, and develop farm-specific adaptation plans.
- **Work together** to protect water quality and manage shared spaces – especially in high-density coastal areas.

- **Reduce waste and protect ecosystems** – Recycle gear, monitor litter, and invest in restoration (e.g. native oyster reefs).

What's already underway?

- **Finfish Challenge Programme** – Supporting novel feed ingredient developments improved resource use, and developing data systems which support improved environmental performance and fish welfare.
- **Shellfish Survey Programme** – New culture technologies and improving monitoring and spat settlement forecasting.
- **CLAMS and SUMS** – Coordinating local planning and reducing visual and environmental impacts.
- **Marine Litter Projects** – Supporting recycling and clean-up efforts.
- **Real-Time Water Quality Monitoring** – Helping producers and regulators make safer, faster decisions.
- **Restorative Aquaculture Work** – Increasing stock for Native oyster fisheries which in turn will improve water quality and ecosystem health.

The next section will explore how innovation and technology can help producers cut costs and stay competitive.



Theme 4 – Innovation & cost competitiveness

Irish aquaculture producers face high costs – from finfish feed and energy to labour and compliance. Small scale and scattered operations make it hard to reduce those costs. At the same time, global competitors are scaling up fast, using tech and integrated systems to produce more for less. To stay competitive, Ireland must focus on smarter ways of working and innovation that fits the reality of small producers.

What's the challenge?

- Production costs are high, especially for organic feed, energy, and labour.
- Small farms struggle to invest in automation or digital tools.
- Fragmented infrastructure makes it hard to share services and reduce costs.

Where are the opportunities?

- **Use technology to reduce waste and improve efficiency** – Smart feeding systems, AI health monitoring, and digital farm management tools can boost productivity and cut costs.
- **Support smaller producers to adopt innovation** – Offer training, finance, and mentoring to help more farms use available tools.
- **Modernise infrastructure and logistics** – Shared facilities, better marking schemes, and local coordination make farms safer and more efficient.
- **Improve freshwater systems** – Support better water quality monitoring and systems which make optimum use of available water.

What's already underway?

- **Finfish Challenge Programme** – Supporting AI driven husbandry management, better resource use, hybrid energy and smart feeding tech.
- **Aquaculture Accelerator Programme** – Helping start-ups develop new tools and connect with producers.
- **SUMS and CLAMS** – Making aquaculture areas easier to navigate and manage collectively.
- **Blue Revolution Fund** – Providing capital for early-stage innovations and trials.
- **Functional Feed Trials** – Testing lower-cost, high-performance alternatives to medicinal treatments.

A shared path forward

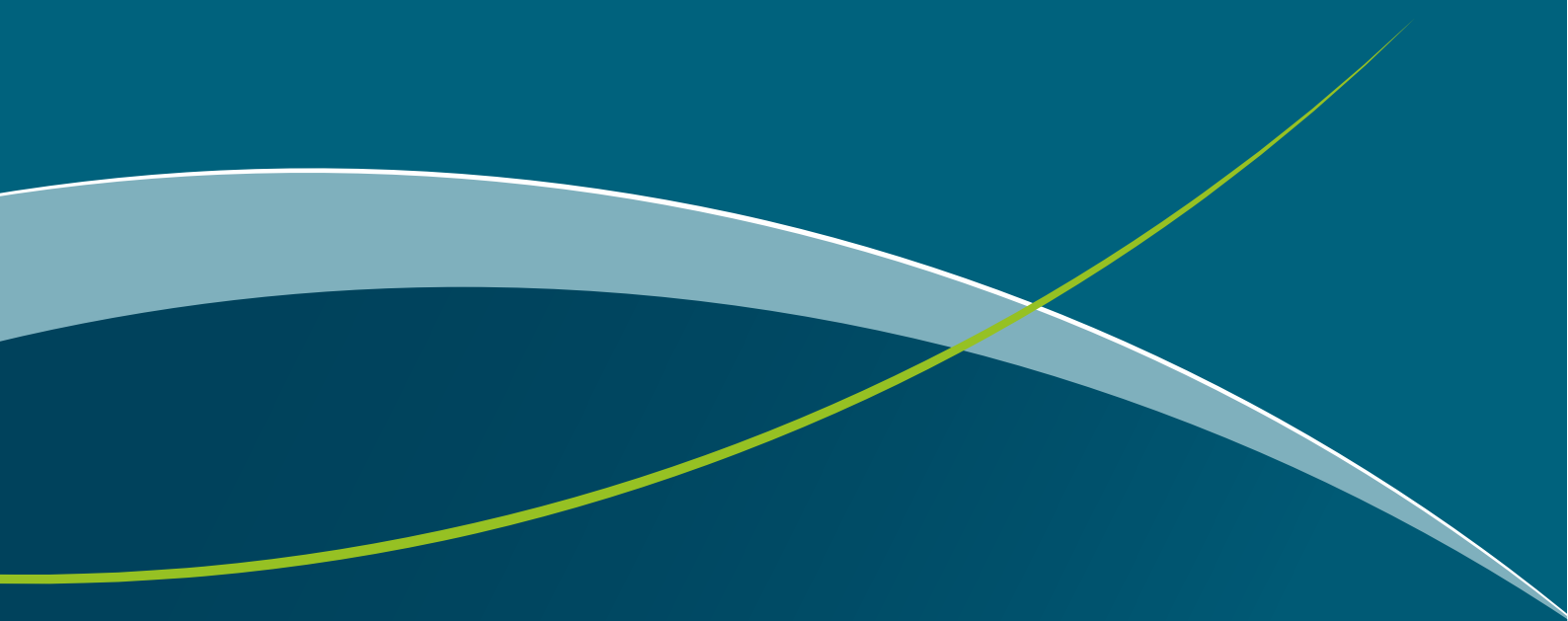
The four themes in this document – **Market led growth & reputation, Talent, capability & future readiness, Resilient, sustainable supply, and Innovation & cost competitiveness** – are deeply connected. Together, they reflect the real-world challenges and opportunities facing producers, and they provide a practical roadmap for action.

What makes this different is that it doesn't separate markets from people, or innovation from daily operations. It recognises that to grow stronger and more sustainable, Irish aquaculture needs to invest in skills, systems, and smart collaboration – while protecting the core strengths that make the sector unique.

The next section sets out BIM's Aquaculture work programmes for 2025–2027. These programmes are designed to directly support the goals outlined here, helping producers, communities, and the wider sector make real progress – together.



5 BIM work programmes





Working Together for a Stronger Aquaculture Sector – BIM's Work in Action

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) supports the Irish seafood industry by providing technical expertise, business guidance, training, funding, and promoting environmental responsibility – core services that underpin its role in strengthening and growing the Irish aquaculture sector.

BIM's current work programmes have been shaped through wide-ranging consultation with producers and industry stakeholders, guided by Ireland's obligations under EU and national legislation, and aligned with strategic direction from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. They also reflect the ambitions set out in the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture (NSPSA), ensuring that BIM's support remains relevant, responsive, and focused on the sector's long-term development.

These programmes are enabled through a combination of EU and national funding, including the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), Ireland's Strategic Investment Fund, and the Blue Revolution Fund – targeted investment streams that support innovation, sustainability, and growth, positioning Irish aquaculture to meet future challenges and opportunities.

Our focus for impact

BIM's work programmes are designed to create impact across the entire value chain – short-term, medium-term, and long-term. Each programme has clear goals and success measures, tracked through defined KPIs. We will work with the right partners to deliver these programmes where they're needed most.

Supporting and enabling

We bring together the resources, expertise, and partnerships needed to help the sector grow and thrive. This includes:

- Drawing from international best practices and market trends
- Working with other agencies to coordinate efforts
- Upskilling BIM's own teams to support aquaculture through business development, data insights, and innovation support

Learning and sharing across the sector

We'll share what's working from successful projects to inspire more producers to get involved and create momentum across the sector. For larger-scale initiatives, we will build communication tools and channels to bring the wider sector along – ensuring everyone can benefit from progress, not just a few early movers.

Our role is not only to support producers but to work alongside them – helping build profitability, resilience, and collaboration.

Programme progress reporting

This work programme has been designed to help the aquaculture sector make the most of the opportunities identified in the earlier chapters. It also responds directly to the challenges outlined in Ireland's National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture (NSPSA).

BIM will report quarterly on progress against targets and KPIs, through written updates and direct briefings with industry.

A practical response to real needs

The following programmes are grouped under the four strategic themes and designed to:

- **Build on what already works** – clean waters, organic standards, and a trusted reputation.
- **Tackle real constraints** – such as scale, fragmentation, and skills gaps.

- **Unlock future opportunities** – like new markets and technologies.
- **Manage growing risks** – like climate change, regulation, and rising costs.

By organising the work this way, we aim to direct focus and investment to where it matters most – supporting producers, strengthening communities, and delivering a more resilient, competitive, and sustainable Irish aquaculture sector.



Theme 1 – Market led growth

These efforts position Ireland as a producer of trusted, sustainable, high-quality seafood – differentiated by reputation, not price – and ensure Irish aquaculture earns its place in high-value global markets.

Programme 1: Seafood certification

Help to get certified for premium markets

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
Maintain Seafood Certification Schemes (MSC)	<p>Continue to certify seafood operations through Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standards for rope and bottom mussels.</p> <p>Develop new tools to assist the sector to navigate the requirements for quality, organic, and sustainability standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certification to the MSC fisheries standard for rope and seabed cultured mussels.• Provide business supports to ensure that farmers have the correct documentation and on-site practices to attain standards.
Develop Seafood Assurance Pathway Programme & Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and pilot a new online tool to help seafood businesses understand, compare, and meet various seafood certification standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development and internal demo of the Pathway Model Concept.• Delivery of a report showing user insights, sector research, prioritised requirements, a development plan, and a working prototype.
Deliver Fish Welfare Workshops	<p>Run a series of In-depth workshops across the year on fish welfare practices, covering harvesting, vaccination, disease control, and welfare of cleaner fish.</p> <p>Additional modular workshops and practicals on specific welfare topics (e.g., infectious diseases, harmful zooplankton)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 full curriculum Fish Health & Welfare workshops, each with 20 participants.• Additional modular workshops and practicals on specific welfare topics, each targeting 15 participants.

Programme 2: Taste the atlantic

Connect producers with food tourism & brand building

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
Support FI in the development of Aquaculture Visitor Experiences Along the Wild Atlantic Way	Work with producers to support the development new farm-based tourism experiences that promote aquaculture and engage visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 20 aquaculture producers on the TTA trail in 2025. • Estimated 30,000 visitors to interpretive centres and participating producers.
Collaborate with Fáilte Ireland on Regional Tourism Integration	Integrate TTA with Fáilte Ireland's regional tourism development initiatives to attract more tourists and grow food tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic cooperation leads to increased visitor traffic to TTA sites, with target of 30,000+ visitors in 2025.
Host Farm Visits for Stakeholder Education	Organise guided visits for chefs, journalists, NGOs, and food/tourism professionals to aquaculture farms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 farm visit completed with 30 participants
Deliver Stakeholder Learning Event	Run a knowledge-sharing workshop bringing together aquaculture producers and food/tourism stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 learning event held with 30 participants, including cross-sector representation.
Run a National Communications & Public Engagement Campaign	Launch a 2025 media and outreach campaign (social media, videos, events, etc.) with an aquaculture ambassador and influencers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquaculture ambassador appointed and engaged in communications throughout 2025. • Series of media and outreach events executed. • Visual and digital content (photos, video, animation, social media) designed, produced, and distributed.

Continue the Young Chef Programme	Recruit and support young chefs to promote aquaculture products within the foodservice industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquaculture ambassador and five Young Chefs recruited and engaged in communications throughout 2025. • Series of media and outreach events executed. • Visual and digital content (photos, video, animation, social media) designed, produced, and distributed.
Upgrade Visitor Infrastructure (Interpretive Centres)	Improve or install interpretation centres to help visitors learn about aquaculture during their trip.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1–2 interpretive centres upgraded or installed by end of 2025.
Operate the Mobile Aquaculture Remote Classroom Nationwide	The ARC is a mobile classroom that travels to primary schools across Ireland, especially coastal and aquaculture-producing regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 6,000 students engaged in 2025. • At least 32 schools visited (approx. 14.5 teaching days/month). • 8 coastal counties visited. • 1 day/month engagement with secondary schools.

Theme 2 – Talent, capability, future ready

Together, these initiatives will build a stronger, more resilient talent pipeline – ensuring Ireland’s aquaculture sector has the leadership, capability and workforce readiness to compete, innovate, and grow in a demanding global market.

Programme 3: Aquaculture remote classroom

Bringing aquaculture into classrooms and communities

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
Support Curriculum-Aligned Aquaculture Education	Lessons delivered through ARC align with the national curriculum in science, geography, and health education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive teacher and pupil feedback collected from 50% of participating schools.

Use Digital and Online Tools to Broaden Reach	Online webinars and digital learning tools supplement school visits, particularly for urban schools and larger groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rollout of open-source VR content and digital-first resources. • Monitoring of online engagement (social shares, page views, likes).
Engage Older Students and the Public Through Outreach	ARC attends science fairs, open days, and public events; supports secondary school outreach and Transition Year (TY) programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence at 10+ public/ stakeholder events annually. • Public awareness surveys at events with 100+ adult respondents. • 1 TY school day/month (phasing out over time).
Deliver Teacher Training and Summer Camp Activities	Train primary teachers and offer regional aquaculture-themed summer camps in collaboration with industry and the IFA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 teacher training programme (min. 20 participants). Summer camps delivered in partnership with aquaculture industry.
Develop and Implement an ARC Programme Strategy	Create a formal strategy document to guide programme mission, reach, evaluation, and stakeholder engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC Programme Strategy document developed. • Stakeholder and teacher input integrated.
Explore New Funding and EU Collaboration	Work with other Irish state agencies and EU bodies to secure long-term sustainability of the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with DG Mare and other EU member states on aquaculture education. • Explore alternative EU funding streams.

Programme 4: Aquaculture capacity plan

Building a strong, skilled workforce

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
Develop a Human Capacity Development Plan (HCDP) for Aquaculture (to 2030)	A long-term strategic plan to identify and address the skills needed across the aquaculture sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of a Human Capacity Development Plan. • Stakeholder validation of the 2023 skills gap analysis. • Identification of skills by region, sub-sector, and supply chain. Training delivery model defined (formal/ informal, online, in-house, apprenticeship, etc.).

Review and Evolve Existing Programmes (e.g. SETU Higher Diploma in Aquabusiness)	Assess and relaunch the underperforming Higher Diploma in Fisheries and Aquaculture with more accessible options (e.g. micro-credentials).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic review of the course completed. New version of the programme scoped: shorter, more flexible, lower-entry-level offerings developed. Enhanced employer engagement due to online delivery and lower workplace disruption.
Investigate Modern Aquaculture Apprenticeship Pathways	Explore the feasibility of launching a national apprenticeship combining formal study with practical workplace experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof-of-concept developed with industry input. Assessment of delivery partners, curriculum requirements, and funding models.

Theme 3: Resilient, sustainable supply

These targeted interventions form a cohesive response to the pressures facing Irish aquaculture. By investing in resilience today, Ireland is future-proofing its supply, protecting its market position, and reinforcing its leadership in sustainable seafood production.

Programme 5: Shellfish survey programme

Working with shellfish producers

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
Seed Mussel Surveys (Bottom Mussels)	Use BIM's survey vessel to map, assess, and monitor seed mussel beds around the coast to support sustainable fishery planning and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed mussel beds located and survey reports published on BIM website. Post-fishery surveys completed and reported. Environmental data collected and analysed. Assist DAFM with data collected to support sustainable farming & licensing process.

Seed Mussel Outsourcing Trials (Bottom Mussels)	Compare the growth and performance of rope seed mussels versus bottom seed mussels when transplanted to shallow or intertidal beds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth performance evaluated in Wexford and Cromane. • Project outcomes included in industry recommendations or future research.
Seed Recruitment Monitoring (Rope Mussels)	Monitor larvae presence, sea temperature, and condition index in bays to understand settlement patterns and timing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Condition Index, larvae, and temperature data collected and bulletins published. • Monitoring results compiled and learnings shared annually. • Recruitment outcomes compared across years (2025–2027).
Data-Driven Husbandry Trials (Rope Mussels)	Use collected data to test and refine husbandry changes (e.g fouling management) with producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing trial of husbandry adjustments. • Results assessed and shared through to final best practice guidelines for the industry by 2027.
Husbandry Technology Trials (Crassostrea gigas / Pacific Oysters)	Monitor new oyster farming systems (e.g FlipFarm, adjustable longlines, Roll'bags) in different bays for impact on quality, waste, and labour needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of C. gigas husbandry trials shared at industry workshops. • Workshop held for oyster sector in 2025. • Trials conducted in Galway Bay, Ballinakill Bay, Donegal Bay, and Clew Bay.
Native Oyster Restoration and Disease Mitigation	Trial restoration strategies and test whether off-bottom culture reduces impact of bonamia disease using wild and hatchery stocks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly monitoring of wild and aquaculture stocks. • Quarterly bonamia testing (non-lethal and full health checks). Comparative report on survival, mortality, and genetics. Bonamia results used to validate off-bottom culture effectiveness.

Stakeholder Engagement and Knowledge Sharing	Share insights from all trials through bulletins, reports, and dedicated workshops (e.g., Oyster Industry Workshop and Native Oyster Fisheries Forum).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-annual industry workshops held. • Native oyster stakeholder meeting hosted. <p>Final project reports and industry recommendations published.</p>
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Programme 6: Finfish challenge programme

New ideas for fish welfare

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
Functional Foods for Fish Health	Trial alternative fish feeds (functional foods) with anti-inflammatory properties to reduce the need for antibiotics and improve fish health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional food ingredients tested across trial groups. • Fish health and welfare monitored and validated. • Five-month trial at Lehanagh pool completed.
Freshwater Filter System Development	Design, test, and refine new water filters to improve freshwater bathing systems and reduce costs and system shutdowns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particle size distribution determined. • Filter screens tested for flow rate, strength, and cleaning intervals. • Commercial deployment recommendations made.
Waste Collection and Retrieval in Freshwater Sites	Develop and test waste capture systems for use in lake and quarry-based smolt sites to reduce nutrient loading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste collection and retrieval devices designed and successfully deployed. • Efficiency measured via feed input and food conversion ratio (FCR). • Waste collection capability calculated in trial sites.
Enhanced Freshwater Treatments with Approved Compounds	Trial freshwater baths with certified anti-inflammatory treatments to reduce fish stress during handling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatments tested and monitored scientifically with control groups and health checks.

AI-Based Fish Welfare Monitoring	Install AI-enabled camera systems to monitor fish welfare indicators (e.g., lice, health, growth) without handling fish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camera systems installed and used. • On-site staff trained in system use and data interpretation. • Welfare benefits validated against control pens.
Real-Time Environmental Data Collection	Deploy additional water quality sensors, including portable units, to monitor and forecast risk events like algal blooms or oxygen dips.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven sensors deployed and maintained. • Data made available via a 24-hour access portal with alarm capability. • Monitoring increased during high-risk periods.
Hybrid Energy Storage and Renewable Input Testing	Continue testing of an 85kWh hybrid battery system for feed barges and assess the use of renewable energy inputs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly reporting on energy use and system performance. Renewable inputs tested with load monitoring. • Cost savings and carbon impact quantified using control site comparison.
Site Equipment Suitability for Hybrid Systems	Assess additional feed barges and aquaculture site equipment for their compatibility with hybrid or renewable energy sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability assessments completed and equipment specifications adjusted based on load monitoring.

Programme 7: Shellfish monitoring & food safety

Better tracking & response

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
Norovirus Testing in Oysters (1,000 samples per year)	Test up to 1,000 oyster samples per year (especially during winter) to identify norovirus levels across different production stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 oyster samples analysed and reported on in both 2025 and 2026. • Annual report published on findings, trends, recommendations and seasonality of norovirus.

Infectious vs Non-Infectious Virus Analysis	Investigate how much of the virus found in oysters is actually infectious by comparing samples from different stages (harvest, pre-depuration, post-depuration).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report completed in 2025 on infectious vs non-infectious virus profiles. Maintain ongoing data to inform risk and water quality management.
Explore Relaying to Reduce Norovirus	Study whether moving oysters to cleaner waters (relaying) reduces norovirus levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific investigation completed in 2025; findings incorporated into best practice guidance.
Develop National Norovirus Best Practice Guidelines	Use data from testing and research to create national best practice for monitoring norovirus in oysters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice protocol developed and updated annually (2025 and 2026). Findings shared via project reports and stakeholder briefings.
Develop and Maintain Norovirus Database	Build and update a central data set of norovirus levels in oysters to support food safety decisions and policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norovirus database maintained and updated in 2025 and 2026.
Support for Food Safety Management Systems (HACCP)	Provide tools and advice to help seafood producers implement HACCP-aligned food safety systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Food Safety Management System Manual made available to businesses.
Deliver Online Food Safety & Hygiene Training	Run at least two online training modules on food safety and hygiene targeted at industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum two online training modules delivered.

Programme 8: Biodiversity & climate change programme

Helping producers future-proof their farms

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Monitoring and Risk Reduction	Ongoing monitoring and reporting of invasive species in aquaculture areas, supported by a dedicated Alien Species Advisor. Includes surveys, reports, stakeholder engagement, training, and risk-reduction measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bay-scale IAS survey reports and species inventories delivered annually.

IAS Data Reuse for Biodiversity Management	Use IAS monitoring data to support broader biodiversity efforts and help businesses show they are managing biodiversity proactively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot client membership on Business and Biodiversity platform.
eDNA for Early Detection of Harmful Plankton	Research using rapid environmental DNA (eDNA) to detect harmful plankton species affecting salmon farms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on sampling and extraction methodology for harmful plankton species in Irish aquaculture.
Green Seafood Support Services	Help seafood businesses measure and reduce their energy, water, and waste impacts through the Green Seafood Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to three case studies/ reports on companies undergoing energy/ sustainability upgrades.
Freshwater Quality Monitoring	Monitor water quality in freshwater aquaculture areas and assess its impact on shellfish farms downstream.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring results & findings reported to relevant stakeholders
Alternative Fuels Exploration	Trial biofuels and alternative energy sources for use in vessels and aquaculture machinery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report from fuel trials; increased sector awareness of decarbonisation options.

Theme 4: Innovation & cost competitiveness

The following programmes offer a targeted, innovation-led response to economic and structural barriers. They aim to elevate Ireland's reputation as a centre of aquaculture excellence, positioning the sector to compete on quality, efficiency, and technological leadership rather than scale alone.

Programme 9: Aquaculture accelerator programme

Helping start-ups and scale-ups innovate & grow

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
Appoint Aquaculture Community Manager	Hire a dedicated person to grow and support a national network of aquatech start-ups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Manager in place by Q3 2025; Network of at least 50 engaged stakeholders built by year-end.

Run 2-Week Innovation Studio (October 2025)	Host an intensive workshop for 10 new aquaculture start-ups, supported by mentors and experts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 start-ups participate; track employment growth and private investment per company over 12 months.
Launch €15M Irish Aquaculture Fund (ISIF-backed)	Provide early-stage investment for Irish and international aquatech companies setting up in Ireland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> €15M deployed across at least 10 start-ups over 3 years; leverage minimum 1:1 private co-investment.
Host 4 University Workshops and Innovation Challenges	Collaborate with academic institutions to raise awareness and inspire student-led innovation in aquaculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 workshops delivered; at least 100 students engaged; 5 new ideas/prototypes generated.
National Aquatech Event (Blue Ambition)	Organise a major Irish industry event to connect start-ups, investors, researchers, and policymakers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event held with 200+ attendees; 90% satisfaction rate in post-event survey.
Roll Out Communication Strategy	Publish and implement a campaign to position Ireland as a global hub for aquatech innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy published by Q4 2025; aim to secure 5+ media features and 2 international speaking engagements in 2025.
Stakeholder Roadshows	Run regional meetings to promote the programme and attract start-up and talent participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 roadshows completed; engage with 100+ individuals across regions.

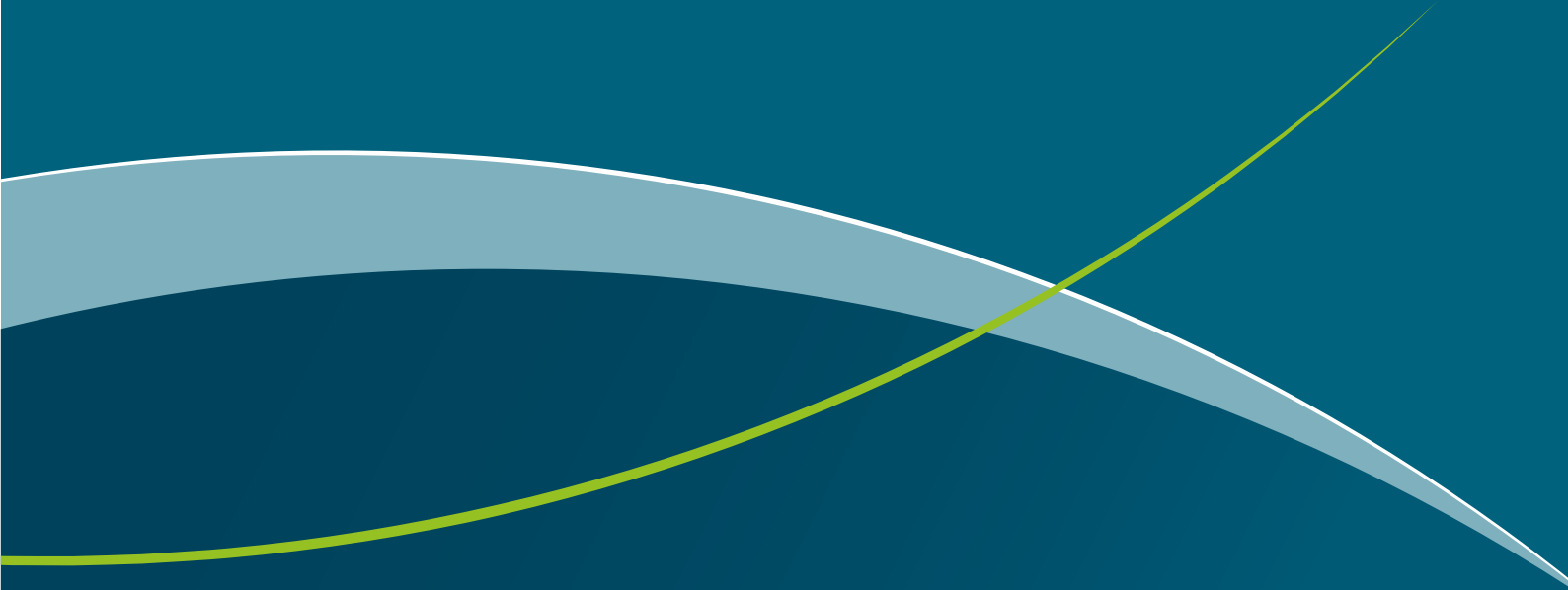
Programme 10: Aquaculture industry services

Practical support to make local operations easier

Work Programme	Work Programme Actions	Performance Indicator
CLAMS – Coordinated Local Aquaculture Management Systems	Support local aquaculture planning, collaboration, and sustainable development through local CLAMS groups and the national executive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Social Licence Plan developed. Baseline growth and mortality data collected in 2 CLAMS areas. Skills gaps identified; training obstacles addressed. Communications message modernised (e.g., signage and digital tools improved).

SUMS – Special Unified Marking Schemes	Simplify and improve marine navigation in aquaculture areas through standardised, safer, and less visually disruptive marking systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop one new SUMS (pending licence). • Renew or extend three SUMS based on licence reviews. • Maintain and upgrade nine existing SUMS.
Archaeological Assessments	Conduct marine archaeological reviews to protect heritage sites and support aquaculture licence applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to two UAIA reports prepared (as required through statutory consultation).
Water Quality Monitoring	Monitor microbial pollution in aquaculture zones to inform water quality improvement plans and help producers make better site-level decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-year sampling and reporting in Dungarvan (to inform Pollution Reduction Plans). • Sampling initiated in Wexford Harbour across 17 sites.
Plastics & Waste Management	Facilitate beach clean-ups, recycling of aquaculture materials, and build awareness around waste management and circular economy solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean-ups in at least five aquaculture areas, targeting 15 tonnes of waste. • One recycling project implemented. • Information disseminated on end-of-life gear disposal. • Minimum of three circular economy trial for recycled gear materials. • National assessment of aquaculture legacy gear volumes completed to inform DCEE and secure funding.

Appendix



BIM help guide

Looking for help? Here's who to contact at BIM depending on what you need:

Service Areas	Service Description	Who to Contact	Contact Details
Funding	Assist Aquaculture producers in successfully completing grant applications	Cormac Murray	(+353) 01 – 2144208 grantsupport@bim.ie
Training	Essential training & skills development for the Irish Seafood Industry	Maria Mc Carron National Fisheries College Donegal Della O Sullivan National Fisheries College of Ireland, Cork Huan Tan Mobile Coastal Training Units CTU 2 East Coast	(+353) 074 9381068 maria.mccarron@bim.ie (+353) 027 71230 della.osullivan@bim.ie (+353) 087 3940763 huan.tan@bim.ie
Technical Advisory	National Seafood Survey – Fisheries: FLAGS Food Safety	BIM Data Team Paul Downes National FLAG Network officer (North, NorthEast, Northwest, West) Brenda O Riordan National FLAG Network officer (South, Southwest, Southeast)	(+353) 87 4950403 dcfdata@bim.ie (+353) 087 1171449 paul.downes@bim.ie (+353) 87 3512327 brenda.oriordan@bim.ie (+353) 01 2144134 foodsafety@bim.ie (+353) 01 2144193 vera.flynn@bim.ie

Sustainability	Green Food Programme	Jeanne Gallagher Green Programme Co-ordinator	(+353) 01 2144160 (+353) 087 9115902 jeanne.gallagher@bim.ie
	Standards and Certification	Catherine Morrison Sustainability & Assurance Manager	(+353) 01 2144118 catherine.morrison@bim.ie
		Vera Flynn Aquaculture Finfish Quality & Food Safety Specialist	(+353)012144193 (+353) 87 4190114 vera.flynn@bim.ie
	Environmental management and Invasive Species:	Grainne Devine Aquaculture Environmental Officer	(+353) 0749381743 (+353) 087 9156293 grainne.devine@bim.ie
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	Bottom grown mussel aquaculture		

