

European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)

Producer Organisation Scheme

Guidelines for Applicants



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
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Document Control

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Document Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assist applicants as they prepare an application to this grant-aid scheme. The focus in this document is on describing the full process to applicants, and to help them prepare a quality application. Detailed guidance on how to complete each question is contained within the application form itself, on BIM's grants management system.

Contents

Contents	3
Introduction	4
Eligible Beneficiaries - who can apply for this Scheme	4
Submission Dates	4
Amounts Grant Aided	4
Claims Verification Process for 2026	4
Pre-Financing	5
PMP & Annual Report Process	7
What is Funded	7
Section 1. Preparation of Production and Marketing Plan	7
Section 2. Preparation of Annual Report	8
Section 3. Administrative implementation of Production and Marketing Plans	8
Section 4. Celtic Sea Herring Management Advisory Committee (administration costs) 9	
Section 5. Northwest Herring Advisory Committee (administration costs)	9
Section 6. Indirect Costs	10
Section 7. Capital costs	10
Section 8. Attendance at specified meetings	10
Section 9. Dissemination of knowledge & advisory services	11
Accountants Certificate	11
Travel and subsistence	12
Claim Deadline	13
General guidance	13
Documentation checklist	13
Standard Eligibility Checks	13
Offers/Rejections	14
Appeals	14
Further Information/Clarifications	14

Introduction

These Guidelines for Applicants for the Producer Organisation Scheme provide guidance on the application process and assessment criteria.

Eligible Beneficiaries - who can apply for this Scheme

Producer Organisations, which are an officially recognised body established by fishery or aquaculture producers in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the Common Organisation of the Markets in Fishery and Aquaculture Products (CMO Regulation), are eligible under this scheme.

Submission Dates

Producer Organisation must submit their Production and Marketing Plan and Annual Report by the 30th of April each year to the Common Organisation of the Market for Fishery and Aquaculture Products (CMO) Competent Authority, the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine.

Calls for applications to the Producer Organisation Scheme will open 29 July 2026. Final Date for receipt of payment Claim Application is the 30 September 2026 5pm.

Amounts Grant Aided

Claims Verification Process for 2026

Support will be provided only for measures identified in the approved Production and Marketing Plan.

To reduce the significant administrative burden associated with claim processing for both Producer Organisations and BIM, claims under this Scheme will be assessed using a **25% verification process**.

How the 25% Verification Process Works

1. The BIM Workbook (Excel file) is submitted as normal.
2. BIM will select a representative sample of 25% of the claim value for verification.
3. BIM will request supporting documentation for the selected sample.
4. The Producer Organisation submits the requested documentation.
5. BIM reviews and verifies the documentation.
6. If the documentation is satisfactory, the claim will be processed accordingly.

Any newly established Producer Organisation, or any existing Producer Organisation that does not have sufficient historical data to support the use of SCOs, will be administered through the **25% verification process**.

Simplified Cost Options (SCOs)

BIM had established Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) in the form of standard scales of unit costs and lump sums, which were approved by the Managing Authority.

Producer Organisations may choose to use these existing SCOs when submitting claims for 2026. However, it should be noted that the existing SCOs will continue to apply at their current rates and will not reflect the new grant aid rates.

The grant aid rates are set out in the table below:

Section	Measure (must be identified in PMP)	Support Rate % of eligible costs	Maximum aid per year
1	Preparation of Production and Marketing Plan	75%	€40,000
2	Preparation of Annual Reports	75%	€30,000
3	Administrative implementation of Production and Marketing Plans	75%	€80,000
4	Celtic Sea Herring Management Advisory Committee (administration costs) ¹	75%	€10,000
5	Northwest Herring Advisory Committee (administration costs) ²	75%	€10,000
6	Indirect Costs ³	75%	€10,000
7	Capital costs	75%	€30,000*
8	Attendance at specified meetings ⁴	75%	€25,000
9	Dissemination of knowledge & advisory services ⁵	75%	€35,000

¹ Available only for the PO administering the CSHMAC.

² Available only for the PO administering the NWHAC.

³ Eligible 'indirect costs' will be calculated at a flat rate of 10% of eligible direct staff costs subject to the specified maximum level of support.

⁴ Eligible costs under the category 'attendance at identified meetings' are travel and subsistence in accordance with public service rules and an agreed per diem rate. Eligible meetings will be specified by the Implementing Authority.

⁵ In accordance with regulation (EU) 2021/1060

*Capital Costs Maximum support over the lifetime of the EMFAF programme

Pre-Financing

Pre-financing is available to newly formed Producer Organisations recognised since 2021. This facility will provide financial support in the form of an up-front lump sum based on the finance plan that forms part of the Production and Marketing Plan. This lump sum will be capped at maximum of €50,000 for each year of the plan.

The following is an example

Section	Measure (must be identified in PMP)	Support Rate % of eligible costs	Maximum aid per year
1	Preparation of Production and Marketing Plan	75%	€40,000
2	Preparation of Annual Reports	75%	€30,000
3	Administrative implementation of Production and Marketing Plans	75%	€80,000
4	Celtic Sea Herring Management Advisory Committee (administration costs)	75%	€10,000
5	Northwest Herring Advisory Committee (administration costs)	75%	€10,000
6	Indirect Costs ³	75%	€10,000

7	Capital costs	75%	€30,000*
8	Attendance at specified meetings	75%	€25,000
9	Dissemination of knowledge & advisory services	75%	€35,000

Total expenditure planned for 2026 under PMP is €130,000 of which the Producer will receive 75% in grant aid if claimed in full (€97,500). As the prefinancing amount is set at 50%, this will amount to a pre-payment of €48,750 being issued to the PO on approval of the PMP and annual reports in preceding years.

If the planned finance amount is not achieved in that year, the actual expenditure will be taken into consideration at final claim stage. If the final claim amounts to a value greater than the pre-financing amount the outstanding balance will be paid to the PO. See example below

- Planned Finance allocation for 2026: €130,000
- Pre-financing amount issued to PO: €48,750

Actual Finance expenditure as per claim submitted: €100,000

Final Balance issued to PO: €75,000 (75% Grant Aid) - €48,750 (pre-financing) = €26,250

Producer Organisations need to be aware that there is a risk that they may need to repay a portion of the pre-financing if they do not submit a claim of expenditure that meets a certain threshold on the basis of pre-financing amount issued.

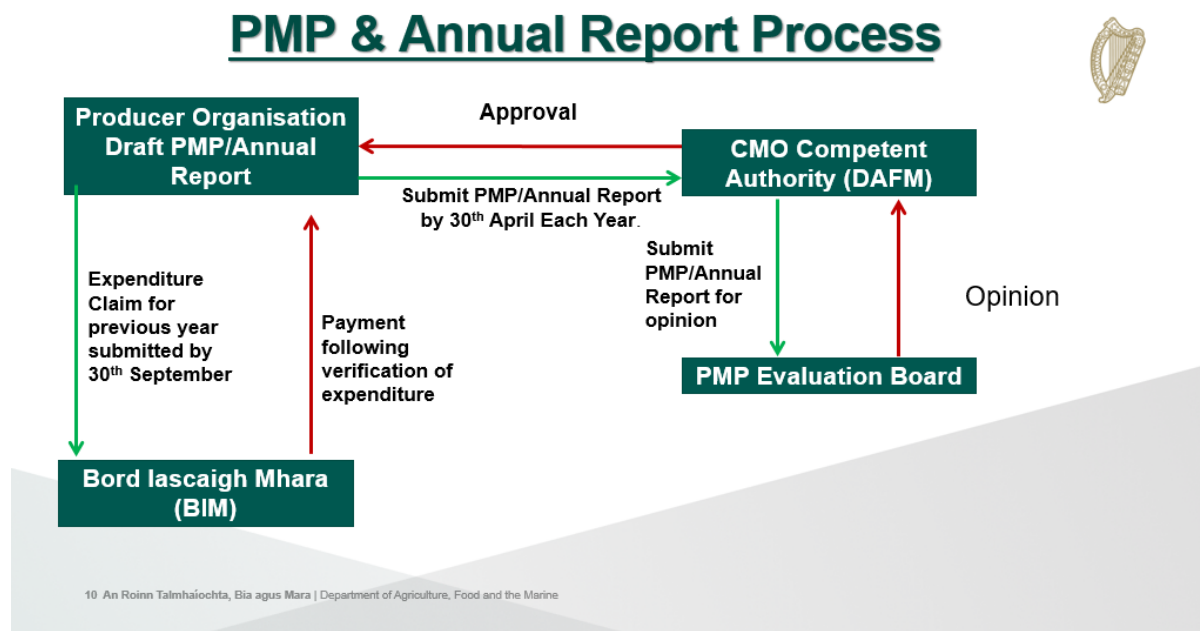
- Planned Finance allocation for 2026: €130,000
- Pre-financing amount issued to PO: €48,750

Actual Finance expenditure as per claim submitted: €60,000

Final Balance issued to PO: €45,000 (75% Grant Aid) - €48,750 (pre-financing) = €3,750 will need to be paid back to BIM/DAFM by PO.

To ensure that the PO does not have to repay a portion of prefinancing then they will be required to spend at least 50% of the expenditure they have outlined in their financial plan on an annual basis.

PMP & Annual Report Process



What is Funded

Section 1. Preparation of Production and Marketing Plan

Eligible Expenditure

- Costs of preparation of a Production and Marketing Plan.
- Includes direct staff costs of a Producer Organisation for this purpose and / or contracting of consultants for this purpose. Once off maximum support of €40,000 or 75% of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser) may be claimed in respect of the preparation of Production and Marketing Plan.

Supporting Documentation

- Relevant staff costs and detail as per BIM's Workbook which is provided by BIM.
- PO's will be asked to provide final year payslip for any staff costs claimed.
- PO's will be asked to provide the calculation of the hourly rate applied by the PO.
- POs will be asked to provide the normal weekly work hours.
- Consulting Costs where relevant, PO's will be asked to provide invoice (s) and proof of payment to the consultant and evidence of procurement of the services by way of tender or Quotes.

Section 2. Preparation of Annual Report

Eligible Expenditure

- Costs of preparation of Annual Report.
- Maximum support per year of €30,000 or 75% of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser) may be claimed in respect of the preparation of the Annual Report.
- Includes direct staff costs of a Producer Organisation for this purpose.

Supporting Documentation

- Relevant staff costs and detail as per BIM's Workbook which is provided by BIM.
- PO's will be asked to provide final year payslip for any staff costs claimed.
- PO's will be asked to provide the calculation of the hourly rate applied by the PO.
- POs will be asked to provide the normal weekly work hours.
- Relevant staff costs and detail as per BIM's Workbook.

Section 3. Administrative implementation of Production and Marketing Plans

- All direct staff costs of a PO for implementation of measures identified in a PMP.
- Maximum support per year of €80,000 or 75% of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser) may be claimed in respect of the administrative implementation of a PMP.
- Relevant costs incurred by the PO in the implementation of projects as outlined in the PMP.
- Consultant Costs.
- Advisory Costs.
- Development Costs.
- Support will cover travel and subsistence in accordance with public service rules.

Supporting Documentation

- Relevant staff costs and detail as per BIM's Workbook which is provided by BIM.
- PO's will be asked to provide final year payslip for any staff costs claimed.
- PO's will be asked to provide the calculation of the hourly rate applied by the PO.
- POs will be asked to provide the normal weekly work hours.
- Travel and Subsistence claim sheets and Time sheets.
- Consulting, Advisory and development costs for administrative implementation of the PMP, PO's will be asked to provide invoice(s) and proof of payment(s) and evidence of procurement of the services by way of tender or Quotes.

Section 4. Celtic Sea Herring Management Advisory Committee (administration costs)

Eligible Expenditure

- This support is available only for the Producer Organisation administering the Celtic Sea Management Advisory Committee.
- Support will be provided for vouched administration costs associated with the administration of the Celtic Sea Management Advisory Committee.
- Maximum support per year of €10,000 or 75% of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser) may be claimed in respect of administration of the Celtic Sea Management Advisory Committee.
- Hire of room for Meetings.
- Hire of Equipment for Meetings.

Supporting Documentation

- Relevant staff costs and detail as per BIM's Workbook which is provided by BIM.
- Relevant Travel and Subsistence claim sheets and Time sheets.
- Support will cover travel and subsistence in accordance with public service rules for meetings outside those listed in any other section.
- Evidence of meeting by way of Agenda and list of attendees.
- PO's will be asked to provide invoice (s) and proof of payment and evidence of procurement of the services by way of tender or Quotes as per BIM Quote Guidelines.

Section 5. Northwest Herring Advisory Committee (administration costs)

Eligible Expenditure

- This support is available only for the Producer Organisation administering the Northwest Herring Advisory Committee.
- Support will be provided for vouched administration costs associated with the administration of the Northwest Herring Advisory Committee.
- Maximum support per year of €10,000 or 75% of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser) may be claimed in respect of administration of Northwest Herring Advisory Committee.
- Hire of room for Meetings.
- Hire of Equipment for Meetings.

Supporting Documentation

- Relevant staff costs and detail as per BIM's Workbook which is provided by BIM.
- Relevant Travel and Subsistence claim sheets and Time sheets.
- Support will cover travel and subsistence in accordance with public service rules for meetings outside those listed in any other section.
- Evidence of meeting by way of Agenda and list of attendees.
- PO's will be asked to provide invoice (s) and proof of payment and evidence of procurement of the services by way of tender or Quotes as per BIM Quote Guideline

Section 6. Indirect Costs

Eligible Expenditure

- Eligible indirect costs calculated as 10% of the staff costs incurred in Sections 1, 2 & 3.
- Maximum support per year of €10,000 or 75% of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser).

Section 7. Capital costs

- Support will be provided to cover the purchase of capital equipment, specifically office equipment related to the implementation of the Production and Marketing Plans, including computers, printers, photocopiers, and other office machines.
- Maximum support over the lifetime of the EMFAF programme of €30,000 or 75% of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser).

Supporting Documentation

- Evidence of Procurement.
- Invoice and proof of payment.

Section 8. Attendance at specified meetings

- Support will be provided for 1 person from each approved PO to cover travel and subsistence in accordance with public service rules and an agreed per diem rate for a specified number of days.
- Maximum support per year of €25,000 or 75% of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser) may be claimed in respect of attendance at specified meetings.

Eligible Meetings

- Quota Management Advisory Committee currently twelve meetings per year plus one quota planning meeting (Hybrid)
- Irish Fisheries Science Research Partnership (IFSRP) currently four meetings per year plus one stakeholder workshop (Hybrid)

- December Council preparatory meeting with the Minister and DAFM in Brussels (Hybrid)
- December Council (In-person)
- Seafood/ORE Working Group meetings currently ten to twelve per year plus sub-group meetings (Hybrid)
- Annual meeting with Minister and DAFM on the Sustainability Impact Assessment in preparation of TAC and Quota discussion (Hybrid)
- Ad hoc industry briefings with Minister on policy issues (formerly Sea Fisheries Liaison Group) previously four to six per year (In-person)

Supporting Documentation

- Relevant staff and details to be entered into BIM's Workbook.
- BIM will confirm attendance at Quota Management Advisory and Irish Fisheries Science Partnerships with the relevant personnel in the Department of Agriculture Fisheries, and the Marine
- European Fisheries Council evidence of attendance, invoice and payment of flight and hotel.
- The maximum level of support payable in respect of travel and subsistence expenses for both domestic and international travel will be linked to the rates, terms, and conditions for Public Service staff at the time of travel.
- BIM will check the detail provided in BIM's workbook.

Virtual Attendance (video call/conference call)

No travel and subsistence costs arise for participants, but the participants time is still committed. A labour replacement cost of €200 (nett) per day is paid.

Section 9. Dissemination of knowledge & advisory services

- Maximum support per year of €30,000 or 75% of eligible expenditure (whichever is the lesser) may be claimed in respect of Dissemination of knowledge & advisory services.
- Support will be provided to promote the dissemination of knowledge of an economic, technical, regulatory, or scientific nature and of innovative practices, in particular linked to the implementation of Production & Marketing Plans.
- Support will cover travel and subsistence in accordance with public service rules
- Items approved under this category must be detailed in advance in the Annual Report and are subject to approval by the competent authority.

Supporting Documentation

- Relevant staff and details to be entered into BIM's Workbook.
- Evidence that the event took place by way of meeting details, Agenda, Minutes.

Accountants Certificate

The application will ask you to provide the name and contact details for your accountant. additionally, you will need to upload a copy of the Accountants Certificate in PDF or image format. A copy of the Accountants Certificate template will be available on the application form.

Travel and subsistence

Travel and subsistence in accordance with public service rules and an agreed per diem rate. The rates will be fixed for a period of three years. However, in the event of any future downturn in input costs, the rates may be adjusted to reflect the changing costs.

- The maximum level of support payable in respect of travel and subsistence expenses for both domestic and international travel will be linked to the rates, terms, and conditions for Public Service staff **at the time of travel**.
- The domestic subsistence rates are shown below.
- Rates for subsistence abroad will vary based on location in accordance with the Public Service rates.
- Support towards travel costs will be linked to standard guidelines to Public Servants in respect of minimising the costs associated with such travel and securing value for money.
- Claims will be subject to provision of approved and certified:
- (a) Travel and Subsistence claim sheets including proof of overnight accommodation were claimed
- (b) Time sheets to be supplied at time of claim.
-

Domestic Subsistence Allowances as per Circular 04/2025:

- Overnight rate €205.53.
- Day Rate 10 hours or more €46.17.
- Day Rate 5 hours but less than 10 hours €19.25.
- Vouched Accommodation (VA) Dublin only. Vouched cost of accommodation up to €205.53 plus €46.17.

Mileage

- Contribution for mileage will be linked to the current equivalent Public Service Rates.
- For illustrative purposes, the current mileage rates are shown below.
- Reimbursement limits for travel costs will be based on standard guidelines to Public Servants in respect of minimising the costs associated with such travel and securing value for money.
- Claims will be subject to provision of approved and certified:
- (a) Travel and Subsistence claim sheets.
- (b) Time sheets to be supplied at time of claim.

Circular 16/2022:

Cars (rate per Kilometre)

Distance band	Engine capacity up to 1200cc	Engine capacity 1201cc - 1500cc	Engine capacity 1501cc and over
Up to 1,500 km (Band 1)	41.80 cent	43.40 cent	51.82 cent
1,501 - 5,500 km	72.64 cent	79.18 cent	90.63 cent

(Band 2)			
5,501 - 25,000 km	31.78 cent	31.79 cent	39.22 cent
(Band 3)			
25,001 km and over	20.56 cent	23.85 cent	25.87 cent
(Band 4)			

Mileage claims made in respect of journeys carried out in electric vehicles should use the rates applicable to engine capacity 1201cc-1500cc. Please see the above table.

Claim Deadline

Claims to be submitted by the 30 September.

General guidance

- Applicants are advised to check that their application includes all the relevant information.
- The primary communication method used in the administration of this scheme is email. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that BIM is on their safe list of contacts, and that they regularly check their email for any updates or deadline requirements.
- All applications must be made in euro.

Documentation checklist

You will need the following documentation to complete this form:

- BIM Workbook.
- Travel and Subsistence claim sheets and Time sheets.
- Accountants Certificate.
- Member Name.
- Position Held.
- Normal Place of Work.
- Gross Salary Per Annum.
- Contracted weekly hours.
- Calculate: Hourly Rate = Annual Salary ÷ (Weekly Hours × 52).
- Employer's PRSI Rate.

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.

Offers/Rejections

BIM will issue a Letter of Offer or Letter of Rejection as appropriate.

Appeals

Per BIM's standard policy and procedures.

Further Information/Clarifications

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

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