

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

Ireland

Ireland – overview

Coast and ports

With its sea area taken into account, Ireland is one of the EU's largest states: it exerts sovereign or exclusive rights over one of the largest sea-to-land ratios, 10:1. Ireland has a coastline of 1 448 km.

Geographically, the fisheries industry is predominantly concentrated on the western seaboard and in the harbour towns of the south and east coastline areas. The seas around Ireland are highly productive, and have historically been fishing grounds shared by vessels flying a high diversity of flags.

The main important fishing ports are Killybegs, Castletownbere, Dunmore East, Union Hall, Ros A Mhil, Kilmore Quay and Greencastle.

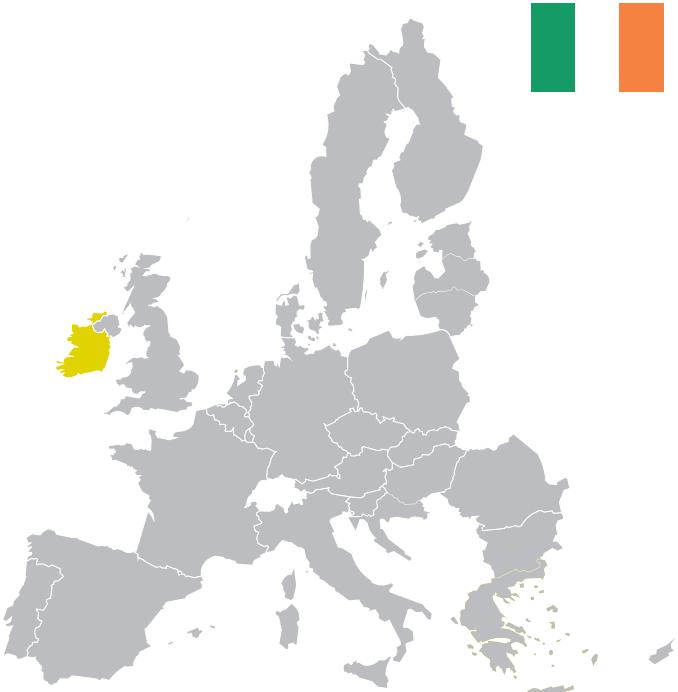
Potential

Ireland is a marine nation, with a longstanding tradition in fisheries. Despite its limited contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), fishery plays an important role in the sustainable development of the economic and social fabric of the many small coastal communities.

Aquaculture activities are located all around the coast, offering employment opportunities and contributing to local coastal economies. The Irish national strategic plan on aquaculture foresees a more than twofold increase in production quantity by 2023. Resolving the persisting administrative problems concerning licencing of aquaculture farms operating in or near designated Natura 2000 areas would contribute to achieving this target.

Economic performance and employment

- In 2013, the Irish fishing fleet consisted of 2 246 vessels (around 9 % were inactive), with a combined gross tonnage of 65 000 GT, a total engine power of 197 000 kW and an average age of 26 years.



- For the same year, the total volume of seafood landed by the Irish fleet was around 236 000 tonnes and the total value amounted to EUR 250 million, putting Ireland in eighth place in the EU.
- In the aquaculture sector, Ireland ranks fifth in value and seventh in volume in the EU, representing, with its value of production of around EUR 36 million, 4 % of total EU production.
- The total employment in the seafood sector is around 6 400 full time equivalents (FTEs), where the catching sector represents about 2 800 FTEs, the aquaculture almost 1 000 and the processing sector around 2 600.

Ireland's Operational Programme



Budget

Total (EU + national):
€239 265 133

EU contribution:
€147 601 979
(2.6 % of total EMFF)

The Operational Programme (OP) covers the six 'Union Priorities' defined in the EMFF, namely:

1. promoting environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based **fisheries**;
2. fostering environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based **aquaculture**;
3. implementation of the **Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)**;
4. increasing **employment and territorial cohesion**;
5. fostering **marketing and processing**;
6. implementation of the **Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP)**.



1. Fisheries

What?

The fisheries sector faces challenges in terms of its sustainability, both at biological and economic level. While there has been a general improvement in the economic performance of the Irish fishing fleet, there is a concern that this could be offset by reduced profits and increased costs resulting from the landing obligation under the reformed CFP.

The Irish fishing fleet is characterised by fragmentation (83 % of the fishing enterprises own a single vessel) and also a high share of small-scale vessels: 64 % of the total number of vessels are less than 12 meters, but account for only 2 % of the total value landed in 2013.

The top five species in value landed by the Irish fleet were Atlantic mackerel, Norway lobster, Atlantic herring, blue whiting and jack and horse mackerels.

OP aim

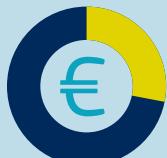
EMFF funding aims to strengthen the economic situation of the fishing sector, while ensuring protection of the marine environment. The OP will help adjust fleet capacity to available resources and support the fishing fleet in meeting the obligation to land all catches, as well as invest in port infrastructure. The small-scale fisheries segment receives higher prominence under the EMFF OP, at the level of both representation and funding.

Key result

An environmentally, economic and socially sustainable fisheries sector.

Budget:

EMFF: EUR 33 500 000
National: EUR 33 500 000
(28% of the total OP allocation)



2. Aquaculture

What?

Aquaculture activities occur all round the coast, and are particularly concentrated in Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Waterford, Wexford, Wand and Cork Carlingford Lough. Irish aquaculture is mainly marine (fish and shellfish) inshore. Projects to develop offshore aquaculture (deep-sea salmon farms) are ongoing, although concerns have been voiced over possible environmental impacts.

In 2013, finfish (Atlantic salmon, rainbow trout, Arctic char, European perch, and turbot) represented 30 % of the volume and 63 % of the value. Some 83 % of total annual salmon production is organically farmed. Shellfish (blue mussel, Pacific oyster, flat oyster and to a lesser extent king scallop, clam, abalone and sea urchin) represent 70 % of the volume, but only 37 % of the value.

OP aim

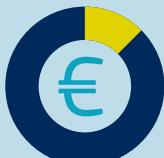
EMFF funding will support the Irish National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture that aims at boosting the aquaculture sector. Support will go towards three main areas: sustainable aquaculture production (e.g. encourage conventional producers to move to organic production; help set up of new aquaculture farmers; invest in increasing energy efficiency); knowledge, innovation and new technology (to reduce the impact on the environment and the dependence on fish meal and oil; and to develop/introduce new aquaculture species with good market potential), and more effective governance of marine planning.

Key objective

By 2023, aquaculture production is expected to more than double, contributing to food supply, exports and employment.

Budget:

EMFF: EUR 14 900 000
National: EUR 14 900 000
(12.5% of the total OP allocation)



3. Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)



What?

The Irish Marine Institute is responsible for the management of fish stock and for data collection programmes that collect scientific information for the assessment of biological and economic data on catch levels for key commercial species. Control and enforcement activities are carried out by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, in cooperation with the Irish Air Corps and Irish Naval Service.

OP aim

Data collection and control represents a major share of EMFF funding. It will be used to further develop risk-based inspection of fishing activities and enhance cooperation with other Member States, to ensure the effectiveness of fisheries control and inspection in Ireland and at EU level. More efficient collection and management of data will be assured, which will result in improving scientific assessment of stocks and knowledge on the state of the marine environment.

Key result

EMFF funding will support the collection, management and use of data required by the CFP, as well as the implementation of the control, inspection and enforcement system.

Budget:

EMFF: EUR 69 790 720

National: EUR 15 133 482

(35.5% of the total OP allocation)



4. Community-led local development strategies



What?

The fisheries and aquaculture activities take place mainly on the coast, which was entirely covered by the six Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) formed under the European Fisheries Fund 2007-2013. More than half of Ireland's population live within 15 km of the coastline, assigning the coastal communities an important role in the Irish economy.

The main challenges to be tackled by the Irish fisheries and aquaculture areas, through their local development strategies under the EMFF, are the creation of new sources of income and new jobs; the promotion of marine tourism and ecotourism, taking advantage of the biodiversity and protected habitats, and leveraging synergies with national/local tourism initiatives; and boosting the business potential of the 1 318 small-scale coastal fishing vessels.

OP aim

EMFF funding will support projects led by local communities to reinforce the position of fisheries and aquaculture from a blue growth perspective, and to enhance the environmental assets of coastal territories. To maximise the effects of funding, FLAGs will be encouraged to work closely with the LEADER Groups. Support will also be available to FLAGs wishing to take forward interterritorial or transboundary projects.

Key result

Create new jobs, add value to fishing activities and diversify local economies dependent on fisheries and aquaculture.

Budget:

EMFF: EUR 6 000 000

National: EUR 6 000 000

(5% of the total OP allocation)



5. Marketing and processing



What?

The Irish processing industry accounted for 164 fish processing enterprises in 2013, most of them (53 %) being small companies with less than 10 employees. The main challenges of the processing sector are difficulty accessing finance, fragmentation and lack of scale, and the need to increase the value added of products. Exports, both in value and volume, have increased faster than imports over recent years, offering a positive outlook for the Irish commercial trade of seafood products, both within and outside the EU.

OP aim

EMFF funding will enable cooperation amongst processing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), boosting their competitive and innovative potential; support the development of new products from underutilised/non-commercial species; improve quality, hygiene and traceability; and reduce energy costs. Producer organisations will be supported in playing a greater part in the production and marketing of their products. The creation of new producer organisations will also be facilitated, particularly in the aquaculture and inshore fisheries sectors.

Key result

Improving the competitiveness and sustainability of the seafood processing enterprises.

Budget:

EMFF: EUR 17 281 587

National: EUR 16 000 000

(14% of the total OP allocation)



6. Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP)



What?

The IMP seeks to provide a more coherent approach to maritime issues, with increased coordination between different policy areas. Ireland puts much emphasis on marine data and knowledge in relation to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) and maritime spatial planning.

OP aim

EMFF funding will support Ireland in improving data gathering and knowledge sharing on the state of the marine environment, and increase inter-agency cooperation and information sharing at national, EU and international level. Funding will also support marine spatial planning, by mapping accurate, up-to-date spatial and temporal information on marine ecosystems and human activities in the Irish waters.

Key results

Preservation and protection of the marine environment and its resources.

Budget:

EMFF: EUR 5 334 672

National: EUR 5 334 672

(4.5% of the total OP allocation)



The rest of total OP allocation, EMFF EUR 795 000 and national EUR 795 000, has been allocated under 'Technical Assistance of the OP'.

Simplification

It aims to improve interoperability between national administrative services, so as to reduce the administrative burden for potential beneficiaries.

The managing authority and the intermediate bodies are carrying out activities to improve the efficiency of administration of the programme. To this effect, the following measures will be used: implementing a new online application and tracking system to assist potential applicants; setting up a dedicated website and IT system to facilitate effective monitoring; developing new IT systems to spatially map licensed aquaculture sites, and possibly potential areas available for aquaculture; introducing simplified costs as part of the verification of expenditure; and providing training to administrative bodies.

Synergies

The coordination of funds is ensured by specific structures (coordination, evaluation and monitoring committees) as well as through thematic networks (communication, research, development and innovation, urban, environment, equal opportunities, social inclusion, rural, fisheries). SMEs will be a core focus under all of the ESIFs.

The ESI funds will address many of the policy recommendations made in the context of the European Semester, e.g. investing in human capital, helping people — especially youth — enter the labour market, easing access to finance for SMEs and implementing the new national strategy for research, development and innovation.

Success stories

Productive developments in aquaculture: development of new farming oyster site

The project's aim was to develop a new oyster farm in Donegal. The operator plans to eventually produce up to 500 tonnes of speciale oysters, mainly for the EU market. The site is currently stocked with juvenile oysters for on-growing and has 10 people in its employ, due to increase to 18 when the site is at full capacity.

Total cost of project: €244 712 (EFF funding: €48 942)

Value added seafood processing

Supports a rapidly growing seafood processing SME to purchase and fit out a high-care area for the increased production of value added seafood products, leading to 15 new full-time jobs and increased production capacity for value added seafood products.

Total cost of project: €660 000 (EFF funding: €99 000)

Conserving lobster stock through v-notching

Supported the v-notching of 13 807 female lobsters in 2014, to return them to the sea to contribute to the spawning potential of the lobster stock, aided by laws prohibiting fishing of v-notched lobsters.

Total cost of project in 2014: €160 243 (EFF funding: €42 886)

More information

● European Commission Fisheries

● European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

● Marine Agencies & Programmes Division

● Aquaculture multiannual national plan