



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS)

General Guidance



Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS): General Guidance

This guidance explains the types of projects that can be funded, who can apply, how much money you can apply for, and how to apply.

This scheme is for applicants based in England only and it is administered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Applicants based outside of England should apply to their respective scheme administrators.

You must read this guidance in conjunction with the specific guidance note that applies to the type of project you are applying for.

This guidance will be updated to ensure compliance with any new legislation, or obligations directly applicable on the United Kingdom authorities (including World Trade Organisation rules relating to fisheries subsidies), and new priorities as the scheme evolves. Please make sure you have checked the MMO's website to ensure you have the most up to date guidance.

DEFINITIONS

In these notes:

- **You** means the applicant. You can employ an agent or consultant to help you complete your application form, but you must sign the form. You will be responsible for ensuring that all the terms and conditions of funding are fulfilled. Responsibility for the content of the application and any supporting information and documentation rests with you and cannot be transferred to your agent or consultant. This means that you will be expected to retain ownership of the work for which you are seeking funding.
- **We** means the MMO.
- **Inland fishing** means fishing activities carried out for commercial purposes in inland waters by vessels or other devices.
- **A public body** is an organisation financed, managed or supervised by the government.
- **Small-Scale Coastal Fishing (SSCF)** means fishing carried out by fishing vessels of an overall length of 11.99 meters or less and not using towed gear/trawling.

The information provided in this document is a guide and is intended to support your application to the FaSS – it is not legally binding.



Interactive
document
Click to
navigate

Aims

Eligibility

Match
funding

How to
apply

Quotes
and costs

Targets and
benefits

Next steps

Contact
us

1. Aims of the FaSS

The FaSS will provide financial assistance for projects that support sustainable growth in the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors, and enhance the marine environment. The scheme is available to applicants whose businesses and/or vessels are registered in England.

The scheme will provide funding for a range of projects that deliver the following seven strategic priorities:

- promoting a sustainable sector for future generations;
- protecting the marine environment, by reducing the environmental impacts of the sector;
- delivering world class science and innovation;
- supporting coastal communities to promote economic growth and social inclusion;
- supporting the reform of stock and quota management to ensure a balance between fishing opportunities and capacity;
- enhancing the value chain through marketing and processing, opening the potential for English businesses home and abroad;
- developing industry infrastructure which is essential to supporting sustainable growth across the whole sector.

Following feedback we have received during the delivery of previous grant funding schemes, the FaSS offers simplified and clearer guidance. As the scheme covers such a wide range of projects, it is organised by overarching measures and each measure has been numbered. All the eligible activities and result indicators (to demonstrate the benefits delivered under each project funded) are organised by measure and can be found in the detailed guidance documents.

Not all areas of the scheme will be permanently open for support. Some areas will be opened later and for a defined period, through a funding round.

2. Eligibility

2a. Eligible applicants

To be eligible for this scheme you must be one of the following:

- An individual or business engaged within commercial sea fishing, aquaculture or processing¹;
- A public body/local authority in a local community that has a focus on fishing/aquaculture activities (including trust ports and local authority ports, and public bodies, using funds for environmental improvements/management of fisheries);
- A university or research institute;
- A new entrant to the industry or unemployed individual that could benefit from knowledge/skills in fishing/aquaculture activities.

You will be required to declare if you have received funding from other Government financial support schemes and, if so, what for.

If you are a business, you will need to declare whether you fall into the category of micro-entities², small³ and medium enterprises (SMEs⁴) or larger enterprises.

2b. Ineligible applicants

You cannot apply for and receive funding if you have:

- been convicted of fraud under any other fisheries scheme;
- been convicted of an offence that the MMO considers to be a 'serious infringement⁵' or fraud, in the 12 months before applying.

Please read the Guidance on Inadmissibility and Fraud on the MMO website.

¹ This definition includes: The owner of an English fishing boat, that is registered in the United Kingdom under Part 2 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, and whose entry in the register specifies a port in England as the port to which the boat is to be treated as belonging; a fisher, or spouse, or legal partner of a fisher; a producer organisation, inter-branch organisation, cooperative, public or semi-public organization; an aquaculture business or organization; an organisation of fishers involved in production, processing, marketing, distribution or commercial retail of fisheries and aquaculture products; a non-governmental organization; an association; a university or research institute; micro, small and medium-sized businesses; scientific organisation working in the maritime sectors; public-private partnerships; a commercial sea fishing business or organization.

² A micro-entity is a business that has any two of the following characteristics: 1) a turnover of £632,000 or less; 2) £316,000 or less on its balance sheet; or 3) 10 employees or less.

³ A small business is a business that has any two of the following characteristics: a turnover of £10.2 million or less; 2) £5.1 million or less on its balance sheet; 3) 50 employees or less

⁴ An SME is a business that has any two of the following characteristics: 1) turnover of less than £25 million; 2) £12.5 million or less on its balance sheet; and 3) 250 employees or less

⁵ Including any illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

2c. Eligible projects

You must review the relevant guidance note for the project you are seeking funding for. These set out what you can and cannot apply for. The guidance notes cover:

- a) fishing related activities,
- b) improving energy efficiency on vessels,
- c) aquaculture related activities,
- d) partnerships, advisory services, professional training and encouraging new entrants,
- e) shore-based facilities,
- f) health and safety,
- g) marketing related activities,
- h) processing related activities, and
- i) preventing and collecting marine litter.

Please note if we consider that you can afford your project without the scheme's support, your project will not be approved. As a minimum, all projects will be assessed for value for money, benefits to be delivered, affordability and deliverability.

It is your responsibility to ensure that:

- your project is technically viable and complies with all relevant health and safety legislation, other project specific safety requirements, and all other legal requirements;
- gear purchased with scheme funding meets all necessary legal requirements. If gear purchased subsequently becomes obsolete or illegal, then this is at your own risk. There can be no refunds or claims against the scheme;
- all relevant legal requirements of the project are complied with.

2d. Ineligible projects

You cannot get funding for:

- increasing the catching capacity of fishing vessels and/or activities that would negatively affect the exploitation of fish stocks,
- increasing the ability of your vessel to find fish,
- increasing the capacity of fish holds,
- building, purchasing or acquiring fishing vessels or importing them,
- carrying out exploratory fishing,
- pulse trawling,
- the same type of equipment for the same vessel if you have already received support through the scheme,
- transferring ownership of a business,
- direct restocking unless explicitly provided for as a conservation measure or in the case of experimental restocking,
- statutory or mandatory undertakings – items and services that are statutory

- or mandatory requirements of law and bylaws cannot be funded,
- preventative or scheduled maintenance costs,
- maintenance and mandatory costs for any vehicles,
- purchasing or leasing of vehicles that are not used exclusively to provide a direct contribution to the project,
- interest on a debt,
- the purchase of land or housing that's worth more than 10% of your project's total expenditure,
- your business's operating costs, unless the MMO has told you otherwise in your offer letter,
- the re-payments of loans on any item(s) you have purchased,
- the costs of any item(s) bought with a loan until the loan is repaid (this does not include leased items if your offer letter allows funding for them),
- any costs that have been fully or partially funded through an alternative grant,
- any costs that you could recover in part or in total by making a claim on an insurance policy or by seeking compensation or damages,
- cost for any items purchased prior to receiving acknowledgement of receipt of your funding application by the MMO.

Please contact the MMO if you are unsure whether your project is eligible or ineligible for funding.

2e. Subsidies

All projects must comply with all other eligibility rules of the scheme and subsidies rules to be deemed eligible for funding.

3. Match funding

It is your responsibility to source and provide match funding, such as business loans or cash resources. You must state the source of funding when applying. Before committing any private resources, we recommend you seek independent financial advice.

The amount of money you can apply for will depend on:

1. Your business or organisation type:
 - Small scale coastal fleet organisations can receive up to 80% funding;
 - Public bodies, producer organisations, fishermen's associations and cooperatives can receive up to 75% funding;
 - Micro, small, or small medium enterprises can receive up to 50% funding. All other private applicants can receive up to 30% funding.
2. There are maximum allocations allowed for each type of project. These allocations can be found in the individual guidance documents.

3a. Non-cash assets

Non-cash assets – such as the value of land, buildings, projected future revenue, or other assets – cannot be used as match funding.

3b. In kind costs

Items or services which are provided 'in kind' – i.e. where no actual costs are incurred, such as volunteering – cannot be used as match funding. However, these may be an important part of delivering a project. 'In kind' costs should not exceed 10% of the total budget for a project.

4. How to apply

You can apply for funding online using the FaSS E-system. You may need to complete more than one application if your project has different elements within it. You should read the associated guidance for each part of your application. If your application is successful, you will need to be able to pay for your entire project up front - you can then claim the costs back from the MMO.

You may be able to claim back up to 10% of the total eligible project for costs incurred prior to the date of the acknowledgement received from the MMO. These costs must be for activities that were directly related to the project and the provision of professional services that assisted the application to proceed to application stage, for example architects plans. We will decide if you are eligible to reclaim these costs and our decision is final.

If you start work before receiving your acknowledgement email, your project may be ineligible for funding.

Documents you will need to submit

The information required to process an application will depend on the value of the project and what is being funded.

The following must be provided:

- Copies of your photographic identification documents (driving licence / passport) or two recent utility bills, only for sole traders/individuals.
- The past three years of your financial accounts (audited or non-audited);
 - If your organisation is less than 3 years old, you only need to provide the accounts for the financial years you have been in operation;
 - If your organisation is less than a year old, you will need to provide a cash flow forecast for a minimum of 5 years (see **Annex A**);
 - If your organisation is currently loss making, you will need to explain carefully in your business case or application form the steps you are taking to make your organisation financially viable, including the contribution you expect your project to make to this.
- A letter signed by all partners to show proof of authority for joint applications from partnerships;
- Company/charity and Value Added Tax (VAT) Registration numbers, if applicable to your circumstances;
- Organisation headcount numbers, if applicable to your circumstances;
- Suitable quotes (see below for more detail)

- A business case for any project £30,000 and above. A business case template can be in **Annex B**.

If your total project cost is £150,000 or above, you will also be asked to provide a discounted cash flow forecast (see **Annex A**). A full financial and economic appraisal will be conducted on your evidence and you may be asked for further information. Your project will be assessed by a panel of experts. More information on panels, including deadlines and dates will be published on our website. If your total project cost is above £150,000, we would recommend that you contact the grants team prior to applying to discuss the proposal.

You will be asked to declare your company's relationship(s) with other businesses. You must determine and declare your business type from the three categories below:

- Autonomous – if the enterprise is either completely independent or has one or more minority partnerships (each less than 25%) with other enterprises.
- Partner – if holdings with other enterprises rise to at least 25% but no more than 50%, the relationships is deemed to be between partner enterprises.
- Linked enterprise – if holdings with other enterprises exceed the 50% threshold, these are considered linked enterprises.

Permissions, planning consents and licences

If your project needs specific permissions, consents and licences to go ahead, you must send us proof of these when you apply. If it is not possible for these to be in place when you apply, you should supply details of when these are expected and forward to us as soon as they have been received. An offer of funding cannot be issued without the required planning consents and/or licences being in place. Costs incurred in obtaining relevant permissions, consents or licences are not eligible for funding as part of the project.

5. Quotes and costs

5a. Quotes

You must provide quotes for all goods and services that are part of your project in order to verify the costs and to demonstrate value for money.

Quotes supplied must include:

- a detailed and itemised breakdown of costs,
- the supplier's address, phone number and a contact name,
- the supplier's VAT number, if they are VAT registered and they have included VAT on the quote,
- the supplier's company registration number, if they are a limited company,
- date of quote.

You need to send one of the following:

- Email quotes that show the email trail from supplier to applicant;
- Electronic copies/scanned images of publicly accessible catalogues or websites which contain the specification of the item.
- The original signed quote by post or electronic copies/scanned images
- Documents that prove you have issued a formal tender, scoring and decision-making details.

The quotes and tenders you submit must:

- come from suppliers that trade independently of each other and do not share any ownership,
- be from the last 3 months and be valid,
- be comparable in terms of the quality, size, quantity, and type of product, if you are using multiple quotes to show you will get value for money when buying a product,
- come from independent companies – and not from suppliers you are related to or that your business is linked to.

You must ensure that the companies requested to quote for items or services for your project know that it is being submitted as part of an application for funding under the scheme.

The number of quotes you need to send depends on the value of the product or service as per the tables below.

Private applicants

Individual items with a value (excluding VAT)	Number of Quotes or Tenders
Up to £1,500	At least one quote
£1,500.01 - £5,000	At least two quotes
£5,000.01 - £60,000	At least three quotes
Equal to or over £60,000.01	At least 3 quotes (photocopies/printouts are not acceptable) or evidence of tender must be provided including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed specification of the works to be undertaken. • Evidence of the scoring used to select the company. • A suitable rationale for the decision to select the chosen company. • The full winning tender submission.

If you are unable to provide the minimum number of quotes or tenders, your application should explain why, and you should speak to the MMO for advice.

Quotes in foreign currencies

If you submit a quote which is in a foreign currency you must calculate the exchange rate at the time the application is submitted. You can use this website to convert your amounts:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_en

Public applicants

The procurement of goods and services that are acquired externally must follow the procurement rules of the organisation applying and evidence of those procurement rules must be provided with the application.

In certain circumstances there may be only one supplier that can provide the goods or services, this could be because;

- it is the only provider who has the necessary skills or equipment to undertake the work,
- the provider owns the exclusive rights required to deliver the goods or service.

If this is the case, then a Single Tender Action (or equivalent) must be supplied, along with a completed Pre-Procurement Approval Form (or equivalent), which evidences the supporting justification for a Single Tender Action, which has been approved by the business area and the Head of Procurement (or equivalent). These MUST be provided prior to the purchase of any goods or services.

If your organisation does not follow formalised processes as set out above, then you must provide evidence of project objectives, a breakdown of the costs, an outline of any value for money considerations, reasons for not procuring in the usual way and any relevant supporting documentation.

If the goods and services are being supplied to the project internally, you must provide a rationale for using internal staff/services, and evidence that the project has satisfied a value for money assessment.

5b. Costs

Calculating staff costs

A member of staff working directly on your project can be included in your project costs. However, staff time can only be reimbursed where the work on the project is not part of an employee's regular job role. Staff costs for capital or revenue projects are considered running costs and therefore are not eligible.

If your project includes staff costs you must provide:

- a [staff hourly rates calculator](#),
- a job description of the staff member,
- pay slip or proof of salary,
- information on contracted hours in current job role, and
- the role in the project.

Claims for staff costs must only be for hours spent exclusively on the project and must be accompanied by signed timesheets and evidence of payment. If you anticipate there being any pay rises within the lifetime of the project, you will need to provide a detailed rationale for these. If this applies to you, you should speak to MMO Grants Team before applying.

Eligible staff salary costs cover gross salary, NI and employers pension contributions only. All other insurances, memberships, salary sacrifices etc. are not eligible for funding.

Leasing of items or equipment

Leasing items may be included in your project costs, but only if you can provide a rationale with your application explaining why the use of leased items is better value for money than purchase. If you want to lease land or buildings, they must have a lease remaining of at least 10 years from the time you apply in order to be eligible for funding.

Simplified costs

Simplified costs can be used for projects where evidencing the actual costs incurred is excessively time consuming or difficult, for example costs for utilities, postage, overheads or where there are many small items with little impact on the project. Simplified costs cannot be used for capital purchases.

If you choose to use simplified costs you will need to demonstrate that the costs are reasonable and based on a sound calculation/evidence methodology over the duration of the proposed project.

In advance of issuing any offer letter the simplified cost rate will be calculated by MMO. This will be based on a percentage of eligible salary costs and will be fixed before the funding offer is made. The method for calculating simplified costs can be found in **Annex C**.

Project management

Project Management costs should not exceed 10% of the total project costs.

6. Targets and benefits

Your application must provide information on the benefits that can be achieved directly by the project (termed a '**result indicator**'). This information will be used to assess applications and set targets which successful applicants will be expected to achieve as a result of public investment. Further details can be found in the individual guidance notes, which outline the result indicators applicants should expect to report against depending on the type of project.

If you do not fully meet the targets and benefits originally agreed and set out in the offer letter, then we will consider to what extent they were achieved. We will work with you to address the issues identified wherever possible, however public funding must be protected and we may recover funding paid to you, or withhold any outstanding funding, if necessary.

Successful applicants will also be expected to provide information for monitoring and evaluation purposes ('**evaluation indicators**'). Applications will not be assessed against evaluation indicators. This information will be used for the purpose of evaluating the impact of funding against the ambitions of the scheme. This will include the submission of information during the funding period and once the project has been completed.

Indicator definitions	
Result indicator	A measure of success assessed as part of the approval process, used to set project specific targets which beneficiaries are expected to achieve as a result of public investment.
Evaluation indicator	An indicator which will be used to complement scheme evaluation in order to ascertain the local and national level impact of the FaSS in line with wider government objectives.

7. Next steps

We will contact you within 5 working days to confirm receipt of your application. After this you can begin work on the project entirely at your own risk. The item, supplier and cost must be the same as in your application: any deviation will make the costs ineligible.

When applying for funding onboard vessels you must engage with the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA). Details of local surveyors and offices can be found in the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency>

MCA must be included in the process as work is undertaken, particularly where there may be an impact on stability.

The Grants team will send details of submitted applications to MCA as soon as they are received for review. MMO Grants Team will also contact MCA at the claims stage to ensure that the applicant has made MCA aware of all the work that has been undertaken and no funds will be paid out unless this confirmation has been received.

All work undertaken by the owner/skipper of the vessel must meet MCA safety/stability requirements, whether funded by FaSS or otherwise. Responsibility for any work undertaken which renders a vessel unstable or unsafe remains entirely with the owner/skipper of the vessel.

We will assess your application within 8 weeks of its receipt and notify you if any further information is required. Once we have all the required information to make a decision, we will contact you to tell you if your application has been successful or not.

If approved, you must update us on the progress of your project when you make a claim for payment.

8. Contact us

Write to:

Grants Team
Marine Management Organisation
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle upon
Tyne NE4 7YH

Telephone:

020802 65539

Email:

FaSS.queries@marinemanagement.org.uk

Annex A: Example cash flow forecast for 12 months & Annex B: FaSS business case template

Annex A and Annex B are available by contacting the FASS team directly:

FaSS.queries@marinemanagement.org.uk

Annex C: Methodology for calculating simplified costs.

In advance of issuing any Offer Letter the rate that simplified costs are to be paid at will be calculated by the MMO.

Simplified costs will be based on a percentage of eligible staff salary costs (up to a maximum of 15%). Applicants must clearly identify those costs being claimed as simplified costs for the duration of the project, with a transparent methodology for how these costs have been calculated.

Evidence of the simplified costs being claimed within the application must be based on data or objective information, such as historical billing information.

For example, if you are claiming for salary costs for staff working on a one-year project and your simplified costs are to cover the utilities and overheads for the premises in which these staff will be based, x4 the value of your last quarterly energy bill would be considered a reasonable methodology for calculating a simplified cost, and a copy of the bill would be considered adequate evidence of the cost.

The MMO will then determine rate of finance to be used for the simplified costs as a percentage of your projects direct salary costs and will include this in your offer of funding.