BIM Ireland's Seafood Development Agency

European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)

Sustainable Fisheries Scheme 2026

Guidelines for Applicants

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Arna chomhchistiú ag an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the European Union

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Eligible Beneficiaries

Owners of non-SSCF fishing vessels:

- Which must be registered on the Irish Register of Fishing Boats at the time of grant application, and;
- Who must have been actively fishing in the two calendar years preceding the year of submission of the application:
    - For vessels less than 10m length overall (LOA) this will be validated by ensuring sales notes to the value of at least €1,000 have been registered with the SFPA in each of the two preceding calendar years.
    - For vessels of 10m LOA or greater, this will be validated by ensuring log books registered with the SFPA show at least 60 days at sea across the two preceding years.
    - Please note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the correct data is registered with the SFPA at the time of their application. If, **on the first check**, the SFPA data cannot confirm the required level of fishing activity, the application will be rejected.

Project Call 2026

This competitive call for applications will be open from 15th of October 2026 until 5pm on 17th December 2026.

All applications are to be made through BIM's grants management system.

Pre Project Site Visit

Most applications will be subject to a physical site visit in advance of any offer being made. This is an information gathering site visit which forms part of eligibility checking (i.e. if you have a site visit, it does **not** mean that your application has passed eligibility checking), to assess the pre-project state and to better understand the impact the project can have. During this site visit the applicant will need to show the current setup on the vessel and the location(s) of the proposed project. **No expenditure can be incurred, nor can any work commence on the project, until you receive an "Assessment outcome email" after this site visit and eligibility checks have been fully completed.** Having a site visit does not mean that eligibility has passed. This site visit forms part of eligibility checking.

- In the application form you will be asked to provide a date range that suits you for this pre-project site visit and BIM will do its best to accommodate you within this date range. The pre-project site visit must be completed by 10th February 2027. If you are not available before this date, your application may be closed.
- If, during the site visit it is found that work has already commenced, your application will be deemed ineligible and will be closed.
- If, at claim stage, you submit invoices or proof of payment for expenditure which are dated before the date of the **Assessment outcome email**, these invoices will not be eligible for payment.
- Once you receive the **Assessment outcome email**, you are free to commence work/incur expenditure related to the project, **but this is entirely at the applicant's risk**. An offer of grant aid might not be made or might be for an amount less than that applied for.

Eligibility checks and evaluation will be carried out as applications are received but offers will not be made until after the call closes and all applications have been assessed. BIM reserves the right to close **any applications which have not passed all eligibility checks, including**

the pre-project site visit, by 10th February 2027. This is in the interest of fairness to all applicants since delaying the process for one applicant would delay it for all.

Amounts Grant Aided & Grant Aid Caps

Beneficiary Type	Grant Rate	Expenditure Type
Vessel Owners (non SSCF)	50%	All

The grant aid cap per vessel over the lifetime of the scheme is €250,000.

The grant aid cap per vessel under the current call is €125,000.

Eligible and Ineligible Costs

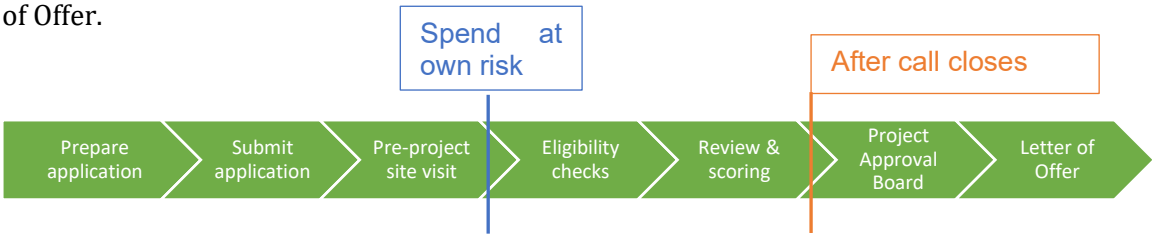
The current list of items which are eligible and ineligible under the scheme is available on the scheme page on www.bim.ie

Claim Deadline

The Letter of Offer will detail the date the Claim is to be submitted.

Application and Approval Process

This flow shows the steps involved in getting from application preparation to receiving a Letter of Offer.



- The applicant prepares and submits their application in BIM's grants management system.
- The more complete your application is when first submitted, the more likely it is to proceed smoothly through all stages with minimum delays. We encourage all applicants to take the time to fully understand the application form, and the evaluation criteria so that they submit a quality application.
- BIM carries out a pre-project site visit, after which an email is issued confirming that the project can commence, and expenditure can be incurred at the applicant's own risk.
- BIM carries out a series of eligibility checks to ensure that all required information has been provided and shows compliance with scheme rules.
- If information is found to be missing, or if further clarifications are required, the application will be returned to the applicant, and a short and fixed deadline will be provided by which the application must be resubmitted. Failure to meet this deadline or resubmitting the application without providing all the information requested, will result in the application being closed.
- A series of evaluation reviews are then carried out, and a BIM panel meets to score the application.
- All eligible applications which meet the minimum score are presented to a Project Approvals Board. Applications are appraised having regard to the objectives of the scheme and the quality of the proposal.
- If the Project Approvals Board approves the application for funding, a Letter of Offer will be issued.

When will you hear from us

General guidance

Please read in conjunction with the details provided in relation to the Project call and Pre Project Site Visit

- When you submit your application, you will receive an automated email acknowledging receipt. If you do not receive this email, it is because the application has not been successfully submitted. Please check your spam folder in case the acknowledgement of receipt has been directed there. Please note that an acknowledgement of receipt email is not a confirmation of grant aid. At this point the application is being processed only. Your application will be assigned a unique reference number, and you will be notified of this in the acknowledgement email. The unique reference number should be used in any subsequent correspondence or enquiry with BIM.
- BIM carries out a pre-project site visit, after which an email is issued confirming that the project can commence, and expenditure can be incurred at the applicant's own risk. Any expenditure incurred before the date of the email sent to confirm the pre-project site visit is complete is ineligible

- Some applicants may have their form returned if it is incorrect/incomplete:
- If information is found to be missing, or if further clarifications are required, the application will be returned to the applicant, and a short and fixed deadline will be provided by which the application must be resubmitted. Failure to meet this deadline or resubmitting the application without providing all the information requested, will result in the application being closed.
- If our checks show that the application is not eligible for the scheme, or if we could not validate your eligibility based on the information provided, your application will be rejected, and the reason provided.
- Following evaluation, BIM will inform you of the decision.
- Applicants approved for funding will receive a Letter of Offer.
- Those applications which have not been approved for funding will be notified, explaining the reason for not approving the project for funding.

You will need the following documentation to complete this form:

- Confirmation of fishing activity registered with the SFPA
- Joint Vessel Owner Authorisation Form
- Supplier quotes for all expenditure items
- Evidence of matched funding clearly indicating how you plan to finance this project

Standard Eligibility Checks

BIM will check the evidence provided by the applicant to ensure that all eligibility criteria set out are met, and that all required documentation has been provided.

Evaluation

Each application which passes eligibility goes through a technical review, and is scored against the following evaluation criteria. It is recommended you take the time to understand this so that you can provide sufficient details in your answers. Applications which score 60 points or more, are presented to the Projects Approval Board

Evaluation guidance	**If….**	**…then score in the range:**
Direct impact against scheme objective	The applicant has demonstrated that this investment will have a ***significant*** impact against the scheme objectives they are targeting, and (when relevant) a significant reduction in energy consumption or CO2 output.	20-25
	The applicant has demonstrated that this investment will have an ***incremental*** impact against the scheme objectives they are targeting, and (when relevant) an incremental reduction in energy consumption and/or CO2 output	15-19
	The applicant has demonstrated that this investment will have a ***limited or weak*** impact against the scheme objective(s) they are targeting, and (when relevant) a limited or no reduction in energy consumption or CO2 output	0-14
Impact on business	The applicant has demonstrated that this investment will involve a ***significant*** step change in how they operate	20-25
	The applicant has demonstrated that this investment will involve an ***incremental*** change in how they operate	15-19
	The applicant has ***failed*** to demonstrate how this investment will change their business	0-14

Joined up project	The applicant has presented a ***cohesive and comprehensive investment***, targeted on achieving a specific outcome	20-25
	The applicant has presented ***elements of a cohesive investment***, with some focus on the outcome, but there is room for more impact	15-19
	The applicant has presented a ***list of unrelated items*** with no clear focus	0-14
Ambition	The applicant has demonstrated ***significant*** ambition in the scale of their investment vis-à-vis their current operation, and the impact they expect it to have	20-25
	The applicant has demonstrated ***some*** ambition in the scale of their investment vis-à-vis their current operation, and the impact they expect it to have	15-19
	The application has displayed ***little*** ambition in the scale of their investment and the impact they expect it to have	0-14

Grant Approval and Offer

Per BIM's standard policy and procedures.

Appeals

Per BIM's standard policy and procedures

BIM Support with Your Application

Vessel owners and those working in the fishing industry considering applying are encouraged to contact BIM as early as possible to discuss their investment plans and receive support in preparing their application.
BIM provides a comprehensive range of supports to applicants, including:

- Guidance on scheme eligibility and requirements
- One-to-one support
- Assistance with developing project proposals
- Help identifying eligible investments and expenditure
- Support in gathering and preparing the required documentation
- Advice and technical support on completing and submitting grant applications
- Guidance throughout the assessment and approval process

If applicants wish to discuss if items in their project are eligible or not, please feel free to contact the Investment Services Manager, Tom Scanlon (tom.scanlon@bim.ie)

For further information on the schemes, eligibility criteria or assistance with preparing an application, please contact your local BIM Fisheries Regional Development Officers or visit BIM.

Further Information/Clarifications

Requests for further information/clarifications should be addressed, by **email**, to the contact details below. Where appropriate, responses to requests for further information/clarifications will be made available to all interested parties via grantshelpdesk@bim.ie

A dedicated feedback email address has been established to collect input from applicants on their experience of the grant's application process, and we would very much welcome your feedback, please contact us grantsfeedback@bim.ie