



**Review of the European Fisheries Fund
in the UK 2012**



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Investing in sustainable fisheries

The contribution of commercial fishing to coastal communities and local economies across the UK is significant. However, this industry is facing a number of challenges. A decline in fish stocks, damage to marine ecosystems and habitats, changing market demands along with other social and economic factors are all affecting the industry's sustainability.

The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) is a driver of development. It is helping fishermen, fish processors and aquaculture businesses to adapt to these changing needs. It is supporting necessary infrastructure projects and improvements which benefit groups of people working in the fishing sector. It also supports the development of economies in fisheries areas.

The EFF scheme is implemented in the UK by the following organisations; Marine Management Organisation (England), Marine Scotland, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (Northern Ireland) and the Welsh Government. The delivery of the EFF scheme across the UK has been, and will continue to be, at the heart of these organisations and this shows a clear commitment to supporting the fishing sector and communities towards a sustainable future.

This report builds on the 2011 review of the EFF and outlines the achievements and benefits of EFF investment and public funding provided in the UK fishing sectors in 2012.

Contents

	Introduction to the European Fisheries Fund in the UK 2012	4
Axis 1	Measures for the adaptation of the community fishing fleet	5
Axis 2	Aquaculture, inland fishing, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products	6
Axis 3	Measures of common interest	8
Axis 4	Sustainable development of fisheries areas	10

Introduction to the European Fisheries Fund in the UK 2012



The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) was introduced by the European Union (EU) to support the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The scheme, which runs from 2007 to December 2013, provides €4.3 billion to help the European fisheries sector to adapt to the regulations set out in the CFP. It provides support towards a range of activities, including:

- Ensuring the long-term future of fishing activities and the sustainable use of fishery resources
- Reducing pressure on stocks by matching EU fleet capacity to availability
- Promoting the sustainable development of inland fishing
- Boosting economically viable enterprises in the fisheries sector and making operating structures more competitive
- Helping to protect the environment and the conservation of marine resources
- Encouraging sustainable development of areas with an active fishing industry.

EU Member States were each required to submit an Operational Programme (OP) in order to secure assistance from the EFF. These strategies set out in more detail the countries' priority areas for awarding funds.

Around £112 million has been made available through the EFF for the UK. This will be used towards the following priorities, which are explained in more detail in the UK OP:

- To boost the balance between fishing effort and opportunity
- To boost profitability by obtaining increased returns from the same inputs
- To increase profitability compared to other EU Member States.

To access the funding available, people, businesses, organisations and fishing communities must apply through one of four funding streams, or 'Axes,' which are each covered in more detail in this document.

From the start of the programme in 2007 to 31 December 2012 £81 million (73 per cent) has been committed from the EFF towards projects in the UK. EFF investment together with national, other government and private match contributions provide investment to the industry of £265 million.

In 2012 a modification to the OP was submitted to the European Commission for consideration. The modification followed the independent mid-term evaluation of the EFF scheme which proposed to redistribute funding across priority Axes, principally between Axis 1 – 3.



Axis 1

Measures for the adaptation of the community fishing fleet



Objective

The main objective of Axis 1 is to contribute to the sustainable development of fishing resources and to improve performance and profitability of the fishing fleet.

Key measures

The key measures for the UK in this Axis include ensuring fishing vessels are able to operate competitively and efficiently, enabling fishing effort to match opportunities and maintaining small-scale coastal fishing activity.

Eligibility

When the EFF scheme launched in the UK the average age of vessels in the fleet was 23 years. Consequently, critical projects for support through Axis 1 include adapting the fleet to make vessels safer, more fuel efficient and have lower maintenance requirements.

Upgrading safety, working conditions, hygiene, conservation, energy efficiency or adopting more sustainable fishing methods may all qualify for funding through this Axis of the EFF scheme providing they don't increase the vessel's capacity to catch fish.

Progress

As at 31 December 2012 a total of £10.1 million was committed on 812 Axis 1 projects in the UK. The OP includes a target for Axis 1 of helping to increase the annual value per tonne of fish landed per vessel to £111,000 in 2015. UK vessels landed 627,000 tonnes of sea fish (including shellfish) into the UK and abroad with a value of £770 million - a 5 per cent increase in quantity but a 7 per cent decrease in value compared with 2011. This equates to the value of fish landed per vessel in 2012 as £120,247 which is still well above the target originally set.

Vessel modernisation

Through Axis 1 fishermen may receive support to modernise their vessels in order to improve safety and working conditions, reduce costs and increase energy efficiency.

Improving crew safety

The number of UK fishermen fatalities or injuries increased from 45 in 2011 to 56 in 2012. The EFF continues to play an important role in helping reduce the number of fishermen fatalities and injuries.

Examples of grants awarded to help improve safety on board fishing vessels include:

- An under 10 metre potting vessel in Northern Ireland was awarded £1,140 to install a gate in the stern of the vessel through which creels could be dispatched from a dedicated storage rack. This reduced the need to store creels and ropes on deck minimising the chance of the tangling of ropes and the potential for crew accidents.
- An under 10 metre trawler in Hartlepool received a grant of £24,842 for safety improvements including a shelter deck that enabled both landing and processing of fish to take place in safer environment. The application also included a new fish sorting system and improved facilities to protect the quality of the catch.
- Two fishing vessels in Peterhead received grants of £5,368 and £5,002 to purchase new selective fishing gear. This enabled the owners to qualify for the conservation credits buy back scheme and will help reduce cod mortality in line with the EU Cod Recovery Plan.
- A fishing vessel in Devon received £2,747 to insulate the fish room. This improved hygiene standards and enabled the vessel owner to command an improved price for his catch. This increased the profitability of the business and safeguarded the jobs of the crew.

Energy efficiency and fuel consumption

Fuel prices remained high in 2012 and the EFF is helping by providing funding towards projects which deliver more fuel efficient working methods such as installing new engines and generators thereby reducing the costs to the fleet.

A number of vessels have received funding to improve energy efficiency, for example grant assistance of £2,200 was provided to replace the existing 4-stroke outboard engine onboard a small-scale coastal fishing vessel based in Northern Ireland, with a new 2-stroke engine of equal power.

Projects like this have resulted in benefits to the environment and the costs faced by fishermen through:

- Reduced emissions
- Reduced fuel consumption
- Increased reliability of operations
- Less maintenance costs.



Objective

The main objective of Axis 2 is to improve the profitability and competitiveness of aquaculture, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products.

Key measures

Through the key measures set in the OP, the UK aims to achieve this in a number of ways, including enabling improvements in production and welfare, supporting projects which respond to changing consumer demand and contributing to lifelong learning in the aquaculture, fish processing and marketing sectors.

Eligibility

Funding is available to support investments in the construction, extension, equipment and modernisation of fish processing companies enabling them to extend their product ranges and move into new markets. This can include processing machines and other associated equipment and facilities used by the trade.

The EFF scheme also supports the development of aquaculture production sites for species where demand is currently exceeding supply and for companies to diversify into new species for human consumption which are not widely produced in the UK.

Progress

As at 31 December 2012 a total of £21.9 million was committed on 333 Axis 2 projects in the UK.

As set out in the OP the EFF aims to help the UK aquaculture industry increase its turnover to achieve £600 million by 2015. Good progress is being made towards this target, with turnover for the sector being around £560 million in 2011 (2012 figures available in December 2013).

The 2015 target of £2.6 billion for the processing sector has already been achieved in 2011 (2012 figures available in December 2013).

Processing and marketing

Gas flushed tray sealer boosts customer base

A fish processing company in Belfast was awarded £8,692 for an innovative project involving a gas flushed packaging system which almost doubled the shelf life of their products (from 5 days to 9 days). This equipment will allow the company to increase turnover, reduce costs and expand its customer base.

The company were also approached by buyers from local and national retailers who had identified a demand from consumers for a more convenient ready to cook range. A further grant of £18,680 was provided to develop and produce ready to cook chilled seafood dishes presented in oven-ready gas flushed foil trays.

Scottish fish processor increases storage

Joseph Robertson (Aberdeen) Ltd, one of North East Scotland's oldest seafood processors, established in 1892, was awarded just over £250,000 to extend its chill storage area and install production equipment in order to handle and dispatch products more efficiently and reduce waste. The new equipment has allowed the company to increase production to meet demand as well as develop a new product range enabling them to build on existing relationships with multiple UK retailers. This has also created 10 new jobs and safeguarded 118 existing jobs at their factory.

New filleting line

Severn and Wye Smokery, based in Gloucestershire received a grant of £250,000 to install a filleting line at their new premises in Grimsby. This new equipment allows fish to be processed and packaged on one site reducing the need to transport the fish to be filleted at another location. Whilst the company are experiencing a strong trend in growth, this expansion will ensure they can continue to meet customer demands. This project will see the creation of 20 new jobs in the area, with all staff being trained to National Vocational Qualification standards.

Aquaculture

Mussel farm improves quality harvest

Deepdock Ltd in Angelsey was granted £256,674 to improve their mussel harvesting process. The aquaculture service vessel they use to harvest mussels from the seabed had the floors of the holds raised to increase efficiency and reduce mussel mortality. The vessel's washing and packaging facilities were also improved to reduce the amount of spillage and crush. Mussel sizes are now sorted more effectively, leading to an increase in the yield of saleable product per harvest. In addition to this, a bespoke marine crane was installed which resulted in a more efficient harvesting process enabling the holds to be better utilised.

Expansion of organic salmon farm

The Northern Salmon Company in Glenarm was awarded £145,000 to purchase high specification moorings, cages

and nets as well as outboard engines for personnel work boats. This enabled the company to achieve a higher biological output whilst remaining compliant with organic standards. The company subsequently exceeded its target to increase its production output by approximately 30 per cent to over 600 tonnes per year.

New vessel for Scottish mussel grower

£177,600 was awarded to C & A Thomason, a family run mussel grower and packer in Shetland. The grant allowed the company to purchase an aquaculture service vessel which is more fuel efficient. This will reduce the running costs and provide safer working conditions for staff. The investment will also allow the company to increase production by 150 tonnes and target the premium market for larger shell mussels.





Objective

Axis 3 supports the sustainable development of the fishing industry, its competitiveness and profitability.

Key measures

Through this Axis, the scheme aims to support collective actions which contribute to the conservation of resources, improving the services offered by fishing ports, strengthening markets for fisheries products or promoting partnerships between scientists and fishermen.

Eligibility

Grants from this part of the EFF can be used to help pay for improvements to facilities and working conditions, including regeneration projects in ports around the UK. Smaller projects can also be funded through this part of the EFF including lifting and handling equipment (landing davits, forklift trucks and boat hoists), storage facilities (fuel tanks, secure areas and ice systems) and landing facilities (pontoons, jetties and slipways).

Progress

As at 31 December 2012 £39.7 million was committed on 364 Axis 3 projects in the UK.

The OP 2015 target for Axis 3 of 6,550 UK fishermen attending non-mandatory training courses each year was significantly exceeded in 2012 with 8,848 training places taken, an increase of 2,718 from the baseline figure of 6,130 since the scheme began in 2007.

Port and harbour redevelopments

Upgrade of the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority dredger

A grant of just over £500,000 was awarded towards a major refurbishment of the grab-hopper dredger MV Kilmore. This

has ensured continued safe passage of vessels into the three main harbours of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie by maintaining water depths in the channels and basins of the harbours. Part of the refurbishment project included improved wheelhouse and crew accommodation to ensure that the vessel complied with environmental best practice.

Installation of new landing davits

A grant of £17,000 was awarded to Scarborough Harbour to purchase and install two new landing davits to lift catch on to the quayside as the existing equipment was unreliable and dangerous to operate. The introduction of new davits proved to be beneficial to the local fleet, whilst attracting visiting boats which led to an increase in revenue. Safety has improved, running costs are down and fishermen directly benefit due to the speed in which they can now land their catch. This project has helped safeguard the future of the harbour and protected jobs in the local industry.

Collective actions

Lobster analysis programme in Northern Ireland

£73,000 was awarded to the North Eastern Fishermen's Co-operative Society (NELCO) to provide assistance to fishermen to v-notch female berried lobsters and return them to the sea safely. V-notching is a non-harmful process consisting of removing a 'v' shaped piece of a lobster's tail. The v-notch is then genetically analysed by Queen's University which has compiled data on approximately 13,000 lobster families. Continued analysis of the data obtained from the genetic screening has enabled the project to protect recruitment and long-term stock sustainability of lobsters. In addition, the scheme has successfully developed a partnership between inshore fishermen, scientists and government departments for the management and sustainability of this fishery.



Pilot operations

Biological sea lice management project in Scotland

Shetland Aquaculture was granted just over £300,000 for a pilot project on biological sea lice management. The project is a collaboration between Shetland Aquaculture a non-profit trade body, NAFC Marine (part of the University of the Highlands and Islands) and a local salmon producer.

The project will trial a new approach to the biological control of sea lice on a commercial basis aiming to provide an alternative to chemical control and improve the health and welfare of fish.



Protect and develop aquatic flora and fauna

Managing nephrop stocks in the North Sea

£45,000 was awarded to the Scottish White Fish Producers Organisation (SWFPA) to develop an overall management plan for nephrops in the North Sea. The plan focuses on long term environmental, biological and economic sustainability. The project will involve consultations with the industry with the focus on Fraserburgh as the hub of prawn fishing in the Fladen Grounds, an area of the North Sea to the North East of Scotland. On completion the report will identify potential management measures for nephrops in the area.





Objective

The objective of Axis 4 is to support the sustainable development of fisheries areas and is delivered through local groups who represent the area. In the UK around £13 million has been made available to help these communities.

22 areas across the UK were chosen to become Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) as part of the scheme. The groups, comprising of local councils, private sector businesses, fishermen's associations and education and conservation organisations have been set up in the following areas and will each use a share of the funding to help diversify their local economies.

England

Cornwall, Hastings, North Devon, North & West Cumbria, Holderness Coast and North Norfolk.

Scotland

Highlands, Outer Hebrides, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Shetland, Fife, East Lothian, Scottish Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Moray and Argyll & Bute & South Ayrshire.

Wales

Swansea, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Gwynedd & Anglesey.

Northern Ireland

South East FLAG (SEFLAG)

FLAG activities

The FLAGs have been developing both practical and innovative ideas – projects have been developed to support local brands and new markets for fish products, maximising fishing related opportunities provided for tourists, encouraging co-operation and communication within the fishing industry and working with partners on initiatives to help people learn more about their local marine environment and fishing.

A number of FLAGs are supporting training and apprenticeships in association with the Princes Trust and other training providers to encourage young people to get into commercial fishing or associated jobs in the industry. Early indications are that the schemes have been a great success and that a high percentage of those participating in the training courses are achieving recognised qualifications and are staying in the industry.

Some other highlights of Axis 4 projects include:

- £78,000 awarded to Coverack Harbour in Cornwall to upgrade ageing facilities and enable 12 fishermen and their boats to continue working from the harbour. Enhancements include a winch and davit, the installation of an ice plant, cold room and new storage bins. Health and safety training was also provided to all fishermen, enabling the safe use of the newly installed equipment.
- Whitehaven Marina in Cumbria was awarded £46,000 to support the development of the tourist industry in West Cumbria. The additional revenue generated will ensure the ongoing maintenance of facilities for existing harbour users. The project provided 140 new berths, reconfigured 28 existing berths, a cruise ship taxi terminal and a maintenance berth – all with power and improved security.
- A project in North Devon was awarded £11,000 to study the local fish/seafood supply chain and to provide recommendations as to how the local industry could evolve to improve the long term viability of the sector. The project was seen as a key priority as the recommendations would provide valuable avenues to diversify markets, retain value in the local industry and exploit by-products. The project produced a report containing a comprehensive assessment of the local fisheries sector including a variety of recommendations.
- Brancaster Staithe in Norfolk benefitted from a grant of £6,000 to replace one buoy with ten colour coded, lit buoys. As a result, there is now a well lit channel for a minimum of 400 users, including the local fleet, leisure craft and visitors. As well as increasing the commercial viability of the harbour, safety during poor visibility or bad light has improved considerably. Conservation of local habitats is also safeguarded as fewer boats will run aground. For a relatively small amount of funding, great benefits have been brought to the area.
- Mackay Boatbuilders Ltd in Arbroath was awarded just over £3,000 towards the appointment and training of an apprentice boatbuilder specialising in traditional boatbuilding skills. The fishing industry has been a traditional economic mainstay of Arbroath, and the harbour is presently used by inshore boats. This funding allowed the company to establish a training course and complete year one of an apprenticeship

ensuring that the apprentice received both on-site and external training as well as access to health and safety courses.

- A project to support the promotion of the Bridlington Seafood Festival received a grant of £330. This festival was part of an integrated festival programme along the East Yorkshire coastline to promote the Holderness Coast fishery to local residents and visitors. The festival was part of an existing summer events programme delivered at community level. The Bridlington Seafood Festival increased the visibility of the local fisheries sector by promoting local seafood and provided a platform for future events to be self-sustaining.



Applying for funding

Anyone considering developing their business, investing in new facilities and equipment or carrying out a project which may benefit the fisheries sector is encouraged to first contact their government's EFF delivery team to see whether their idea may qualify for funding through the EFF.

The EFF cannot support work that has already been started or items that have already been purchased, so it is vital that potential applicants speak to the relevant organisation before committing to any project.

More information about the EFF can be found in the fisheries section in the appropriate regional website or can be obtained by calling:

England	www.marinemanagement.org.uk 0300 123 1032
Northern Ireland	www.dardni.gov.uk 0300 200 7852
Scotland	www.scotland.gov.uk 08457 741 741
Wales	www.wales.gov.uk 0300 060 3300

