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Aquaculture overview – UK and Ireland

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This paper provides an overview of the scale of aquaculture and the support provided to the sector across the UK and Ireland.

This information is provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in support of their duties, and is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. It should not be relied upon as professional legal advice, or as a substitute for it.

Key Points

- Aquaculture is a key sector that appears to have potential for growth in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK and Ireland;
- Scotland has the largest industry across the UK and Ireland, with salmon farming being the predominant activity;
- Support for aquaculture could broadly be defined under policy/strategic direction and financial assistance. In terms of policy/strategic direction the available data suggests that England, Scotland and Ireland have more recent, specific and longer-term strategies for the development of aquaculture as compared to Northern Ireland and Wales. Northern Ireland's closest equivalent document appears to be FSDP final report published in 2021;
- Financial support for aquaculture activities is distinctly different between Ireland and each of the UK jurisdictions in that UK support appears to be predominated by annual funding calls rather than the six-year European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund active within EU Member States such as Ireland. The UK wide Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund could have potential to reverse this trend but there is a current paucity of information as to how it will be administered and whether aquaculture activities will be eligible for support;
- With more specific reference to Northern Ireland, the development of aquaculture did explicitly feature within Northern Ireland's first dedicated agri-food strategy, but the latest Food Strategy Framework and associated Action Plan make no specific reference to the sector, or any other agri-food sector;
- The forthcoming Northern Ireland Fisheries Bill would appear to have the potential to enhance local aquaculture development, but without policy proposals or a finalised Bill an accurate assessment of this potential is impossible at this time;
- The NI Executive's Environmental Improvement Plan includes considerations relating to marine based aquaculture but a number of key interlinked policies/strategies such as the Green Growth Strategy and Marine Plan have yet to be finalised at the time of writing.

1 Introduction

Aquaculture could be broadly defined as the propagation and husbandry of aquatic plants, animals, and other organisms for commercial, recreational, and scientific purposes¹.

This briefing paper provides an overview of the current scale and value of aquaculture within the UK and Ireland. Additionally, the paper includes details on strategies/policy interventions with a focus on growing aquaculture within the UK and Ireland. Within this latter context, the paper also briefly considers the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework and associated Action Plan in terms of specific reference to and provisions for aquaculture.

¹ [Britannica encyclopedia website, 12 June 2025](#)

2 Aquaculture – size and value of the sector

The scale and nature of aquaculture activity across the UK and Ireland is set out in table 1 below.

Table 1: Size and scale of aquaculture across the UK and Ireland – most recent data

	England	Ireland	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Value of aquaculture	No specific data	2023 data ² Total value - €168.20 million	2022 data ³ Total value - £14.02 million	2022 data ⁴ £337 million aGVA ⁵	2018 data ⁶ £5.19 million
Main components	No specific data	Finfish - €101 million Shellfish/other - €67.40 million	Finfish - £5.93 million Shellfish – £8.08 million	Atlantic salmon made up 96% of the aquaculture value	Finfish - £933k Pacific Oysters - £62,500 Mussels - £4.19 million

² [Findings of the National Seafood Survey 2024, Annual Aquaculture Report, BIM, table 2, page 7](#)

³ Provided to Researcher by DAERA in form of letter, 19 March 2025

⁴ [Scotland's Marine Economic Statistics 2022, Scottish Government, November 2024, page 11](#)

⁵ Approximate gross value added at basic prices

⁶ [Sector Locational Guidance: Enabling Evidence for Sustainable Development - Aquaculture, Welsh Government, June 2022, table 4.2, page 25](#)

Numbers employed	No specific data	Finfish - 209 (248 full time) Shellfish/other – 1,961 (1,149 full time)	Finfish – 61 (55 full time) Shellfish – 80 (76 full time)	2021 data ⁷ 2,300 (2,200 full time)	Finfish – 57 (47.05 fulltime) Shellfish – 26 (21.73 fulltime)

Whilst there is a paucity of specific data for England, overall UK data includes the following highlights for 2021⁸:

- UK farmed 217,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish which was worth £1 billion (although this is a value decrease of 13% compared to 2020).
- The top five species by value were Atlantic salmon (£1 billion), rainbow trout (£51 million), mussels (£12 million), oysters (£10 million) and carp (£6 million).

⁷[Scotland's Marine Economic Statistics 2021, Scottish Government, 13 December 2023](#)

⁸[Aquaculture data and insight webpage, Seafish website, 12 June 2025](#)

The data presented in table 1 highlights the fact that aquaculture across the UK and Ireland is comparatively small in terms of employment but the cumulative value to the overall economy at present is still significant.

Finfish are the main area of production and value, with farmed Scottish salmon dominating in terms of scale and overall value.

3 Support for aquaculture – GB and Ireland

Table 2 below provides a summary of recent/current key policy developments and associated support provisions within GB and Ireland.

	Policy/Strategy developments
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development (2022 – 2030)⁹. • Seafood Development Programme 2021 - 2027 under the new European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).
England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Aquaculture Strategy 2040¹⁰ – published in 2020. • Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FASS)¹¹ – recent announcement of £6 million available for grant support¹².
Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture 2045 – published in 2020¹³.

⁹ [The National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030, Government of Ireland, 2023](#)

¹⁰ [English Aquaculture Strategy, Seafish, November 2020](#)

¹¹ [Fisheries and Seafood Scheme, Marine Management Organisation website, 12 June 2025](#)

¹² [Fisheries and Seafood Scheme reopens with around £6 million of investment, FishFocus website, 12 June 2025](#)

¹³ [Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture, Scottish Government, July 2023](#)

	Policy/Strategy developments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Economy Vision for Scotland to 2045 – published in 2022¹⁴ • The Marine Fund Scotland 2025-2026 opened for application 10 June 2025
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Statement: Strategic Approach to Welsh Fisheries and Aquaculture – November 2024¹⁵ • Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme¹⁶

It is also worth noting the UK Government announcement of a new UK-wide Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund in June 2025¹⁷, with an overall budget of £360 million. At the time of writing, it remains unclear as to how this money will be allocated across the UK and how/if aquaculture will be supported.

4 Support for aquaculture – Northern Ireland

There follows an overview of support for aquaculture in Northern Ireland in terms of policy and financial assistance.

4.1 Going for Growth 2013

Going for Growth¹⁸, which was Northern Ireland's first agri-food strategy, was published in 2013. The Strategy included specific targets for the growth and

¹⁴ [A Blue Economy Vision for Scotland, Scottish Government, March 2022](#)

¹⁵ [Written Statement: Strategic Approach to Welsh Fisheries and Aquaculture, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Welsh Government, 4 December 2024](#)

¹⁶ [Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme: guidance relevant to all rounds, Welsh Government, 5 December 2022](#)

¹⁷ [Government to launch £360m Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund, DEFRA press release, 19 May 2025](#)

¹⁸ [Going for Growth, A strategic action plan in support of the Northern Ireland agri-food Industry, Agri-Food Strategy Board, 2013](#)

development of the combined fish and aquaculture sectors in Northern Ireland by 2020 as follows:

Figure 1: Going for Growth Fish and Aquaculture Growth targets

Fish & Aquaculture 2020 Targets		
Grow turnover	by 34%	to £90m.
Grow value-added	by 45%	to £22m.
Grow external sales	by 36%	to £75m.
Grow employment	by 9%	to 600 full time equivalents.

Going for Growth also outlined a number of specific recommendations for aquaculture development as follows:

- **Recommendation 105** - Access must be facilitated to sites, and opportunities fostered for the sustainable development of aquaculture both offshore and along the Northern Ireland coastline, e.g. by providing access to seed and grow mussels and oysters, and to maximise the opportunities presented by the harvesting of seaweed;
- **Recommendation 106** - New opportunities should be explored to harness the resource of Lough Neagh for alternative aquaculture species;
- **Recommendation 107** - Potential sources of EU funding must be identified which could be used to support the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors;
- **Recommendation 108** - Government funding must be made available to aquaculture projects and catchers should be represented at trade shows, where appropriate, to help convey the clean, green, healthy nature of the local product;
- **Recommendation 110** - Government must recognise aquaculture as a legitimate, non-consumptive user of water. The NIEA must take a leading role in improving the quality of inland and coastal waters to support the production of the highest quality shellfish and in supporting fisheries and the sustainable development of aquaculture; and

- **Recommendation 111** - Aquaculture must be recognised as an agricultural rather than an industrial activity, in line with planning appeals decisions. This is particularly important given the intention to develop a new planning policy document for the coast.

The NI Executive's response to Going for Growth contained a number of aquaculture specific commitments which had either been completed, ran up to the end of 2015 or were ongoing in nature.

An Executive Going for Growth Implementation review published in September 2015 provided a summary of what had been delivered across a range of recommendations and actions. Detailed information is provided in Appendix 1.

4.2 Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework

The concept of successor strategy to Going for Growth post 2020 began to be formally considered in 2019. At that time there was no Northern Ireland Executive but DAERA, the Department for the Economy (DfE) and other interested parties began to explore the concept of a Food Strategy Framework. The motivation behind this move was a willingness to develop strategic alignment across NI Departments and help shape a future food system for Northern Ireland.

The intention was for the Food Strategy Framework to both complement and sit within the Executive's Green Growth Strategy.

The finalised Food Strategy Framework was formally introduced on 14 November 2024¹⁹ and utilises a food systems approach that aims to build a food system that will address economic, environmental and social sustainability.

The Framework has four strategic priorities as follows:

- **Priority One** - Enabling improved dietary related health outcomes through education and increased accessibility to healthy nutritious food;

¹⁹ [Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework, DAERA, 2024](#)

- **Priority Two** - Building an environmentally sustainable and resilient agri-food supply chain;
- **Priority Three** - Building a prosperous food economy;
- **Priority Four** - Building a Food Culture and Food Conscious Society.

The Framework makes **no explicit references to aquaculture** but the Glossary (Annex A) does highlight that for the purpose of the document food includes food, drink, fish and marine.

Additionally, the definition provided for Agri-food Single Supply Chain includes the movement of agricultural goods (including fish and marine) from production level to final consumer.

Subsequent to the development of the Food Strategy Framework, in May 2025 DAERA published the NI Food Strategy Framework's two year action plan²⁰. Running until 2027 the action plan contains an Executive-wide range of actions designed to deliver three missions as follows:

- **Mission One** - To use Food to Improve Lifelong Health and Wellbeing.
- **Mission Two** - To Support Environmentally Sustainable, Safe and Ethical Agri-food Supply Chains.
- **Mission Three** - To Further Develop Sustainable Economic Prosperity Within the Agri-food Sector.

Similarly to the Framework, the **action plan contains no explicit references to aquaculture, or any other specific sector for that matter.**

The Glossary to the action plan makes it clear that the definition of food used in the action plan matched that in the overall Framework, as it included fish and and marine.

Given the fact that fish and marine are included in the definition of food a number of the actions within Mission 3 of the action plan would appear to offer potential support for local aquaculture including:

²⁰ [Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework, Action Plan 2025-27, DAERA, 2025](#)

- Action 4 - Identify opportunities for start-up and early-stage food and drink businesses to accelerate growth, undertake innovation and develop external sales.

4.3 Northern Ireland Fishing & Seafood Development Programme (FSDP)

The FSDP involved a strategic review of the opportunities for developing the sea fishing and seafood sectors in NI as a whole, including the potential role of new public investment in infrastructure.

A final report published in 2021 included the following observations on aquaculture²¹:

For aquaculture to grow in Northern Ireland, current operators and prospective new developers need support. Those seeking to invest need assurances to reduce development risk and this can be in the form of site identification, increasing certainty and timeliness of licensing, extraction/discharge consent & planning permissions. Northern Ireland needs to be promoted as a region where aquaculture development can happen and investment here makes commercial sense. An approach that may suit the objectives and scale of the Northern Ireland sector as a 'one-stop shop' like the Dorset and East Devon Aquaculture, which promotes aquaculture development in the region, provides information and links prospective developers to investors and regulators.

4.4 Marine Environment and Fisheries Fund

The Marine Environment and Fisheries Fund is currently the key local vehicle for providing financial support to the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

²¹ [Northern Ireland Fishing & Seafood Development Programme, Final Report, DAERA, April 2021](#)

The most recent iteration of the Fund which covered the 2023-24 period had a specific component targeted at the development of aquaculture, namely Scheme 4. More specifically guidance²² that accompanied Scheme 4 highlighted the following as potential areas of productive investment that could be funded under the scheme:

- diversification of aquaculture production and species cultured;
- the modernisation of aquaculture units, including the improvement in working and safety conditions of aquaculture workers;
- improvements and modernisation related to animal health and welfare, including the purchase of equipment aiming at protecting the farms from wild predators;
- investments reducing the negative impact or enhancing the positive effects on the environment and increasing resource efficiency;
- investments in enhancing the quality of, or in adding value to, aquaculture products;
- the restoration of existing aquaculture ponds or lagoons through the removal of silt, or investments aimed at the prevention of silt deposits;
- the diversification of the income of aquaculture enterprises through the development of complementary activities (support shall only be granted to aquaculture enterprises if the complementary activities relate to the core aquaculture business of the enterprise, including angling tourism, environmental services related to aquaculture or educational activities concerning aquaculture);
- investments resulting in a substantial reduction in the impact of aquaculture enterprises on water usage and quality, in particular through reducing the amount of water or chemicals, antibiotics and other medicines used, or through improving the output water quality, including through the deployment of multi-trophic aquaculture systems²³;

²² [MEFF Guidance note for Developing NI Aquaculture applications, DAERA website, 12 June 2025](#)

²³ Multi species systems and the interactions between species

- the promotion of closed aquaculture systems where aquaculture products are farmed in closed recirculation systems, thereby minimising water use; and
- investments increasing energy efficiency and promoting the conversion of aquaculture enterprises to renewable sources of energy.

At the time of writing the MEFF is currently closed to applications but in an answer to a recent Assembly question²⁴, DAERA Minister Andrew Muir MLA revealed the following:

I expect to make an announcement on the opening of the Marine Environment and Fisheries Fund (MEFF) by the end of this month (June 2025) after I have reviewed my officials' proposals for this financial year.

The MEFF will provide £2.75m in financial assistance to support investment in progressing a range of themes that industry has indicated are priorities. These include workforce recruitment initiatives, automation of on-board practices, economic and environmental resilience of the fleet and, a continuing focus on the de-carbonising fishing activities.

5 Forthcoming NI Fisheries Bill

DAERA Minister, Andrew Muir MLA, has stated his intention to bring forward a Fisheries Bill within the current Assembly mandate. Answers to Assembly questions including AQW 20314/22-27²⁵ reveal the following with regards to the Bill:

...I am bringing forward a Fisheries Bill which will modernise Northern Ireland's fisheries policies and further support management of sustainable fisheries.

²⁴ [AQW 28189/22-27](#)

²⁵ [AQW 20314/22-27](#)

Minister Muir has stated that the Fisheries Bill proposals will be going out to public consultation in June 2025,²⁶ but at the time of writing this has yet to commence.

In answers to a question posed to DAERA by the researcher on whether the Fisheries Bill will include land based and sea based aquaculture provisions the following response was received in the form of written correspondence²⁷:

The Bill includes policy proposals from a wide range of areas including aquaculture. The aquaculture policy proposal is to support the sustainable development of all aquaculture sub-sectors in Northern Ireland by streamlining the current aquaculture licensing process; this will apply to both land and marine based aquaculture.

6 NI Environmental Improvement Plan

The Northern Ireland Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP)²⁸ published in 2024 forms the basis for how the Executive will seek to deliver a coherent and effective set of interventions that can collectively deliver real improvements in the quality of the environment.

The EIP includes a number of references to programmes to support marine aquaculture within Strategic Environmental Outcome 4 - Sustainable production & consumption on land and at sea, section 15: Productive & Sustainably Used Seas, as follows:

- Ongoing evaluation of climate change scenarios and understanding of potential impacts to coastal habitats, fisheries and aquaculture, including adaptation actions required; and
- Delivery of water quality objectives to support the aquaculture industry.

²⁶ [Official Report: Monday 09 June 2025](#)

²⁷ Aquaculture provisions correspondence from DAERA, 19 March 2025

²⁸ [Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Executive, 2024](#)

7 Observations

- The available data suggests that aquaculture is a significant industry in Northern Ireland in terms of the value of sales (14.02 million) but employs a relatively small number of people (141);
- The potential for aquaculture development is highlighted by the scale of the sector in Scotland;
- Support for aquaculture could broadly be defined under policy/strategic direction and financial assistance. In terms of policy/strategic direction the available data suggests that England, Scotland and Ireland have more recent, specific and longer term strategies for the development of aquaculture as compared to Northern Ireland and Wales. Northern Ireland's closest equivalent document appears to be FSDP final report published in 2021;
- Financial support for aquaculture activities is distinctly different between Ireland and each of the UK jurisdictions in that UK support appears to be predominated by annual funding calls rather than the six year European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund active within EU Member States such as Ireland. The UK-wide Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund could have potential to reverse this trend but there is a current paucity of information as to how it will be administered and whether aquaculture activities will be eligible for support;
- With more specific reference to Northern Ireland, the development of aquaculture did explicitly feature within Northern Ireland's first dedicated agri-food strategy but the latest Food Strategy Framework and associated Action Plan make no specific reference to the sector or any other agri-food sector;
- It has been stated that the forthcoming Northern Ireland Fisheries Bill has the potential to enhance local aquaculture development, but without policy proposals or a finalised Bill an accurate assessment of this potential is impossible at this time;
- The NI Executive's Environmental Improvement Plan includes considerations relating to marine based aquaculture but a number of key

interlinked policies/strategies such as the Green Growth Strategy and Marine Plan have yet to be finalised at the time of writing.

8 Potential issues for consideration

- Given the fact that the Food Strategy Framework Action Plan only runs to 2027 does DAERA have plans to develop more agri-food sector specific action plans that will run beyond this Assembly mandate? Will any such plans include an aquaculture specific action plan?;
- Does DAERA have any plans to develop a specific long-term aquaculture strategy similar to those that have been adopted in Scotland and Ireland?
- How has the FSDP final report published in 2021 informed DAERA's thinking in terms of aquaculture policy and strategy?
- Does DAERA have plans for a longer term funding/financial support package for the development of aquaculture? Has the department explored the potential for such an approach as part of the UK-wide Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund?;
- How key is the forthcoming Fisheries Bill and its provisions to the development of aquaculture in Northern Ireland? Does DAERA envisage the Bill completing its legislative process within the current Assembly mandate?;
- When will the Green Growth Strategy and Marine Plan be finalised/published and how will they complement the EIP in relation to aquaculture development?

Appendix 1 – Aquaculture specific elements Going for Growth – NI Executive Implementation Review, September 2015

Recommendation	Response	Lead	Other Partners	Action	Date	RAG status	Explanation of RAG: Actions carried out / Highlights / Risks
105 - Access must be facilitated to sites, and opportunities fostered for the sustainable development of aquaculture both off shore and along the Northern Ireland coastline, e.g. by providing access to seed and grow mussels and oysters, and to maximise the opportunities presented by the harvesting of seaweed.	The Executive supports the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector, encourages improved competitiveness and innovation and will seek a level playing pitch for operators in terms of access to marine waters and space.	DARD	DOE / NIEA / FSA / Industry	i) Seek to ensure that the proposed NI Marine plan makes appropriate provision for the sustainable development of aquaculture and that aquaculture is fully taken into account in developing marine spatial plans through responses to consultations and attendance at the Inter-Departmental Marine Co-Ordination Group.	Achieved	Green	<p>DARD has held a number of meetings with the IMCG on the Draft Marine Plan. The last meeting DARD held with DOE and NI Water was on 4 November. We continue to work closely with DOE on the Draft Plan before it goes out to consultation. We continue to support the aquaculture sector through the Aquaculture Initiative.</p> <p>The Aquaculture Initiative is funded by DARD through EFF (ca £180K) to promote and support aquaculture development in NI. There have been three meetings of the Aquaculture Steering Board to date this year, with the most recent meeting on 4 September 2015. Terms of Reference have been agreed and a Work Programme discussed. A Draft Business Plan was tabled at the meeting on 4 September and this will be discussed at the next meeting, which is scheduled to take place on 26 November.</p>
				ii) Continue to support the Bottom Grown Mussel sector by undertaking annual seed mussel surveys.	Ongoing	Green	<p>A Report on the 2nd Surveillance Audit on the Bottom Grown Fishery was published by SAI Global Assurance Services on 9 November 2015. The Report determined that the NI Bottom Grown Mussel Fishery, and the linked Ireland Bottom Grown Mussel Fishery, continues to operate a well managed and sustainable fishery and therefore certification of the MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishery is awarded. The main seed fishery opened in</p>

Recommendation	Response	Lead	Other Partners	Action	Date	RAG status	Explanation of RAG: Actions carried out / Highlights / Risks
							southern waters on 5 September 2015. The fishery however remains closed in NI waters as surveys indicated there is no fishable quantities of seed.
				iii) Carry out consultation on proposals for a new Fisheries Bill which, among other things, would extend the scope of aquaculture licensing to aquatic species other than fish and shellfish, eg seaweed.	Complete	Complete	The issue was included in policy proposals on which the Department consulted between August and November 2014. The published target was met and the policy was included in final proposals for a new Fisheries Bill, which has been agreed by the NI Executive. (Due to the limited time before the end of the current mandate, the aquaculture provisions were not included in the Bill that the Executive agreed to introduce in the Assembly in order that the remaining provisions could have a better of chance of passing through the Assembly in time for it to come into law during the current mandate. It is hoped that the aquaculture proposals will be taken forward in due course.)
106 - New opportunities should be explored to harness the resource of Lough Neagh for alternative species.	The Executive is working with the inland fishing sector on a range of initiatives to support the sustainable development of the Lough Neagh fishery in light of pressure on eel stocks including the development of a Fishery Management Plan and also a Plan for Lough Erne.	DCAL	Industry	i) Commission stock surveys and review fisheries legislation and methods; ii) Develop a Fisheries Management Plan for Lough Neagh; iii) Complete stock surveys on Lough Erne; and iv) Develop a Fisheries Management Plan for Lough Erne.	Dec 2014 Mar 2015 Complete Mar 2015	Green	Stock surveys completed and results have informed development of fisheries management plans for Lough Neagh and Lough Erne. Draft plans now out for public consultation – closing date for comments by 4th Dec 2015. Engagement with both commercial and recreational Fisheries stakeholders is ongoing re the draft plans. The draft plans are scheduled to be finalised by end of March 2016.

Recommendation	Response	Lead	Other Partners	Action	Date	RAG status	Explanation of RAG: Actions carried out / Highlights / Risks
107 - Potential sources of EU funding must be identified which could be used to support the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors.	<p>The EMFF Regulation was made in May 2014.</p> <p>National allocations have been fixed and within the UK regional allocations have been determined.</p> <p>NI share of the €243m UK allocation is €23.51m. Of this, some €14.55m is to support industry and community led projects, €3.09m is available to assist with control and monitoring costs, and €5.87m is available for data collection.</p>	DARD	DCAL/ DEL/ Invest NI	i) Undertake public consultation on behalf of fisheries administrations by DEFRA on the UK Operational Programme for the EMFF	Complete	Complete	Action complete
				ii) A Fishing Industry taskforce will consider among other things the investment priorities for the new EMFF. The Taskforce's preliminary report will be made to the Minister.	Dec 2014	Green	DARD established Fisheries Taskforce to increase involvement of fishing represented in strategic discussions about fishing opportunities, TACs and quotas.
108 - Government funding must be made available to aquaculture projects and catchers should be represented at trade shows, where appropriate, to help convey the clean, green, healthy nature of the local product.	<p>The Executive will consider the potential to support aquaculture and sea fisheries attendance at trade shows within the scope of the new EMFF, where appropriate, to help convey the clean, green, healthy nature of the local product.</p>	DARD	DCAL/ Invest NI	i) Undertake public consultation on behalf of fisheries administrations by DEFRA on the UK Operational Programme for the EMFF.	Complete	Complete	Action Complete
				ii) A Fishing Industry taskforce will consider among other things the investment priorities for the new EMFF. The Taskforce preliminary report will be	Dec 2014	Green	DARD established Fisheries Taskforce to increase involvement of fishing represented in strategic discussions about fishing opportunities, TACs and quotas. Task force will assist DARD in engaging sea fishing stakeholders.

Recommendation	Response	Lead	Other Partners	Action	Date	RAG status	Explanation of RAG: Actions carried out / Highlights / Risks
				made to the Minister.			
			Invest NI				Since the launch of the strategy to date (30/9/15) Invest NI has delivered 92 financial and advisory projects to fish processing companies and has offered £676,134 total assistance leveraging £5.82million of total planned investment. Invest NI has also delivered a programme of marketing and technical events and workshops which have attracted 45 participants from the fish processing sector.
<p>110 - Government must recognise aquaculture as a legitimate, non-consumptive user of water.</p> <p>The NIEA must take a leading role in improving the quality of inland and coastal waters to support the production of the highest quality shellfish and in supporting fisheries and the sustainable development of Aquaculture.</p>	The Executive will continue to monitor and report on water quality and work with stakeholders to achieve improvement where required.	NIEA	DOE /DCAL /DARD	<p>i) Implement the first cycle (2009 – 2015) River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) which will lead to improvements in the quality of inland and coastal waters.</p> <p>ii) Develop and publish the second cycle (2015 – 2021) RBMPs.</p>	<p>Dec 2015</p> <p>Dec 2015</p>	Green	<p>First cycle plans have led to improvements at individual element level and some changes in overall water body status level. Report progress of first cycle plans by end March 2016.</p> <p>Consultation on draft 2nd cycle plans closed on 22 June 2015. Work on production of final 2nd cycle plans is on-going with the intention of publishing those 2nd cycle plans by Dec 2015.</p>
111 - Aquaculture must be recognised as an agricultural	A terrestrial planning policy document for the coast is	DOE		i) Consult on a Strategic Planning Policy	Complete	Green	Work on the final SPPS completed in March and it will be published in near future following Executive Committee

Recommendation	Response	Lead	Other Partners	Action	Date	RAG status	Explanation of RAG: Actions carried out / Highlights / Risks
rather than an industrial activity, in line with planning appeals decisions. This is particularly important given the intention to develop a new planning policy document for the coast.	not currently under development or planned. Existing planning policy on the Coast (contained within the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland) is intended to be consolidated into the forthcoming draft single Strategic Planning Policy Statement.			Statement. ii) Finalise the Strategic Planning Policy Statement iii) DoE will hold discussions with the aquaculture sector to consider a review of permitted development rights for buildings associated with fish farms.			consideration. Meeting with Aquaculture reps held and further advice provided on Planning Policy including PDRs and EIA in the context of fish farming.