



AN t-ÚDARÁS UM  
CHOSAINT  
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES  
PROTECTION  
AUTHORITY



BIA MARA SÁBHÁILTE INBHUNAITHE  
SAFE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



## Contents

SFPA Offices	1
2023 at a Glance	2
SFPA Statement of Strategy	3
Chairperson's Statement	4

### Goal 1 - Effective Regulation 6

Promoting Compliance	6
Sea-Fisheries Control	8
Seafood Safety	9
Enforcement	12
International Trade	13
European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)	20

### Goal 2 - Communicating and Engaging 24

Communications	24
National and European Engagement	26
Sea-Fisheries Protection Consultative Committee	31

### Goal 3 - Data Driven Delivery 32

Data Unit	32
Information and Communications Technology	35

### Goal 4 - Organisational Excellence 38

Corporate Governance Report	38
Audit and Risk Committee Report	42

### Goal 5 - Staff Development and Support 46

Organisational Structure and Culture	46
Health and Safety Report	48
Organisational Capability Review	49

### Report and Financial Statements 50

## About the SFPA

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) was established under the provisions of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 ("the Act") and operates under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

The principal functions of the SFPA are set out in Section 43 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 include the following:

- To secure efficient and effective enforcement of sea-fisheries law and food safety law.
- To promote compliance with and deter contraventions of sea-fisheries law and food safety law.
- To detect contraventions of sea-fisheries law and food safety law.
- To provide information to the sea-fisheries and seafood sectors on sea-fisheries law and food safety law and relevant matters within the remit of the Authority, through the Consultative Committee or by any other means it considers appropriate.
- To advise the Minister in relation to policy on effective implementation of sea-fisheries law and food safety law.
- To provide assistance and information to the Minister in relation to the remit of the Authority.
- To collect and report data in relation to sea-fisheries and food safety as required by the Minister and under Community law.
- To represent or assist in the representation of the State at national, community and international fora as requested by the Minister; and
- To engage in any other activities relating to the functions of the Authority as may be approved by the Minister.



# SFPA Offices



# 2023 At a Glance



**1,585**  
Shellfish samples taken



**60**  
Foreshore licenses reviewed

**56,731**

Tonnes of produce imported from non-EU fishing vessels into Ireland



**2,297**

Food safety official controls carried out



**67**

Food safety incidents and complaints investigated



**1,343**  
Official Control Samples taken



**85**

Casefiles opened in 2023



**177**

Infringements detected in 2023 across the 85 Casefiles



# SFPA Statement of Strategy

The SFPA's Statement of Strategy 2021-2023 sets out the focus of work over five strategic goals and 23 strategic objectives. The 2023 Annual Report is set out according to these five strategic goals.

## Our Goals

1

### Effective Regulation:

Deliver a quality public service and regulate in a fair, objective, and proportionate manner.

2

### Communication and Engaging:

Strengthen partnerships and re-define relationships with stakeholders.

3

### Data Driven Delivery:

Promote and enable the use of data to enhance service delivery, inform decision making, support accountability and simplify engagement with stakeholders.

4

### Organisational Excellence:

Sustain and develop strategic and operational capacity and capability to deliver organisational excellence.

5

### Staff Development and Support:

To develop and support SFPA's staff.

## Our Vision

To be a trusted regulator that promotes and verifies compliance supporting sustainability in Ireland's sea-fisheries and seafood sector in a fair, proportionate, and transparent way and where necessary enforcing sea-fisheries and seafood safety law effectively.

## Our Mission

The SFPA is committed to the promotion of compliance and the effective and fair regulation of the sea fishing and seafood sectors that fall within the Authority's mandate in order to support safe and sustainable seafood. This means the fair regulation of all fishing vessels operating within Ireland's 200-mile limit and Irish fishing vessels wherever they operate, and all seafood produced in Ireland.

## Our Values

- The SFPA promotes a culture of accountability, professionalism, teamwork, and transparency.
- The SFPA have an ethos of independence, integrity, and impartiality.
- The SFPA strive for excellence by using the best available information to make decisions and supporting continuous learning, innovation, and collaboration within the organisation.
- The SFPA are committed to diversity, inclusion, and the fair, respectful, and equal treatment of all.

# Chairperson's Statement

In a challenging climate for Ireland's sea-fisheries and seafood sector in 2023, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority continued to provide regulatory oversight of our sea-fishing fleet and our seafood processing sector, underpinning the sustainability and safety of our internationally renowned seafood offering.

As the State's competent authority for the regulation of all fishing vessels from all nations operating within Ireland's 200-mile limit, the near 2,000 Irish-registered fishing vessels wherever they operate, all seafood producers operating in the State and the certification of Irish seafood exported to Third Countries, the operational demands on the SFPA continue to increase in line with regulatory changes and the trade requirements of the UK and other trading partners.

From a fisheries control perspective 2023 was a significant year with the implementation of our European Commission approved Sea-Fisheries Control Plan. The functioning of the Control Plan progressed satisfactorily over the course of the year and credit is due to SFPA staff as well as the sea-fisheries and seafood processing sector for adapting to the changed control regime.

Organisationally, the SFPA concluded this strategy cycle to the end of 2023 with the implementation of most of our strategic objectives. A critical one of which was the completion of the 2020 Organisational Capability Review implementation process which was overseen by an Independent Advisory Board appointed by the Minister for Agriculture, Food & Marine. The Independent Board has reported on the successful implementation of the Review programme to the Secretary General of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in fulfilment of the Programme for Government requirement. We look forward to the publication of our new Statement of Strategy in 2024 to take the SFPA to a new phase in its evolution.

A new EU Fisheries Control Regulation completed its journey through the European Union's legislative process in 2023. The SFPA has monitored the implications of the new Regulation throughout and will continue to appraise industry of what the new requirements will entail as the new measures take effect.

There were further revisions to the United Kingdom's food import requirements in 2023. The SFPA's Trade Control Unit supported the seafood industry in preparing for these changes with proactive engagement and information sharing. 2023 also saw a revision of control measures for the export of live crab to China, which should see the re-establishment of this trade. In 2023, the SFPA enabled the export of 3,802 consignments of seafood totalling 49,782 tonnes and 23 species from 44 food businesses to 41 countries outside the EU through the provision of Export Health Certification. Furthermore, 744 catch certificates were issued for the export of 19,187 tonnes of Irish seafood produce to third countries, including the UK.



Throughout 2023, there was a total of 2,222 inspections of fishing vessels undertaken, an increase of 17% on the previous year (1,903 inspections). A total of 85 case files were opened, comprising of 63 sea-fisheries law enforcement cases and 22 food safety law enforcement cases. Nine points cases for serious infringements of fisheries regulations were initiated, with the findings anticipated in 2024.

Protecting seafood safety is crucial, not only to the reputation of Ireland's seafood offering both at home and abroad, but ultimately for the health and well-being of consumers of Irish seafood products. In 2023, the SFPA promoted and oversaw compliance with relevant food safety legislation in 2,325 food businesses. Overall, a total of 2,297 food safety official controls were carried out. Of these official controls, 535 (23%) were categorised as inspections of approved establishments, 1,553 (68%) consisted of official control checks, such as checks prior to certifying a consignment of food being exported to a third country, temperature checks and labelling checks. During 2023, the SFPA dealt with a total of 61 food incidents, a decrease of 1% when compared to 2022. Of this number of food incidents, 15 (25% of total) were associated with the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). Ireland was the notifying country in 4 (27% of total) of these RASFFs. A food incident is any event where, based on the information available, there are concerns regarding the safety or quality of food requiring follow-up by the Competent Authorities in the interest of public health.

Seafood safety law enforcement measures in 2023 ranged from advisory measures to the service of Compliance Notices, as well as to the commencement of criminal prosecutions for serious non-compliances.

In 2023, four prosecutions for offences under food safety legislation were initiated or underway before the courts, two of which concluded in 2023 with convictions and fines imposed on the food business operators for breaches of food hygiene, traceability and food premises requirements under EU food safety law. In 2023, 12 Compliance Notices, 4 Improvement Orders, 1 Prohibition Order and 9 Fixed Payment Notices were issued under food safety law.

The SFPA is supported in our sea-fisheries inspections by the Naval Service, the Air Corps and the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), and we greatly appreciate their valuable assistance. I also thank the members of the SFPA's Audit and Risk Committee and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Consultative Committee for their continued support and valuable guidance.

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority is adhering to the relevant aspects of the Public Spending Code.

On behalf of the Authority, I also thank the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, together with the executives and staff within his Department for their continued support of the SFPA in its endeavours and actions this year.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the dedication of all staff of the SFPA who continue in their commitment to high-quality work and to ensure the delivery of our Statement of Strategy.



**Mr. Paschal Hayes**

EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON



# GOAL 1: EFFECTIVE REGULATION

**Deliver a quality public service and regulate in a fair, objective, and proportionate manner.**



## Promoting Compliance

The goal of the SFPA is to deliver a high-quality public service while regulating in a fair, objective, and proportionate manner.

This is achieved through regular inspections, providing advice and guidance to industry, and undertaking enforcement action when necessary to address non-compliance. Ultimately, this will lead to a more compliant and sustainable industry. The strategic outcome of the SFPA's efforts to promote compliance through industry engagement and communication is to be a proactive regulator, while increasing industry's understanding and capacity to comply with the relevant requirements.

The SFPA Strategy Statement 2021-2023 has established key objectives to promote compliance among industry stakeholders. These include the relaunch of the confidential line for reporting non-compliances, the issuance of fishery information notices to keep industry informed of regulatory changes, regular communications through media releases, meetings with industry representatives to discuss and address any concerns and through SFPA's day to day inspection work. These measures are designed to foster a culture of compliance and ensure the SFPA is effectively meeting its regulatory responsibilities.

### Confidential Line

The SFPA implemented a Confidential Line campaign in late 2023 across trade media publications and online with the purpose of promoting the SFPA Confidential Line to improve compliance by encouraging those working within the sea-fisheries industry as well as the public to report suspicious or illegal activity to the SFPA in confidence. The campaign consisted of a telephone number (1800 76 76 76) and a dedicated email address ([confidential@sfpa.ie](mailto:confidential@sfpa.ie)) for people to report fisheries control and food safety related incidents.

The SFPA confidential line and email received a total of 81 contacts in 2023, 62 of those were confidential phone line and 19 via the confidential email. This represents an increase in 10% in contacts from the previous year, with 73 reports received in 2022. There were various areas of suspected reporting such as illegal and overfishing in Irish waters, unlicensed fishing, sale of undersize lobsters and concerns regarding inshore fishing. The confidential reporting system has initiated several operations within SFPA to detect and deter illegal fishing. Several reports received which were forwarded onto partner agencies such as Inland Fisheries Ireland resulted in positive outcomes. In November 2023, the confidential reporting system was advertised in several media outlets in Irish.





## Fishery Information Notices

The SFPA's Fishery Information Notices (FINs) are an important tool for keeping industry informed of regulatory changes and providing guidance on how to comply with relevant requirements. These advisory notes are developed to assist industry in understanding and complying with fisheries and food legislation. The purpose of FINs is to provide the information in a manageable form and in doing so it is limited to the essential elements of information. In 2023, a total of eleven FINs were published, covering a wide range of topics including animal by-products, logbook requirements, minimum conservation reference sizes, crawfish, spurdog regulations for Irish vessels in North Western Waters, prohibited species, sprat and herring identification, and new Automatic Identification System (AIS) rules.

The SFPA believes that by providing this comprehensive and timely information to industry, it will increase understanding of the requirements and help foster a culture of compliance. Industry stakeholders are encouraged to read the FINs in conjunction with the governing legislation to stay informed and understand the compliance requirements.

## Engagement Activities with Industry

The SFPA conducts regular engagement activities with industry stakeholders to promote compliance among industry stakeholders. These activities include meetings, briefings and training sessions on various topics. This information is used as a baseline to measure progress and identify areas where improvements can be made in order to promote compliance among industry stakeholders.

## Official Controls: The SFPA's Daily Operational Inspection Work

Daily operational inspection work performed by Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers (SFPOs) is crucial to promote compliance among industry stakeholders. This includes conducting regular inspections to ensure compliance with regulations, providing advice and guidance to industry, and taking enforcement action when necessary to address non-compliance. These measures are designed to ensure that industry is aware of its obligations and that the SFPA is effectively monitoring compliance on an ongoing basis, making it a key part of the SFPA's efforts to promote compliance among industry stakeholders.

## Implementation of a New Sea-Fisheries Control Plan

A new, revised Control Plan was submitted to the European Commission in September 2022 and implemented from January 2023.

In 2023, the SFPA was focused on promoting compliance with the new EU approved Sea-Fisheries Control Plan. This was achieved through a range of engagement activities such as meetings, briefings, letters, information notices, and approval inspections. The goal was to ensure that industry stakeholders had the understanding and knowledge to comply with the plan. Through these efforts, the SFPA aimed to ensure that the new Sea-Fisheries Control Plan was being effectively and efficiently implemented.

# Sea-Fisheries Control



2,222

Inspections of fishing vessels undertaken.

Throughout 2022, the SFPA worked tirelessly to obtain an EU Commission approved Sea-Fisheries Control Plan and following submission of the plan in late September on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022, this plan was approved for implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

The Control Plan is critical in ensuring that Ireland adheres to its obligations under the EU Common Fisheries Policy and is a central component in Ireland receiving a derogation allowing weighing after transport, for 95% of its fishery products.

Accountability was key in 2023 and revised key performance indicators were established for operational tasking across all areas under the SFPA remit. In relation to fisheries control, during 2023 there was a total of 2,222 inspections of fishing vessels undertaken, an increase of 17% on the previous year (1,903 inspections).

The SFPA continued to adapt and streamline its automatic cross-checking system, VALID. This afforded operational staff greater oversight of real time non-compliances onboard fishing vessels. During 2023, there was an 80.4% compliance rate demonstrated across the automatic system, an increase in the compliance rate of 3% on the previous year.

“““

*During 2023, there was an 80.4% compliance rate demonstrated across the automatic system, an increase in the compliance rate of 3% on the previous year.*

Following the COVID-19 restrictions of the previous years, the SFPA undertook inshore patrols and during 2023 a total of 39 patrols were undertaken. In addition to inshore patrols, the SFPA participated in 6 joint deployments onboard offshore patrol vessels chartered and co-ordinated by the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA). These deployments provided additional operational capabilities to promote compliance with sea-fisheries legislation in Irish waters of EU and non-EU flagged vessels.

# Seafood Safety

The SFPA is the Official Agency which has responsibility for overseeing and enforcing national and EU laws governing the safety of seafood across the supply chain up to the point of retail.

In carrying out this role, the SFPA has established a comprehensive framework of official controls. The legislation enforced by the SFPA is wide ranging and includes general food law and regulations pertaining to food hygiene, official controls, labelling, traceability, additives & flavourings, contaminants, residues of veterinary medicines, microbiological criteria and marine biotoxins.

In line with a key goal set out in the SFPA Strategy (2021-2023), the SFPA continually strives to deliver a quality public service and regulate in a fair, objective and proportionate manner. All official controls are carried out in accordance with documented procedures.

## Food Businesses

In 2023, the SFPA promoted compliance with the relevant food safety legislation in 2,325 food businesses. Food businesses are registered or approved by the SFPA, depending on the activities being carried out. Those establishments handling and processing seafood are required to be approved and meet the required food safety standards before they can place fish/fishery products/shellfish on the market from their establishment. In 2023, the SFPA processed a total of 51 applications (new registrations and approvals, amendments to existing approvals). A total of 23 full approvals were issued by the SFPA.

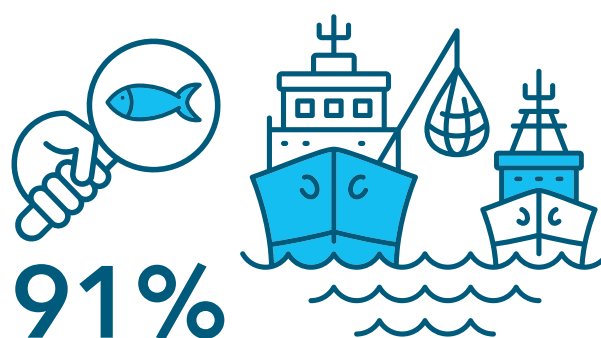
The seafood businesses under the SFPA official control remit included 312 land-based food business operators (FBOs), 194 approved food business establishments and 118 registered food business operators. There were 49 approved freezer/factory fishing vessels and 1,915 registered primary production fishing vessels. Handling fresh fishery products and processing were the main businesses and activities of the approved land based FBOs, and freezing was the primary activity being carried out in approved fishing vessels.

## Risk-based Food Safety Inspections

In accordance with EU official control Regulations, the SFPA carries out risk based official controls across the whole seafood chain up to the point of retail sale. Approved establishments are categorised as High, Medium or Low risk.

Overall, a total of 2,297 food safety official controls were carried out by the SFPA in 2023. Of these official controls, 535 (23%) were categorised as inspections of approved establishments, 1,553 (68%) consisted of official control checks, such as checks prior to certifying a consignment of food being exported to a third country, temperature checks and labelling checks.

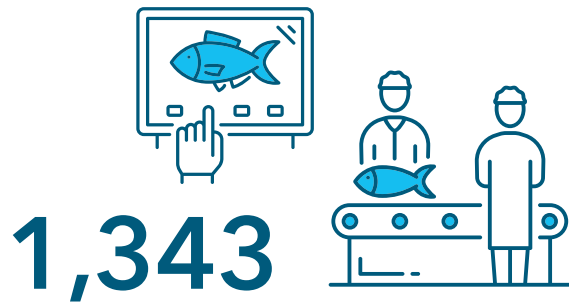
In 2023, 91% of the annual target for inspections of establishments and fishing vessels that require approval was achieved. Such inspections were undertaken by SFPOs based on risk associated with the establishment and processes undertaken within the establishment. The types of establishments inspected include processing plants, dispatch centres and freezer vessels. SFPA delivered on 96% of the annual target for high risk ready to eat establishments. High Risk Ready-to-Eat (RTE) food business operator activities include live bivalve mollusc purification, cooking, and smoking.



**91% of the annual target for inspections of establishments and fishing vessels that require approval was achieved.**

## Seafood Safety (CONTINUED)

### Official Control Sampling



**Official control samples taken.**  
This is a 7.5% increase compared to the previous year.

Sampling and subsequent analysis are key food safety official controls performed by the SFPOs and official laboratories. In 2023, the SFPA increased its official control samples collected by 7.5% compared to the previous year, with a total of 1,343 samples taken. 74% of these were fish, fishery product or live bivalve mollusc samples for microbiological or chemical analysis, 16% were water, ice or seawater samples for microbiological analysis and 7% were environmental swabs for microbiological analysis. The majority of samples were analysed by official laboratories to verify compliance with microbiological residues or contaminant criteria and other standards set by EU legislation and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI).

### Food Incidents & Complaints

A food incident is any event where, based on the information available, there are concerns regarding the safety or quality of food requiring follow-up by the Competent Authorities in the interest of public health. During 2023 the SFPA dealt with a total of 61 food incidents, a decrease of 1% when compared to 2022. Of this number of food incidents 15 (25% of total) were associated with the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). Ireland was the notifying country in 4 (27% of total) of these RASFFs.

During 2023, 16 incidents (26% of total) were due to unsatisfactory results with respect to microbiological or chemical food safety criterion. 13 incidents (21% of total) resulted in an FBO product recall/withdrawal. In these instances, the role of SFPA is to verify that the recall/withdrawal has been completed satisfactorily.

During 2023, 25 incidents (41% of total) were reports of alleged illnesses following the consumption of fishery products or live bivalve molluscs. All incidents where there are reports of illness are deemed as Class 1 incidents which means that immediate follow up with an FBO takes place. Typical SFPA follow-up for such incidents involves investigating the incident, determining if there are further reports of illness and verifying FBO traceability records.

The SFPA dealt with 6 complaints during 2023. The SFPA may receive a complaint from an FBO, a consumer, another Official Agency or from an anonymous complainant. The types of complaints received in 2023 ranged from labelling issues to concerns regarding food safety information on an FBOs website.

All food incidents and complaints received by the SFPA are followed up and investigated. Corrective actions put in place by the FBO to prevent re-occurrence is verified by the SFPA during official controls and where required, enforcement action is taken.

### Shellfish Monitoring and Sanitary Surveys

The SFPA is dedicated to maintaining the safety and quality of shellfish production by conducting ongoing shellfish monitoring programs and sanitary surveys to assess pollution sources and classify production areas. The SFPA also prevents shellfish harvesting from areas with elevated levels of marine biotoxins and phytoplankton to ensure the safety of the product. Monitoring shellfish is an essential safety precaution for consumers and plays a crucial role in safeguarding the shellfish industry. It helps prevent outbreaks of foodborne illnesses and ensures the continued safety of seafood for consumption.

The SFPA successfully met 93.13% of its target for the number of E. coli samples collected in the National Classification Microbiological Monitoring Program for Bivalve Mollusc Production Areas in Ireland, with a total of 1,585 samples collected. Monitoring of shellfish production throughout 2023 also consisted of the submission of approximately 300 biotoxin verification samples and 450 phytoplankton water samples by SFPA staff. The SFPA also takes additional shellfish samples each November to assist the Marine Institute in the monitoring of shellfish waters for the analysis of trace metals and organohalogenes.

“

***Ireland's shellfish monitoring programme is important for both consumers and commercial producers. One of the principal remits of the SFPA is to ensure that Irish and international consumers can be assured of the quality and safety of fish and seafood harvested here.***

The SFPA conducted the annual review of shellfish classifications in Ireland based on the previous three-year dataset (01 Jan 2020 - 01 Jan 2023) of 4802.E.coli results from 134 sampling sites in 60 production areas. The 2022/23 draft review was reviewed and finalised at the Annual Implementation meeting attended by representatives from SFPA, FSAI, MI, IFA Aquaculture and Industry.

As a result of the review, five production areas were upgraded, seven were downgraded, one was de-classified for Urchins, one site was declared dormant, eight decreased in seasonality. The Annual List of Classified Live Bivalve Mollusc Production Areas in Ireland is published at: [sfpa.ie/What-We-Do/Molluscan-Shellfish/Classified-Areas](https://sfpa.ie/What-We-Do/Molluscan-Shellfish/Classified-Areas)

The publication of the classification list is the annual culmination of the ongoing partnership between the SFPA and the Marine Institute in the microbiological monitoring of shellfish production areas in Ireland.

Ireland's shellfish monitoring programme is important for both consumers and commercial producers. One of the principal remits of the SFPA is to ensure that Irish and international consumers can be assured of the quality and safety of fish and seafood harvested here. Shellfish production is an important industry in many coastal communities around Ireland and it is essential that the highest standards of food safety are maintained at all times. The SFPA works in collaboration with industry and other state agencies to ensure that production areas are of the highest possible standard and meet rigorous assessment criteria to ensure that the safety and quality of the shellfish placed on the market is not compromised in any manner. This work is an important pillar in both preserving and further enhancing Ireland's global reputation for quality, and safe seafood.

In 2023, the SFPA continued its sanitary survey program in partnership with its existing service provider and completed comprehensive surveys of Inver Bay, creating a sampling plan and the representative monitoring point for the area. The SFPA also conducted extensive shoreline surveys and microbiological water studies in several production areas, including Kilmakilloge Harbour, and the Bantry - Gearhies area in Bantry Bay. The SFPA hired a full time Shellfish Environmental Manager to co-ordinate the sanitary survey program of the existing shellfish production areas and manage the third-party service provider in completing the remaining sanitary surveys from the contract agreement. The results of all completed surveys are on the SFPA website.

### **Official Controls in cooperation with other Official Agencies**

The Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM) approves or registers, and implements, animal by-product (ABP) official controls at animal-by product plants. The SFPA continued its role of ongoing official controls of aquatic ABP plants to verify compliance with the ABP regulation. The SFPA liaised with DAFM on relevant aspects of these inspections as necessary including non-compliances. The SFPA provided as necessary technical support to the staff at DAFM Border Control Posts on imports of seafood. The SFPA worked collaboratively with other Official Agencies in the area of residues and contaminants.



# Enforcement



Throughout 2023 a total of 85 case files were opened, comprising:



## 63

sea-fisheries law  
enforcement cases.



## 22

food safety law  
enforcement cases.

Throughout 2023 a total of 85 case files were opened, comprising of 63 sea-fisheries law enforcement cases and 22 food safety law enforcement cases.

Within the administrative sanctions framework, the SFPA assigned points to a master's registration and a fishing vessel's owner sea-fishing licence in 2023 arising from a finding by the Determination Panel that a serious infringement occurred.

This infringement was detected during an EFCA joint deployment programme inspection.

A further 9 points cases for serious infringements were initiated in 2023, with the findings anticipated in 2024.

Increased inspection and enforcement provide an effective tool to protect against illegal fishing activity.

Seafood safety law enforcement measures in 2023 ranged from advisory measures to the service of Compliance Notices, as well as to the commencement of criminal prosecutions for serious non-compliances. In 2023, four prosecutions for offences under food safety legislation were initiated or under way before the courts, two of which concluded in 2023 with convictions and fines imposed on the food business operators for breaches of food hygiene, traceability and food premises requirements under EU food safety law. In 2023, 12 Compliance Notices, 4 Improvement Orders, 1 Prohibition Order and 9 Fixed Payment Notices were issued under food safety law.

# International Trade

Official controls in the deterrence of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing continued to be conducted.

This included the verification of 2,498 catch certificates relating to the import of 11,301 tonnes of produce from all third countries, including the UK. This represented respective decreases over 2022 data of 12% and 3% in the amount of import certificates and import tonnage verified, reflecting reduced trade volumes of imports returning closer to 2020 levels.

The main countries from which import consignments originated were UK, Iceland, China, Ecuador and India. Imports from UK accounted for 46% and 22% in the respective overall amounts of certificates issued and tonnage imported from all third countries.

744 catch certificates were issued for the export of 19,187 tonnes of Irish seafood produce to third countries, including the UK. The main species exported by volume were Atlantic Mackerel, Atlantic Horse Mackerel, Edible Crab and Sprat. This represented a respective increase over 2022 data of 8% and 99% in the amount of export catch certificates issued and related export tonnage catch certified reflecting a return to 2021 levels.

Exports to UK accounted for 61% of the total number of certificates issued.

A total of 609 direct landings of fishery products by non-EU fishing vessels into Ireland resulted in the import of 56,731 tonnes of produce. This represented respective decrease over 2022 data of 13% and 24%. Landings by UK-registered vessels accounted for 97% of the overall total number of landings by non-EU fishing vessels into Ireland. Irish vessels landed 356 times into third country ports, accounting for exports of 19,650 tonnes of produce, with 95% of landings taking place in UK ports.

## 3,802

consignments of seafood totalling 49,782 Tonnes and 23 species were certified for export from 44 Food Businesses to 41 countries outside the EU in 2023.



## International Trade (CONTINUED)

\* Please note all the weights in this section refer to the product as exported and may not reflect the species live weight.

### Export Health Certificates

A total of 3,802 consignments of seafood totalling 49,782 Tonnes and 23 species were certified for export from 44 Food Businesses to 41 countries outside the EU in 2023.

This compares with a total of 3,670 consignments of seafood totalling 78,171 Tonnes and 26 species which were certified for export from 47 Food Businesses to 48 countries outside the EU in 2022. In 2021, a total of 4,455 consignments of seafood totalling 121,395 Tonnes and 25 species which were certified for export from 48 Food Businesses to 42 countries outside the EU.\*

**Table 1: Consignments certified**

Countries	Tonnes	Consignments
Nigeria	17,564	87
China	6,904	594
Ivory Coast	5,213	16
Egypt	3,054	29
Japan	2,919	78
Congo	2,700	12
Ghana	2,401	45
Vietnam	1,917	106
Ukraine	1,010	55
Korea, Republic of	874	57
Lithuania	768	9
Cameroon	759	5
Hong Kong	752	1,459
Liberia	625	10
United Arab Emirates	330	257
United States	280	15
Taiwan, Province of China	268	27
Togo	225	3
Benin	201	8
Reunion	178	4
Sierra Leone	150	2
Malaysia	141	199
Jamaica	137	8
Canada	118	202
Singapore	84	334
Thailand	40	57
Philippines	30	56
Indonesia	25	1
Others	116	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,782</b>	<b>3,802</b>

### Top Three Export Destinations

Three countries account for 59.6% of Irish Seafood exported to third countries outside the EU in 2023: Nigeria 35.3%, China 13.9%, and Ivory Coast 10.4%.

Exports to these three destinations Nigeria, China and Ivory Coast were primarily pelagic species, as set out in the tables below.

**Table 2: Exports to Nigeria**

Species	Tonnes
Mackerel	10,224
Blue Whiting	6,926
Herring	413
Pacific Oysters	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,564</b>

**Table 3: Exports to China**

Species	Tonnes
Mackerel	4,309
Blue Whiting	780
Whelk	600
Horse Mackerel	553
Prawns	234
Razor Clams	173
Pacific Oysters	124
Crab	94
Whiting	23
Other	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,904</b>

**Table 4: Exports to Ivory Coast**

Species	Tonnes
Blue Whiting	4,963
Sole	250
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,213</b>



## Exports by Species Class

In 2023, the vast majority (90.7%) of seafood exported consisted of pelagic species including Mackerel, Blue Whiting and Horse Mackerel. Shellfish exports made up 8% of exports and mostly included Whelk, Pacific Oysters, Razor Clams, Crab and Prawn exports. Round Fish and Demersal species comprised 1.3% of exports, mostly Sole and Salmon.

**Table 5: Exports by Class**

Species Class	Tonnes	Percentage
Pelagic	45,174	90.7%
Shellfish	4,002	8.0%
Demersal	606	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,782</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6: Pelagic Species**

Pelagic	Tonnes
Mackerel	23,899
Blue Whiting	16,623
Horse Mackerel	3,796
Herring	582
Sardines	225
Sprat	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,174</b>

**Table 7: Shellfish Species**

Shellfish	Tonnes
Whelk	2,009
Razor Clams	688
Pacific Oysters	547
Crab	370
Prawns	293
Mussels	57
Lobster	24
Scallops	14
Others	< 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,002</b>

**Table 8: Round Fish and Demersal**

Roundfish	Tonnes
Sole	250
Salmon	190
Whiting	90
Hake	76
Others	< 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>606</b>

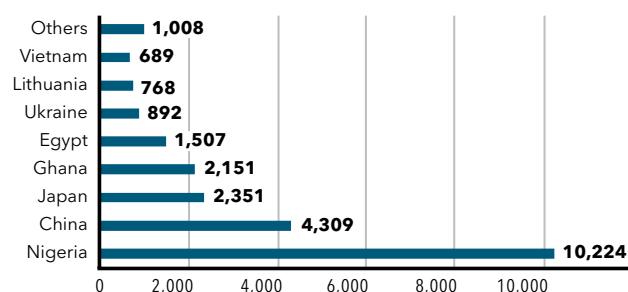
## Exports of Mackerel

A total of 23,899 Tonnes of Mackerel was exported to various third countries in 2023. Almost all of this was frozen Mackerel (95.2%) with small amounts of smoked and canned Mackerel being exported.

**Table 9: Exports of Mackerel by Country and Weight**

Country	Tonnes
Nigeria	10,224
China	4,309
Japan	2,351
Ghana	2,151
Egypt	1,507
Ukraine	892
Lithuania	768
Vietnam	689
Others	1,008
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,899</b>

**Figure 1: Mackerel Exports (tonnes)**



**Table 10: Presentation Type Mackerel**

Presentation	Tonnes
Whole Frozen	17,354
Frozen	5,400
Other	1,145
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,899</b>

## International Trade (CONTINUED)

\* Please note all the weights in this section refer to the product as exported and may not reflect the species live weight.

### Exports of Blue Whiting

Exports of Blue Whiting to third countries totalled 16,623 Tonnes in 2023 of which 41.7% went to Nigeria. All Blue Whiting was exported frozen.

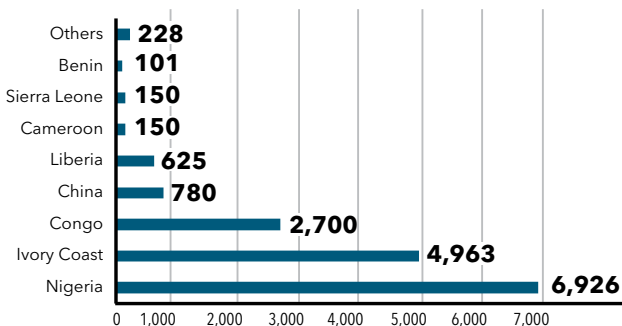


**16,623**  
Tonnes of Blue Whiting exported

**Table 11: Exports of Blue Whiting by Country and Weight**

Country	Tonnes
Nigeria	6,926
Ivory Coast	4,963
Congo	2,700
China	780
Liberia	625
Cameroon	150
Sierra Leone	150
Benin	101
Others	228
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,623</b>

**Figure 2: Blue Whiting Exports (tonnes)**



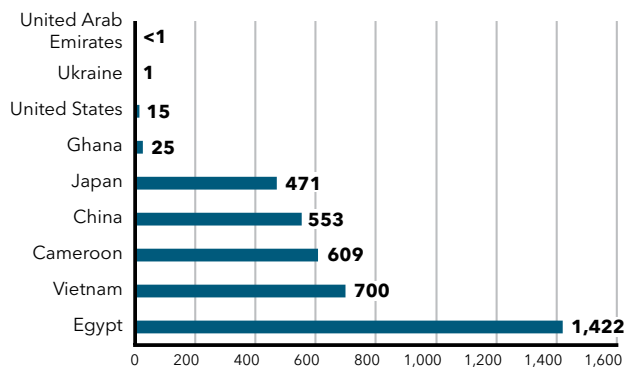
### Exports of Horse Mackerel

A total of 3,796 Tonnes of Horse Mackerel was exported to third countries in 2023 with 37.5% of this exported to Egypt. All Horse Mackerel was exported frozen.

**Table 12: Exports of Horse Mackerel by Country and Weight**

Country	Tonnes
Egypt	1,422
Vietnam	700
Cameroon	609
China	553
Japan	471
Ghana	25
United States	15
Ukraine	1
United Arab Emirates	<1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,796</b>

**Figure 3: Horse Mackerel Exports (tonnes)**



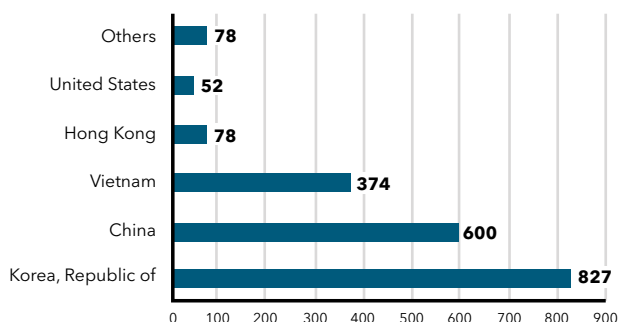
## Exports of Whelk

Whelk is regarded as a particular delicacy in some East Asian countries which is where most of this product was exported. In 2023, 41.2% of this Whelk was exported to Korea. Most consignments of Whelk were exported frozen.

**Table 13: Exports of Whelk by Country and Weight**

Country	Tonnes
Korea, Republic Of	827
China	600
Vietnam	374
Hong Kong	78
United States	52
Others	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,009</b>

**Figure 4: Whelk Exports (tonnes)**



**2,009**  
Tonnes of Whelk exported

**Table 14: Whelk Presentation**

Presentation	Tonnes
Frozen	1,987
Cooked	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,009</b>



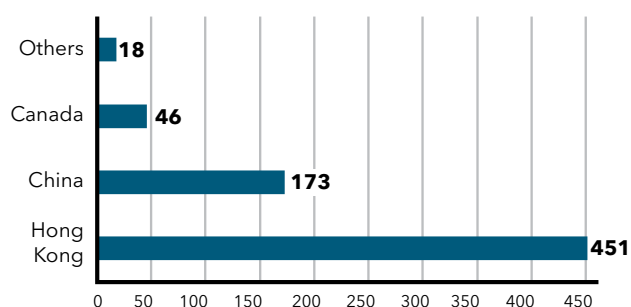
## Exports of Razor Clams

Most Razor Clams exported to third countries are flown out live within hours of landing; a small proportion (2.8%) was exported frozen. The Asian market and Canada are the primary destinations for this product.

**Table 15: Exports of Razor Clams by Country and Weight**

Country	Tonnes
Hong Kong	451
China	173
Canada	46
Others	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>688</b>

**Figure 5: Razor Clams Exports**



**Table 16: Presentation Type Razor Clams**

Presentation	Tonnes
Live	669
Frozen	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>688</b>

# International Trade (CONTINUED)

\* Please note all the weights in this section refer to the product as exported and may not reflect the species live weight.



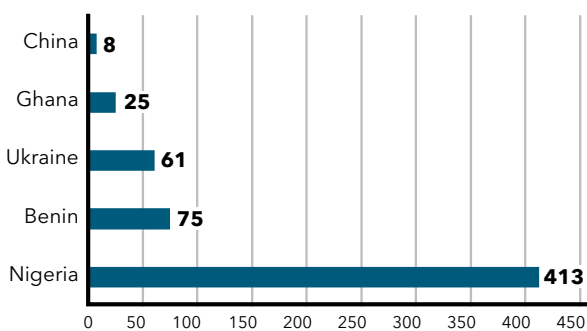
## Exports of Herring

A total of 582 Tonnes of Herring was exported to third countries in 2023. All Herring was exported frozen.

**Table 17: Exports of Herring by Country and Weight**

Country	Tonnes
Nigeria	413
Benin	75
Ukraine	61
Ghana	25
China	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>582</b>

**Figure 6: Herring Exports**



## Exports of Pacific Oysters

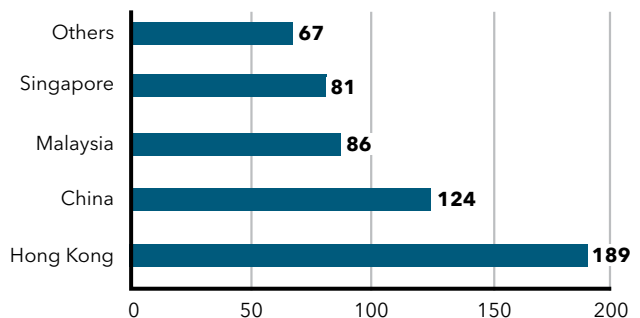
A total of 547 Tonnes of Pacific Oysters were certified for export by the SFPFA in 2023. Cultivated Irish Oysters were exported live to countries primarily in the Far East as set out in the table below.



**Table 18: Exports of Pacific Oysters by Country and Weight**

Country	Tonnes
Hong Kong	189
China	124
Malaysia	86
Singapore	81
Others	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>547</b>

**Figure 7: Pacific Oysters Exports**

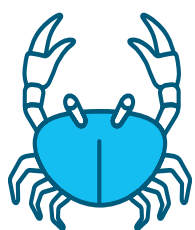


**Table 19: Presentation Type Pacific Oysters**

Presentation	Tonnes
Live	546
Frozen	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>547</b>

## Exports of Crab

A total of 370 Tonnes of Crab was exported in 2023; the majority of this was exported to countries in the Asian market. 82.4% of the exports were of frozen Crab while the remainder was exported as live produce.



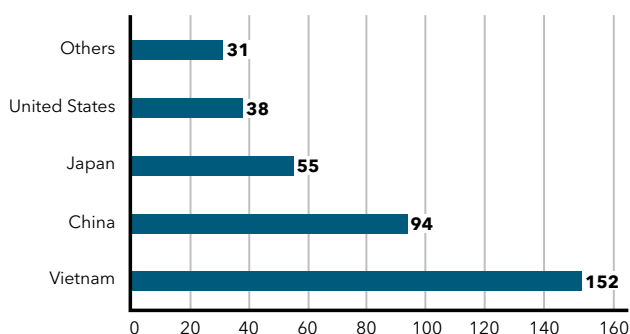
**370**

**Tonnes of Crab exported**

**Table 20: Exports of Crab by Country and Weight**

Country	Tonnes
Vietnam	152
China	94
Japan	55
United States	38
Others	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>370</b>

**Figure 8: Crab Exports**



**Table 21: Presentation Type Crab**

Presentation	Tonnes
Frozen	305
Live	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>370</b>

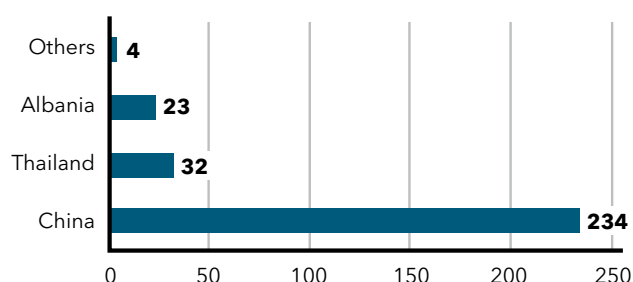
## Exports of Prawns

A total of 293 Tonnes of Prawns were exported to third countries in 2023. All Prawns were exported frozen.

**Table 22: Exports of Prawns by Country and Weight**

Country	Tonnes
China	234
Thailand	32
Albania	23
Others	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>

**Figure 9: Prawns Exports**



**293**

**Tonnes of Prawns exported**

# European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)

The European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) runs from 2021 to 2027 and supports the EU common fisheries policy, the EU maritime policy and the EU agenda for international ocean governance. It provides supports for developing innovative projects ensuring that aquatic and maritime resources are used sustainably.

The following activity was funded under EMFAF in 2023.

## Aggregated Catch Data Report

Aggregated Catch Data Reporting (ACDR) is exchanged between EU member states, DG MARE AND EUROSTAT. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, the ACDR is sent by member states to the Commission and the SFPA Data Unit complete this exercise monthly.

DG MARE has published an updated ACDR implementation document and member states are required to implement the changes mandated in the implementation document. The main changes include adding 'Fishing Effort' to the current ACDR, and the implementation of new business rules on data validation. In 2023, the SFPA coordinated the underlying work in updating the ACDR report on the Integrated Fisheries Information System (IFIS) and preparing for a new format for exchanging the data (ECR). This groundwork will ensure that the SFPA report will align with DG MARE implementation guidelines, and that the SFPA is ready to complete testing for the EU mandated go live date in Q1 2024.

## Exchange of Inspection and Surveillance Reports

Currently the SFPA can only access inspection reports completed within Ireland's jurisdiction by Irish Inspectors (SFPA/NS). This project is mandated by Europe and aims to allow the exchange of electronic inspections and surveillance reports with EU, EFCA & other member states, through an internationally agreed standard, the United Nations Fisheries Language for Universal exchange (UN/FLUX). In 2023, the SFPA did the underlying work in updating existing systems, creating a new module to follow the implementation guide provided by the EU Commission and put in place a new user interface to query for inspection reports within the EU Commission. This work will allow us to complete testing with other member states and enable the new exchange in 2024.

## ieCatch V3

The electronic Logbook software (ieCatch) is in use across the Irish fishing vessel fleet. All data from ieCatch is securely transmitted and stored in the national fisheries database known as Integrated Fisheries Information System (IFIS). The IFIS system supports the management of the fishing industry in Ireland. EU Council regulation 1224/2009 requires that Ireland maintains a database of fishing activities and has in place a control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). This system is housed and supported by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

There were 3 new software releases/upgrades to ieCatch V3 in 2023 which implemented a range of enhancements including:

- Enhancements to North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission NEAFC Catch on Entry (COE) functionality and data recording.
- Number of locally stored trips increased to address user feedback.
- More streamlined access to previous trips.
- User Interface Enhancements.

## European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The predecessor of EMFAF, the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF), formally closed from a funding perspective in 2023. The SFPA completed a number of projects, outlined below, which were funded under EMFF in 2023 to close out EMFF funding available to the SFPA.

### Logbook View Enhancements

SFPA Sea-Fisheries Officers have access to a log book view in IFIS (the Irish Fisheries Information System) and in 2023 enhancements were implemented to enhance the view and information available to officers. The existing view had limitations and lacked capability to drill down for further data which is available on IFIS.

The enhanced views were released on IFIS in 2023 providing the additional information to SFPOs. This provides officers with further data and a more thorough view of fishing activity, which inputs into risk assessment with respect to inspections.

### National Infringements Register/ Case Management System

A new 'Case Management System' (CMS) was implemented in 2023 to support the Enforcement function of the SFPA. The system was introduced to meet EU requirements, set out in EU Regulation 1224/2009, implemented by EU Regulation 404/2011, as well as to enhance efficiency in legal case management through automation and workflow capabilities of the case management system software.

The CMS and associated processes provide the following:

1. Ensures SFPA meets current and planned Control Regulations obligations to record and report on all infringements with a National Register for all Infringements.
2. Provides increased visibility of all infringements to support decision making when determining enforcement action.
3. Enables improved management of enforcement procedures.

4. Automated integration between the CMS and IFIS to record infringements, resulting in reduced risk of human error, minimized duplication of effort and reduced delays.
5. Supports the implementation of the 2009 EU Fisheries Control Regulation 1224/2009 and EU Commission Implementing Regulation 404/2011, introducing a points system for serious infringements of the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy committed by the licence holder of a fishing vessel and also separately the master.

### Prior Notification of Landing (PNO) Management Report

Masters of fishing vessels engaged in fishing for stocks subject to multi-annual plan, and fitted with Electronic Recording Systems, are required to provide prior notification of landing (PNO) as stated in EU and national legislation. This procedure is in place for both national and foreign vessels. Notification must be submitted to the competent authority at least 4 hours before the estimated time of entering port. PNO messages are delivered via email to SFPA Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers (SFPOs) at the relevant port.

In 2023, the SFPA developed a new report which allowed officers to get a consolidated view of all PNO's for their port. Previously they could only view an individual PNO received by email. The report provides filtering and sorting functionality which gives officers the ability to sort by for example nationality, port, species etc. Officers can filter by date to see a consolidated report of all vessels that have sent a PNO for that particular date.

“ ”

**Masters of fishing vessels engaged in fishing for stocks subject to multiannual plan, and fitted with Electronic Recording Systems, are required to provide prior notification of landing (PNO) as stated in EU and national legislation.**

# European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) (CONTINUED)

## Process Mapping

SFPA successfully conducted a project focused on mapping/documenting core processes within fisheries control and regulation. While processes are understood and operated effectively across SFPA, it was recognised that mapped and documented processes were needed. These process maps will provide a significant input into SFPA's digital transformation, as well as enhancing service quality through stronger resilience and standardisation. The project not only helped SFPA to document a clear understanding of existing processes, but also laid the foundation for future improvements and continuous optimisation in SFPA.

## Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM)

The overall objective of the REM project is to proactively prepare for EU legislation mandating the use of REM by member states to promote compliance with the Landing Obligation.

The project is being delivered across a number of workstreams and the following catch weight verification workstream was completed in 2023.

## REM Catch Weight Verification (CWV) Project

The objective of the REM CWV Project was to build SFPA REM knowledge by trialling different types of REM equipment and how that equipment could be installed on a vessel for the purpose of remote electronic monitoring at sea of fishing activities in relation to the landing obligation.

The project consisted of 3 phases; Phase 1 to identify REM solutions; Phase 2 to test those REM solutions and Phase 3 to trial the equipment on a vessel at sea. Phase 1 involved procuring a supplier who completed a body of work to identify possible REM solutions. Phase 2 consisted of trialling those solutions.

### PHASE 1

Delivered the SeaScope report: 'Identification and Analysis of Non-CCTV Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) technical solutions to support the implementation of the 'Landing Obligation' which identified possible REM solutions and equipment.

### PHASE 2

Involved testing the efficacy of weighing and volumetric equipment and showcasing how they can be integrated into a REM system. This phase delivered 'Irish CWV Final Report' which outlined recommendations regarding trialling REM solutions and equipment identified in Phase 1.

### PHASE 3

Is being delivered as a separate project through involvement in the North Western Waters Pilot and will be funded under EMFAF funding.







## SFPA APEX Reports

Oracle Discoverer reporting technology, previously used by the SFPA, is outdated and no longer supported. In 2023, a reporting project focused on migrating all fishery control reports to a new reporting tool, Oracle APEX, was undertaken.

While the initial requirement was to move off the existing platform and migrate existing reports to the new reporting tool to ensure reporting and data requests would be supported, the project also facilitated enhanced capability within the SFPA Data Unit to produce ad-hoc reports when requested. The introduction of the new reporting tool enabled the SFPA to meet the requirements on reporting across the SFPA, to ensure all mandatory EU and government reports are available when required.

## VALID Phase 3

VALID is an automated 'Cross Check' system which is in daily use by SFPA to regulate and administer compliance with sea-fisheries regulation as defined by the EU Commission.

VALID operates by cross checking information provided by each fishing vessel's electronic monitoring system (VMS), electronic logbooks and Sales Note information submitted by buyers. Inconsistencies within the data or missing information are identified and provided to SFPA fisheries officers and to the Naval Service control partners for investigation.

“”

*Enhancements to the VALID system were released in December 2023. The release ensures continued compliance with evolving EU legislation with a significantly improved user interface to identify commonly occurring inconsistencies between the fish catch declared in the Landing Declaration and corresponding information provided by the Buyer.*

Enhancements to the VALID system were released in December 2023. The release ensures continued compliance with evolving EU legislation with a significantly improved user interface to identify commonly occurring inconsistencies between the fish catch declared in the Landing Declaration and corresponding information provided by the Buyer. The VALID system has been supplemented with the new data analytics to assist the efficacy of control officers in targeting fishing vessels with a higher risk of non-compliance.

## GOAL 2: COMMUNICATING AND ENGAGING

**Strengthen partnerships  
and re-define relationships  
with stakeholders.**



## Communications

Alignment to SFPA's Strategy Statement 2021 to 2023.

The SFPA's annual communications plan included a calendar of activities combining various tools and channels (media relations, SFPA website, publications) through which to share key messages with fishers and the seafood sector at critical junctures throughout the year.

A strategic objective for the SFPA as outlined in the Strategy Statement 2021 to 2023 was to build relationships with key stakeholders through direct engagement and provision of information. The tactical approach for this included an integrated programme of fresh proactive activity across a variety of channels.



This included a targeted, proactive programme using new initiatives, key developments, and calendar opportunities, working in collaboration with individual SFPA business units as appropriate and publicising across channels.

- Press releases focused on significant regulatory changes; compliance initiatives, seasonal patrols; using SFPA data to tell the regulatory story; collaborations with organisations on initiatives; utilising the publication of the annual Shellfish Area Microbiological Classification to highlight the SFPA's role in assuring seafood safety and so on.
- In May 2023, the SFPA launched the Annual Inshore Patrol Programme as part of conservation measures to help protect Ireland's valuable shellfish and crustacean fisheries including crab, lobster, crayfish, and whelk.
- News opportunities focused on significant court verdicts; calendar opportunities for example, World Fisheries Day and specific proactive initiatives that highlight the benefits of the SFPA's work.
- The website provided an important platform for hosting the latest announcements and updates including recent developments in the context of compliance and other important developments in the context of fishing regulations, enforcements, and areas of key interest to fishers.
- Regular posting on our LinkedIn channel and X highlighted the broad remit of the SFPA.



In 2023, the SFPA undertook a number of communications initiatives and activities with a diversity of key stakeholders in order to promote the role and remit of the SFPA:



Published information guides are a key communications tool that the SFPA use to disseminate information. The SFPA published a number of information guides including the SFPA's Guide to Skates and Rays, which was produced, launched and distributed to industry in May 2023. Furthermore, the SFPA's report on Protecting Seafood Trade 2022 was produced and launched in April 2023.



The SFPA hosted a stand at the annual Skipper Expo in Limerick in February 2023, Ireland's flagship fisheries show with many visitors and exhibitors from Ireland and abroad. The event was attended by Sea-Fisheries Protection Officer's as well as senior personnel from the SFPA.



Minister for Agriculture Food & Marine, Charlie McConalogue, TD, officially opened SFPA's Port Office in Greencastle in April 2023.



Seminars and workshops were promoted for example the SFPA and the Naval Service hosted a joint seminar on the 'Landing Obligation' at the National Maritime College of Ireland Cork in March 2023.



Media relations formed a core part of all communications activities with a strong focus on engagement with trade print and online publications to share latest updates and developments with industry.



The SFPA website is also an important communications tool for disseminating information with fishers and the wider sector which included updates, announcements and the publication of key documents for example, the Sea-Fisheries Control Plan, Fisheries Information Notices etc.

# National and European Engagement

The SFPA continues to engage with key stakeholders both nationally and in Europe which builds relationships within the regulatory framework in order to work, share advice, and to inform in relation to regulatory priorities and sustainability.

## NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

### Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is the parent Department of the SFPA with responsibility in relation to policy formulation, corporate governance oversight and resource allocation. The SFPA engages with a number of divisions within the Department in relation to the implementation of regulations under the remit of the SFPA.

### Food Safety Authority of Ireland

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) is Ireland's central competent authority for food safety across the food chain from primary production to consumption. The functions of the SFPA in respect of food safety are detailed in a service contract agreement with the FSAI. The SFPA is represented on a number of FSAI working groups co-ordinated by the FSAI.

### Department of Defence

The SFPA has a Service Level Agreement with the Department of Defence for the provision of fishery protection services by the Naval Service and Air Corps. The SFPA produces an annual Fisheries Control Plan, which outlines the benchmark requirements for inspections at sea by the Naval Service and surveillance by the Air Corps. The annual plan uses agreed risk management strategies that produce baseline inspection benchmarks for all vessels operating in our EEZ. These levels of inspection are continuously developed using strategies including intelligence information, fleet profiling and administrative crosschecks. The SFPA works closely with the Naval Service to ensure that such inspection levels are maintained to ensure that there is a balanced and appropriate level of control on all fisheries activities in our areas of responsibility.

### Marine Institute

The Marine Institute (MI) is Ireland's national agency for marine research, technology development and innovation. In food safety, the MI are control partners providing extensive analytical services and scientific advice. In fishery control, the MI and the SFPA collaborate in the area of dataflows to best inform scientific research.

### An Garda Síochána

The SFPA works in close co-operation with An Garda Síochána, in roadside vehicle inspections and fisheries-related investigations. Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers also jointly undertake specific enforcement actions with members of An Garda Síochána particularly in relation to the detention of fishing vessels.

### Bord Iascaigh Mhara

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) plays a key role in developing the Irish seafood industry by providing technical expertise, business support, funding, training and promoting responsible environmental practice.

The SFPA and BIM collaborate on many different aspects that affect the fishing industry including the management of inshore fisheries, industry training, aquaculture, fishing gear technology and fisheries statistics.

### Inland Fisheries Ireland

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) is charged with ensuring the protection and conservation of fisheries resources in inland waters, and sea angling. The IFI and the SFPA cooperate with a view to overall efficiency of state inspection services, and specifically in the area of inshore fisheries control operations.

### National Standards Authority of Ireland

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) is Ireland's official standards body. The NSAI is responsible for the development of Irish Standards, representing Irish interests in the work of the European and International standards bodies CEN and ISO, and for the publication and sale of Irish standards. NSAI Legal Metrology uphold and enforce accuracy and transparency in trade measures by certifying and inspecting measuring instruments used by traders. The SFPA has an MOU with the NSAI and undertakes joint inspections of weigh systems and training.

## EUROPEAN ENGAGEMENT

The SFPA also works closely with a number of international partners including European institutions and their agencies and is represented on a number of committees and working groups.

### Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries - EU Commission

The EU has **exclusive competence** for the conservation of marine biological resources under the **Common Fisheries Policy** (CFP). This applies both in EU waters and in relation to the international obligations deriving from UNCLOS (United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea) and from other United Nations agreements to which the EU is party, such as the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. The exclusive competence equally applies to the sustainable fisheries partnership agreements signed with non-EU Member States. All these areas are regulated by the Common Fisheries Policy.

The Directorate-General for **Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG-MARE)** works to ensure that the ocean resources are used sustainably and that coastal communities and the fishing sector have a prosperous future, promote maritime policies and stimulate a sustainable blue economy, promote ocean governance at international level.

#### The key objectives of DG-MARE are:

- Protect the maritime environment while maintaining Europe's competitiveness.
- Implement the new common fisheries policy.
- Use the potential of Europe's seas to create sustainable jobs that preserve natural resources.
- Establish rules for the management and governance of the world's oceans together with global partners.

### Directorate General for Health and Food Safety- EU Commission

Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) is responsible for EU policy on food safety and health and for monitoring the implementation of related laws.

### European Expert Group on Fisheries Control

To ensure that the Common Fisheries Policy benefits from the best scientific, technical, and economic advice the Commission established an Expert Working Group on Fisheries Control.

#### The Role of the Expert Group is to:

1. Review the technical aspects of monitoring and inspection in the field of fisheries.
2. Assist the Commission in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives.
3. Coordinate with Member States facilitating the exchange of views.

The meetings with control experts of member states are devoted to the control and enforcement of the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy. The expert group serves also to develop cooperation with and between Member States, to develop recommendations and ensure their effective implementation and application.

The meetings also cover control issues under the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation's and third countries agreements.

### European Fisheries Control Agency

The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) is a European Union agency. The agency's mission is to promote the highest common standards for control, inspection, and surveillance under the CFP. Its primary role is the organization, coordination and cooperation between national control and inspection activities so that the rules of the CFP are respected and applied effectively.

## National and European Engagement (CONTINUED)



The added value of the work of the agency lies in its contribution to a European-wide level playing field for the fishing industry so that European obligations are observed by everyone and everyone in the sector is treated equally, wherever they might be operating. Secondly, it contributes towards sustainable fisheries by enhancing compliance with existing conservation and management measures to the benefit of present and future generations.

### EFCA Administrative Board

The SFPA represents Ireland on the EFCA's Administrative Board. The Administrative Board is made up of one representative of each Member State and six representatives of the European Commission. Roles of the Administrative Board include:

- Adopt the multi-annual work programme of the Agency which establishes its overall objectives, mandate, tasks, performance indicators and the priorities for each action of the Agency over a five-year period.
- Appoint the Executive Director.
- Adopt the general report of the Agency for the previous year.
- Adopt the Final Budget of the Agency.

The Administrative Board met on two occasions in 2023.

### EFCA Regional Steering Groups

In 2023, the SFPA attended Regional Steering Groups hosted by the EFCA. The EU Fisheries Control regulation (1224 of 2009) allows for the European Commission, in concert with Member States, to adopt specific control and inspection programmes (SCIP) for specific fisheries or sea basins. These SCIP are implemented through 'Joint Deployment Plans' (JDP).

Ireland is involved in three SCIP namely Western Waters, North Sea and NEAFC. In order to coordinate these SCIP, EFCA produces a JDP for each SCIP. The JDPs establish that the deployment of pooled national means is coordinated by EFCA in cooperation with the Member States and frequently with the presence of national coordinators at EFCA premises. A Regional Steering Group (RSG) composed of Commission, Member States and EFCA representatives is in charge of ensuring the proper implementation of the plan. The EFCA Regional Steering Groups met on two occasions in 2023.

Ireland participated in the EFCA weighing project workshops on unsorted pelagics for non-human consumption and for human consumption. In addition, Ireland contributed to EFCA Regional Risk workshop, the Annual Risk Management workshop and a workshop on post landing controls.

### The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) is the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) for the North East Atlantic. The area covered by the NEAFC Convention stretches from the southern tip of Greenland, east to the Barents Sea, and south to Portugal.



Recommendations adopted by NEAFC are legally binding. The SFPA participates in the NEAFC technical Permanent Committee on Monitoring and Compliance (PECMAC) meetings as part of the EU delegation at NEAFC meetings.

### Permanent Committee on Monitoring and Compliance (PECMAC)

This Committee is comprised of representatives from all the Contracting Parties of NEAFC. It is responsible for advising the NEAFC Commission and for centrally coordinating technical issues relating to fishing control and enforcement and the enforcement of the NEAFC Scheme. PECMAC met twice in London during 2023.

### EU Live Bivalve Mollusc Working group meeting

The SFPA attends and represents Ireland at the EU Working group meeting on Bivalve Mollusc chaired by the Commission.

At this forum proposed changes to legislation in the area of Live Bivalve Mollusc food hygiene requirements and official controls are discussed with Member States. Any issues identified by a Member State(s) with enforcing the relevant legislation are also highlighted at the meetings and discussed. Proposals are also put forward to the Commission. The SFPA has played a significant role in preparing submissions in consultation with relevant stakeholders and presenting at these meetings. The SFPA has built good working relationships with competent authorities in other Member States at these meetings. The SFPA attended a meeting in December 2023. The SFPA on behalf of Ireland presented on possible revision of the key pieces of legislation relevant to placing Live Bivalve Molluscs on the market.

The SFPA also contributes to discussions on proposals and legislation presented at the following meetings which are attended by a representative from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

### EU Expert Group on Food Hygiene and Control of Food of Animal Origin

Food Hygiene requirements and official controls on all products of Animal Origin including Live Bivalve Molluscs and Fishery Products are discussed at these meetings. Proposed legislative changes across the whole food chain are presented at these meetings and views put forward by Member States. Any issues identified by a Member State are also highlighted and discussed at this forum.

During 2023, there were three meetings, held virtually. The SFPA provided information to support the meeting attendee. Issues discussed were Tuna fraud and control, Intermediary operators in the shellfish supply chain, super chilling of fishery products, amendments to Regulation 853/2004 on the hygiene of foods of animal origin.

### Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed Section: Biological Safety of the food Chain

The Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF) is composed of representatives of all EU countries and presided by a European Commission representative. Draft Regulations are presented by the Commission at these meetings for voting and views exchanged.

As part of the consultation process and in collaboration with DAFM, SFPA gives expert opinions on the various proposals and issues discussed at these meetings.





# Sea-Fisheries Protection Consultative Committee

The Sea-Fisheries & Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 states that the Minister shall, for the purposes of consultations and liaison with the sea-fisheries and seafood sectors and other relevant interests on matters relating to the functions of the Authority, establish a body to be known as the Sea-Fisheries Protection Consultative Committee and appoint the members of the Consultative Committee.

The functions of the Consultative Committee are laid down in the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 as follows:

- to inform the Authority of concerns and views of the sea-fisheries and seafood sectors regarding the functions of the Authority;
- to seek to keep the sea-fisheries and seafood sectors generally informed of the applicable sea-fisheries law and food safety law, as well as of the standards, guidelines, practices and procedures operated by the Authority in relation to the enforcement of that law;
- to advise the Authority on keeping the burden on the sea-fisheries and seafood sectors generally of compliance with that law to the minimum possible consistent with the essential purposes and the effective enforcement of that law;
- to advise the Authority of its views on the fairness and consistency of the operations of the Authority;
- to seek the delivery of a high standard of service by the Authority.

The Consultative Committee shall arrange its business as it sees fit.

The SFPA held formal meetings with the Sea-Fisheries Protection Consultative Committee on two occasions in 2023. There were ongoing bilateral engagements between members of the Consultative Committee and the SFPA throughout the year. The SFPA in close consultation and collaboration with Consultative Committee members published a comprehensive online guide on exemptions to the landing obligation. This guide was developed to assist vessel masters in adhering to landing obligation.

The SFPA provide the Sea-Fisheries Protection Consultative Committee with secretarial support to carry out its duties and corresponds with members continuously on developments associated with the Committee's functions.

## Committee Members

The members of the Consultative Committee in 2023 were:

<b>Catherine McManus (Chair)</b>	Marine Harvest
<b>Norah Parke (Deputy-Chair)</b>	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
<b>Eamon Dixon</b>	Erris Inshore Fishermen's Association
<b>John Harrington</b>	Kush Seafarms Ltd
<b>David Kirwan</b>	Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation
<b>Aodh O'Donnell*</b>	Irish Fish Producers Organisation
<b>Sean O'Donoghue</b>	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
<b>John Power</b>	Inshore Fishermen Representative - Wexford Lobster Co-op Society
<b>Ebbie Sheehan</b>	Irish Fishermen's Organisation
<b>Anthony Sheehy</b>	Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation
<b>Brendan Byrne</b>	Irish Fish Processors & Exporters Association
<b>Dr Ciaran Kelly</b>	Director Fisheries Ecosystem Advisory Services, Marine Institute

*Ann-Marie Gautier resigned from the Committee in 2023.*

*\*Appointed to the Committee by the Minister in 2023.*

## GOAL 3: DATA DRIVEN DELIVERY

**Promote and enable the use of data to enhance service delivery, inform decision making, support accountability and simplify engagement with stakeholders.**



### Data Unit

In 2023, the SFPA launched its Data Strategy 2023–2028, encompassing data management, data governance, and analytics.

This strategic vision supports heightened data-driven operational decision-making, spanning enforcement, risk-based activities, and staff deployment. The SFPA's commitment to data excellence is evident through ongoing investments, including the appointment of an executive manager with responsibility for Data in July 2023, marking a fundamental step in strengthening the organisation's data capabilities.



### Publish Statistics

In our commitment to transparency, the SFPA consistently shares comprehensive statistics on a weekly, quarterly, and annual basis. These metrics, crucial for stakeholders, are easily accessible on the SFPA website, offering a thorough overview of the most recent information. This dedication to regular reporting underscores our commitment to keeping our valued partners and the broader industry well-informed, fostering a culture of openness and collaboration.

### Key Publications Include

Publication	Periodicity
Landings Report	Annual
Species Report	Annual
Irish Vessels Landing into all Ports	Annual
Non-Irish Vessels Landing into Irish Ports	Annual
Key Species Prices List	Annual
Number of Inspections & Landing Count by Nationality	Annual
Inspection Report Q1	Quarterly
Inspection Report Q2	Quarterly
Inspection Report Q3	Quarterly
Inspection Report Q4	Quarterly
Landings and Percentage Quota Uptake	Weekly
Interactive Map of Landings	Annual



The Quotas page stands out as one of the most frequented sections on our website, featuring monthly regimes issued by DAFM for each stock code (where applicable), and this popularity underscores its significant value to the industry. This particular page serves as a pivotal resource for both fishers and the general public, offering a comprehensive repository of pertinent data related to fishing activity for quota stocks. Its accessibility provides users with a valuable tool to explore and understand various aspects of fishing operations, enhancing transparency, and contributing to informed decision-making within the industry.

“““

*The Quotas page stands out as one of the most frequented sections on our website, featuring monthly regimes issued by DAFM for each stock code (where applicable), and this popularity underscores its significant value to the industry.*

### **Brexit Temporary Fleet Tie Up and Brexit Inshore Fisheries Business Model Adjustment Schemes**

Throughout 2023, the Data Unit supported Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) with a range of schemes including:

- Brexit Fish Processor Transition Scheme.
- Brexit Fisheries Co-operative Transition Scheme 2023.
- Brexit Inshore Fisheries Business Model Adjustment Scheme 2023.
- Brexit Specific Scallop Fleet Transition Support Scheme.

The Data Unit supported BIM and the industry through analytics and supporting follow-up queries across these schemes.

## Data Unit (CONTINUED)



*Looking ahead to 2024, our commitment to innovation remains in focus as we embark on further enhancements to this platform.*

### Operational Enhancements

In the third quarter of 2023, a strategic and pivotal initiative was undertaken by the Data Unit, marking a significant milestone as the team seamlessly migrated its operations to a new platform for comprehensive issue tracking. This transformative shift resulted in a clear improvement in terms of productivity and overall output. The utilisation of this platform has not only streamlined workflow processes but has also empowered the team members to collaborate more efficiently, ultimately contributing to the achievement of our organisational goals with increased effectiveness, precision and auditability.

In the fourth quarter of 2023, the Data Unit successfully concluded the migration from a legacy data extraction and reporting solution to a new advanced platform. This transformative move enabled the Data Unit to introduce self-service data extraction and reporting capabilities from our fisheries platform, offering a curated list of reports to internal users.

Looking ahead to 2024, our commitment to innovation remains in focus as we embark on further enhancements to this platform. This strategic initiative not only reinforces our capabilities but also accelerates our development of more advanced data analytics and business intelligence solutions.

### Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement

In 2023, the Data Unit efficiently handled approximately 1,500 data-related issues, proactively balancing scheduled activities with ad-hoc tasks. Our close collaboration with DAFM extended to processing 150 actions, actively participating in monthly DAFM's QMAC (Quota Management Advisory Committee) meetings and providing daily fishing activity reports during various periods.



**1,500** APPROX.

**Data-related issues, efficiently handled by the Data Unit, proactively balancing scheduled activities with ad-hoc tasks.**

Over 250 requests from other Public Sector Bodies were also received and processed during the year.

The utilisation of quota uptake data, remains instrumental in shaping quota management recommendations and decisions, ultimately produced by DAFM. This process underscores the ongoing reliance on accurate and forward-looking data to guide strategic decisions and ensure sustainable management practices within the fishing sector.

# Information and Communications Technology

One of the key responsibilities our team have is the support we offer to approximately 230 vessels in relation to the Electronic log book and also the vessel monitoring systems we provide.

We have a member of our team on call to deal with any out of hours queries to ensure that any issues are dealt with promptly. In 2023, we dealt with over 750 such issues.

## Further Electronic Recording System (ERS) Training

All vessels 12m or greater are required to use Electronic Recording & Reporting System (ERS) since January 2012. Some vessels in the 12-15m had been in receipt of an exemption on the basis that either: the vessel is at sea less than 24 hours per trip, or the vessel is fishing within the 12 nautical mile limit. This exemption was removed in early 2023. In March and April training was organised for owners and skippers of these vessels in the following locations: Bord lascaigh Mhara's training facilities in Castletownbere and Greencastle in addition to Dingle, Dublin, Wexford and Westport to maximise the audiences attendance. The training consisted of familiarisation with the ieCatch application and distribution of a new electronic logbook on which it runs. In total 60 owners and skippers received training from 43 vessels. This was a challenging project given that many of the people we trained were unfamiliar with electronic log books having never utilised them before.

## CCM

Our team worked on and supported our parent Department on their updating of their Corporate Customer System (CCS) to their new Corporate Customer Management System (CCM). CCM became the primary data source for the Integrated Fisheries Information System (IFIS) in relation to masters, vessel owners and fish buyers and our work was focused on data validation and verification.

## Electronic Inspection and Surveillance Reports

There is currently an ongoing project mandated by European legislation for Member States to exchange electronically, inspection and surveillance Reports. The first part of this project is for Member States to commence exchanging Vessel Inspections in Port and Vessel Inspections at Sea by April 2024. As part of the work involved in this project our team worked with DAFM Information Management and Technology Division (IMT) to upgrade the technology and screens for how Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers (SFPOs) search for, view, save and print these Inspection Reports. These new screens will provide an extra tool for our SFPOs to assist them in their duties.

## Prior Notification of Landing

Masters of fishing vessels engaged in fishing for stocks subject to multiannual plan and fitted with ERS are required to provide prior notification of landing (PNO) as stated in EU and National legislation. This procedure is in place for both national and foreign vessels. Notification must be submitted to the competent authority at least 4 hours before the estimated time of entering port. Our team worked with DAFM Information Management and Technology Division to develop an additional module in IFIS to allow SFPOs to configure search criteria to sort PNO messages to provide consolidated data from PNOs on UK and other European Union Member States' vessels arriving at Irish Ports.



# Information and Communications Technology (CONTINUED)



*The SFPA is required under EU regulations, to have an automated cross-checking system in place, to verify and validate reported electronic logbook data against other reported data such as VMS and Sales Notes.*

## Validation System

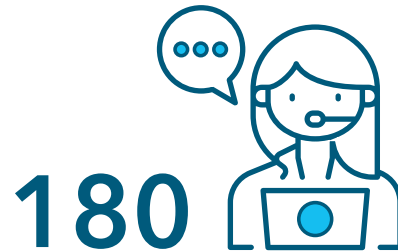
The SFPA is required under EU regulations, to have an automated cross-checking system in place, to verify and validate reported electronic logbook data against other reported data such as VMS and Sales Notes. Such a validation system allows for the immediate identification of inconsistencies, errors and missing information; and provides the control authority and its partners with the ability to adopt a risk-based approach to inspections. This year a project was launched to make improvements to this system such as making it more user friendly, limiting duplication of issues, highlighting higher priority issues etc. Our team assisted in developing the user requirements and also with user acceptance testing.

## OGCIO Migration

Preparation for the migration to the OGCIO's Managed Desktop Service was a significant project for the ICT unit in 2023. The Managed Desktop service is part of the Government's Build to Share programme which delivers a standard range of services, collaboration tools, platforms and applications across the public service. It is a significant project that will touch upon all areas of our ICT estate including laptops, file servers, access control, managed print, email, line of business applications, mobile phones, desk phones, government network connectivity etc. At the end of 2023, it was anticipated that this project would complete in early 2024 however it is now being rescheduled for delivery with remaining elements of the ICT strategy between 2024-2026.

## ICT Support

Our team provided ICT support to 180 SFPA staff across 8 national locations. This year we onboarded 22 new staff providing them with new equipment and support in familiarising themselves with key ICT systems.



**SFPA Staff across 8 national locations received ICT support from our ICT team.**



## GOAL 4: ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

**Sustain and develop strategic and operational capacity and capability to delivery organisational excellence.**



# Corporate Governance Report

## Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies

During the year, the SFPA continued its focus on effective corporate governance and ensured it remained in compliance with the requirements of the 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies ("the Code"). The SFPA submitted its 2022 Annual Report and Financial Statements in compliance with the Code and the SFPA compliance checklist with the Code was completed with no issues arising.

## Memorandum of Understanding between SFPA and DAFM

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SFPA and DAFM regarding the provision of data and services was signed in April 2018. The MOU specifies the timelines of delivery, level of detail and data quality required, and seeks to ensure that such requests for data are only sought where necessary, having regard to the resources necessary to service ad-hoc requests. During 2023, a total of 234 queries were received and processed compared with 190 in 2022. The majority of queries were data related.

## Authority

Mr. Paschal Hayes was appointed as Executive Chairperson of the SFPA on 14th January 2022. The Executive Chair of the SFPA leads and guides the organisation and is responsible for securing efficient and effective enforcement of sea-fisheries and food safety law; promoting compliance while detecting and deterring contraventions.

Michael Finn was appointed as an Authority member in October 2022 with responsibility for Operations.

Jonathan Hoare was appointed as an Authority member in October 2022 with responsibility for Corporate Affairs & Communications, Human Resources, and Food & Fisheries Support.

The SFPA has a management board that consists of Authority Members and two Principals Officers and supports the delivery of the work of the SFPA. There were 29 SFPA Management Board meetings in 2023.

## Gender Balance in the Board Membership

The SFPA does not have a Board however consists of an executive Authority of three members. All three members were appointed in 2022. As of 31st December 2023, all three members of the Authority were male. The Authority therefore does not meet the Government target of a minimum of 40% representation of each gender in the membership of State Boards.





## Information Access Request

### Freedom of Information

---

The SFPA is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2014 and has a guide for members of the public on how to access records under the FOI Act 2014 which is available on our website. In 2023, the SFPA received 13 FOI requests.

### Access to Information on the Environment

---

The European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) (AIE) Regulations 2007 to 2018 give legal rights to those seeking to access information on the environment from public authorities such as the SFPA. The regulations also oblige the SFPA as a public authority to be proactive in disseminating environmental information to the public. The SFPA received 1 request for information under AIE in 2023.

### General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

---

The SFPA has provided information on its website on how data subjects can access their personal information held by the SFPA. In 2023, the SFPA received 1 Subject Access Request.

## Protected Disclosures

The SFPA has developed detailed Guidance Documents for SFPA staff and for workers from outside of the SFPA who may wish to make a protected disclosure to a Member of the Authority under Statutory Instrument 339 of 2014. The guidance document was updated in 2023 to reflect legislative updates and is published on the SFPA website. The SFPA received no Protected Disclosures in 2023.

## Customer Charter

The SFPA has published a Customer Charter detailing our commitment to providing quality service to our customers and defines our service standards in clear and simple language. It also provides information on how customer input can contribute to the improvement of services provided and on issues such as complaints procedures and FOI.

# Corporate Governance Report (CONTINUED)

## Section 49 Complaints

The SFPA has appointed a complaints officer from outside of the Authority to consider and report independently on complaints made under Section 49 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006. A complaint may be submitted to the Complaints Officer and details on how to make a complaint are published on the SFPA website. Complaints under this procedure may only relate to the enforcement of sea-fisheries or food safety law and must be made to the Complaints Officer at any stage within 28 days of the event. Complaints may be made on behalf of an individual by their Producer Organisation or additional recognised representative organisation. The Act states that complaints will not be considered if:

- a. it relates to any matter which is the subject of proceedings before a court or other tribunal;
- b. it is the subject of a complaint to the Ombudsman or an appeal to the Information Commissioner, or;
- c. it is not made to a Complaints Officer within 28 days after the subject matter of the complaint arose.

The Complaints Officer submitted one report to the Authority in 2023.

## Provision of Information to Members of the Oireachtas

In 2023, the SFPA received no request for the provision of information directly from Members of the Oireachtas. 38 Parliamentary Questions were redirected from the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine to the SFPA, and the SFPA responded directly to the relevant Member of the Oireachtas.

## Public Sector Duty

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 places a positive duty on public sector bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights in our daily work. This is referred to as "The Public Sector Duty".

The SFPA is committed to the public service core values of equality, respect, and fairness. The SFPA has a Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Policy to ensure the organisation's commitment to the development and implementation of improved measures to promote and support the employment of persons with disabilities and our commitment to working together to maintain a workplace environment that reflects the spirit of equal opportunities, free from prohibited or inappropriate conduct and one where SFPA staff will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity.

## Official Languages Act 2003

We have complied with our obligations relating to the Official Languages Act 2003 to date.

A senior member of management has been appointed to ensure compliance, we respond to all written communication in the official language through which it is received and we have met our obligations in relation to advertising in the Irish language (advertising spend and use of Irish language media)

In 2023, one complaint was received by the SFPA via An Choimisinéar Teanga.

## Climate Action Mandate

The Climate Action Plan 2021 (CAP21) envisages the public sector leading by example on climate action to reach the target of reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and becoming climate neutral no later than 2050.

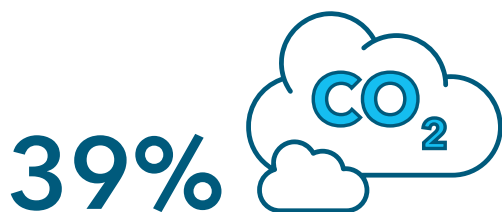
To support public sector bodies leading by example, a Public Sector Climate Action Mandate applies to public bodies covered by the CAP21 decarbonisation targets. As required under this mandate in 2022, the SFPA appointed a Climate and Sustainability Champion, Jonathan Hoare, and a Sustainability Lead, Yvonne Grant.

## Achieving Our Targets - Progress to Date

All Public Sector bodies are required to report to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland annually on their energy usage and actions taken to reduce consumption in accordance with SI 426 of 2014 (and previously with SI 542 of 2009).

This allows SEAI to track progress towards national energy reduction targets. The SFPA reports annually on energy consumption for all fuel types (electricity, thermal fuels and transport fuels (including fossil and renewables)) at an organisational level.

The public sector has a target of improving its energy efficiency by 50% and reducing its energy-related greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030. The latest report, 2023 Annual Report on Public Sector Energy Efficiency Performance, shows that energy consumption in the public sector decreased by 51 GWh, or 1%, between 2021 and 2022. Final energy consumption decreased by 1% across the public sector between 2021 and 2022.



**Reduction in overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since the baseline year.**

The SFPA achieved energy savings of 47.1% lower against the 2009 baseline by the end of 2022. In 2023, carbon emissions associated with air travel increased by over one third, however overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions decreased by 39% since the baseline year. Heating oil showed an increase in 2023 of 66% despite proactive management of heating controls in head office. Petrol used in RIBs decreased by 38%, mainly due to poor weather conditions.

# “”

*The public sector has a target of improving its energy efficiency by 50% and reducing its energy-related greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030.*

The SFPA has identified several decarbonisation projects. All new facilities fit out projects will incorporate energy efficiency initiatives in the planning phase to maximise opportunities to achieve our targets in the coming decade.

When procuring new utility vehicles in Ports, EV models will be given preference and EV charge points are being installed in all Ports.

International air travel, as well as road travel nationally will be closely monitored and managed to ensure that only travel which is considered necessary is undertaken.

# Audit and Risk Committee Report

This report of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) provides a summary of its salient activities and outputs for the Financial Year (FY) ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2023.

## Membership of the ARC

Mr. Peter G. Cowap - Chair

Mr. Pat Farrell

Mr. Shane McCarthy

Mr. Rav Vithaldas

Mr. Christopher Reynolds

In February 2023, Mr Sean Angland stepped down from the Committee. We wish to formally acknowledge and express the Committee's thanks to Sean for his invaluable service and wise counsel over several years on behalf of the Committee and in support of the Authority's endeavours. Sean was succeeded in September 2023 by Mr Chris Reynolds, who brings a distinctive and complementary set of skills and experience, which Chris is already bringing to bear on the Committee's programme of work.

## Committee Meetings

The ARC's Terms of Reference require the Committee to meet on at least four occasions each FY. The Committee met on 6 occasions in FY 2023, namely, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 17<sup>th</sup> April, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 6<sup>th</sup> November and 11<sup>th</sup> December (all in Clonakilty at SFPA HQ). The Committee also met on 6<sup>th</sup> October (virtually) to assist with the development of the Authority's Corporate Strategy for the period 2024-2026.

In addition, the Committee conducted its annual self-assessment evaluation of its own performance post the last ARC meeting of 2023 in Clonakilty. The Committee actively engaged with all key stakeholders throughout the Financial Year with the support of the Authority Chair and the newer Authority Members, who have provided substantive contributions to the Committee's undertakings, together with the Director of Finance, Director of Trade and Audit, the Transformation Lead, HR Director, Executive Managers of Operations and the Executive Manager of ICT.

The Committee continued to oversee the provision of outsourced internal audit via Deloitte in the final year of their appointment and met (virtually) with the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) at the November ARC.

The Committee again wish to acknowledge the indispensable Secretariat support provided by the Authority, primarily contributed through Ms Linda Deane during 2023.

## Roles and Responsibilities of the ARC

The ARC provided guidance and support in facilitating the Authority's executive management responsibilities and sources of assurance, giving effect to the requirements of the Code of Practice (for the Governance of State Bodies - 2016) relating inter alia to:

- The integrity of the Financial Statements including the Financial Reporting Process;
- The Risk Management Process;
- The System of Internal Control;
- The relationship with the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG);
- The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority's processes and internal controls for monitoring compliance with Official Controls in the areas of Sea-Fisheries and Seafood Safety, together with all other applicable laws and regulations;
- The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority Code of Conduct and, as appropriate, the Authority's conduct of anti-Fraud and Protected Disclosure Programmes and related processes;
- Performance of the Authority's Technical and Corporate Internal Audit functions, whereby the provision of professional services continues to be outsourced;

The ARC is responsible for advising the Authority on whether an appropriate regime of internal control is in operation but not for the formulation or implementation of such a regime.

### The noteworthy areas focused on by the Audit and Risk Committee during 2023 included:

1. Reviewing the continuing post-Brexit implementation impact on the Authority's Operational and Regulatory Trade Compliance;
2. Assessing the further significant progress of the Authority's Organisational Capability and Transformation Programme;
3. Evaluating the status of the implementation of the Authority's revised Permanent Control Plan as approved by the EU Commission;
4. Appraising the progress of the development of Authority's Data and ICT Strategies;
5. Oversight of the Internal Audit Plan for 2023, including Internal Audits and Assurance work focused on the Internal Controls Review and Cyber Security;
6. Oversight of the implementation of the Authority's Technical Internal Audit (TIA) Plan, including selected inspections (e.g. Sea-Fisheries (Landing Obligations) and Seafood Safety (e.g. Food Incident Management)) and remediation status on findings for prior audits, additionally identifying a 3-year rolling programme of selected audits as identified via a comprehensive review of the existing audit and risk universes.
7. Under the auspices of TIA function assisted by external practitioners, an audit was performed to enable the Authority, following an exhaustive and iterative process, to satisfy the requirements for Independent Scrutiny (as outlined in Art.6 of EU Regulation 2017/625 and the associated explicit Guidance provisions contained in 2021/C 66/02).
8. Reviewing the Annual Statement of Internal Control for 2023 and associated Report and Financial Statements and other significant activities pertaining to the Finance Unit, including the Procurement Programme;
9. Examine the Authority's Programme for Senior Management Assurance Statements via selected presentations;
10. Engaging with the Comptroller and Auditor General, both on the completion of the 2023 Audit and reviewing with them their Audit Planning approach for Financial Year 2024;
11. Injecting further oversight and scrutiny of the Authority's management and remediation of outstanding audit findings and corrective actions.

### Risk Management

As an integral core component of the Audit and Risk Committee mandate, the Committee reviews the effectiveness of the Authority's Risk Management Programme on an ongoing basis.

During 2023 the Authority determined to conduct an evaluation of the fitness for purpose of the critical elements of the Risk Management Framework, including Risk Categorisation, Appetite, Policy and Risk Register templates. This timely exercise is being orchestrated by EY and also includes the implementation of a new Internal Control Framework bolstered by an updated Manager Assurance Statement process.

The Committee had the benefit of engaging with the EY team at the December ARC.

In the interim, the Committee is satisfied that the nature, spectrum and velocity of risks currently identified in the SFFPA's Corporate Risk Register represent an accurate picture of the Authority's primary risks.

“ ”

*During 2023 the Authority determined to conduct an evaluation of the fitness for purpose of the critical elements of the Risk Management Framework, including Risk Categorisation, Appetite, Policy and Risk Register templates.*

# Audit and Risk Committee Report (CONTINUED)

## Priorities and Work Programme for 2024

The Committee's programme of work for 2024 will include the following components:

1. Overseeing the deliverables of the SFPA Internal Audit Plan, together with the transitioning of Mazars, the newly appointed outsourced Internal Audit provider;
2. Evaluating the Technical Audit Programme for 2024 and assessing outcomes;
3. Ongoing review of the implementation and execution of the Risk Management Framework deliverables, with continuing engagement with EY, and in particular understanding how the enhancements to a 'culture of risk management' is being embedded;
4. Engage with the Comptroller and Auditor General in delivering audit satisfaction;
5. Assess emerging outcomes of the permanent Control Plan in order to understand and assess their potential impact on the Authority's operational resilience and compliance with the EU OC Regime;
6. Review of the Annual Statement of Internal Control for the Authority and associated Report and Financial Statements for 2023, in addition to other major activities within the Finance function, including Procurement;
7. Continue to provide oversight of the Authority's management and remediation of outstanding audit findings and corrective actions;
8. Appraise the emerging potential impact for the Committee's work of both the new Corporate Strategy '24-26' and the outputs of the culture audit being performed as part of the Transformation Programme.

## Conclusion

The Members of the Audit and Risk Committee wish to acknowledge the positive and constructive engagement and assistance during the year of the staff of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority.



*The Committee would also wish to recognise the contribution made to both the Authority's and Committee's endeavours by Deloitte during their tenure as outsourced professional services provider of internal audit.*

The Committee would also wish to recognise the contribution made to both the Authority's and Committee's endeavours by Deloitte during their tenure as outsourced professional services provider of internal audit.

The Committee's efforts are greatly assisted by the periodic sector-specific briefings and operational updates facilitated by the Authority which form a vital contributor to the Committee's understanding of the Industry, for which the SFPA is the Competent Authority.

By way of conclusion, the Audit and Risk Committee, on whose behalf this report is prepared, is satisfied that, in general, there are adequate systems of internal control, risk management and sources of assurance.

**Mr. Peter G. Cowap**  
Chair - SFPA ARC



## GOAL 5: STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

To develop and support  
SFPA's staff.



### Organisational Structure and Culture

The Human Resources business unit is responsible for the delivery of all aspects of the human resources function, health and safety and facilities services to the organisation.

The HR and H&S team completed a successful year, with some key achievements in 2023.

Overall headcount grew to 180, including the replacement of some roles which were vacated due to retirements and resignations during 2022, as well as the creation of new posts. 25 posts were filled, including Chief Information Officer, Executive Manager Operations, Executive Manager Project Management Office, Head of Data Management and Head of Legal Services.

The Senior Management Team experienced significant change between 2022 and 2023 with 60% of SMT members being new to the organisation or newly promoted. A key focus for the year was onboarding and integrating these new managers.

A new three person Senior Operations Management structure was introduced in March 2023. The new structure assists with balancing workload across the Operations function, provides additional support to the Senior Port Officers and will help to ensure new processes are fully adopted and embedded in Ports.

A HR Business Partner model was also implemented during 2023 to further strengthen the HR support we provide to our colleagues. Each HR Business Partner is assigned an area of the business in Operations or Head Office functions. This will allow the HRBP to build meaningful partnerships with the line managers, and to support each manager with their people management and leadership responsibilities.

A Learning and Development Strategy was rolled out in March. This project included the reviewing of the current state of L&D in the organisation, designing a high-level skills framework, and conducting a skills assessment to identify capability gaps.

The L&D strategy is based on the SFPA's values and strategic aims. A number of recommendations were identified as part of the strategy which will be implemented as part of our broader HR Strategy.

A key focus of the HR team during 2023 was the roll out of a Talent Management system encompassing a Learning Management System and an online Performance Management System.

The migration of the Performance Management process online has facilitated increased engagement with the PMDS process and strengthened the individual goal setting process which is aligned with unit business plans and organisational goals.

The implementation of a Learning Management System supports the delivery of online training, provides a catalogue of learning content online, and centralises training records across the organisation.





Planning began for the next phase of HR’s move to online systems, with the procurement of a HRIS and a new time and attendance system.

The promotion of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) is a key priority for the HR Team and DEI training was rolled out to the organisation in February. We developed SFPA Diversity, Equality and Inclusion awareness training with the purpose of fostering a more inclusive workplace and raising awareness of the importance of DEI in the SFPA. This was followed later in the year with Disability Awareness Training for the management team.

Regular meetings were held with the representative unions during the year. An IR Protocol was concluded between the SFPA and Forsa. The purpose of the IR Protocol is to regulate relations between the parties and confirms their commitment to collaborative working and to preventing unnecessary escalation of issues wherever possible to protect the provision of service.

### Staffing Grade December 2023

A Sec	1
PO	4
AP	12
Eng II	2
Accountant II	1
HEO	28
EO	17
CO	22
SPO	9
SFPO	84
<b>Total Staff 31 December 2023</b>	<b>180</b>

### Culture Audit

The completion of a culture audit was the final recommendation to be implemented from the Organisational Review. We recognise that culture is one of, if not the, critical component in any organisational transformation. Our culture is the essence of how we interact and work across the SFPA and is inherent in everything we do rather than being an abstract concept or standalone activity. It is important that the SFPA Strategy, Operating Model and Culture are aligned so that we can effectively and efficiently deliver on our statutory mandate.

In 2023, to support the delivery of the culture audit we set up a Steering Group consisting of members from across the organisation, including a representative from Fórsa, to oversee the development of the survey. External support was procured to provide subject matter expertise and independent third party oversight to the process. The information gathering aspect of the audit was completed in Q4 2023. Outputs and recommendations are anticipated in Q1 2024.

The completion of the audit will allow us to gain insight into what it feels like to work in SFPA with a view to reinforcing our strengths and identifying areas for improvement. SFPA management is committed to engaging with all employees to identify and bed the critical behaviours to support cultural change. Our organisational culture will take time to evolve. The audit findings will provide a baseline against which progress can be monitored.

# Health and Safety Report

The stated aim of the SFPA is that the safety, health, and welfare of all employees remains a 'paramount objective'. This is achieved through work practices that are safe, that are consistent with safe working protocols and are in accordance with legislation and public health guidelines. We work to always achieve this objective.

Health and Safety was demonstrated as a priority at all levels of the organisation.

Our Safety, Health, and Welfare programme in the SFPA remains proactive, with the input and support of Senior Port Officers, the H&S Committee, Safety Auditors, Fire Wardens, First Aid Responders, Mental Health First Aiders, and many more colleagues involved in safety roles within the organisation. Several meetings took place with the H&S Committee and Health and Safety was added as a standing item to Management meeting agendas.

In 2023, the SFPA delivered the IOSH Lead Safety Programme to the Senior Management team which encourages management to proactively maintain the safety of their teams and throughout the organisation.

A new online Health and Safety Management System was launched in September 2023 which provides the facility to report accidents and incidents online, assign H&S audit findings for close out and the facility to order PPCE online.

A full review of all Health and Safety documentation took place, including the SFPA Safety Statement, all H&S Standard Operating Procedures and Risk Assessments.

## SFPA Health and Safety outcomes

Throughout 2023 the SFPA successfully completed several objectives as follows.

#	Description	No. of Attendees
<b>General:</b> Throughout 2023, the SFPA delivered different Health and Safety related training courses / events for personnel through attendance on a mixture of (1) In-House, (2) On-Line, (3) Private and (4) Public courses, as outlined below;		
1	On-Line Safe Boarding Procedures	15
2	H&S Induction Training Courses	19
3	On-line Lone Working Training courses	184
4	Manual Handling Training Courses (Physical attendance)	25
5	1 X Lifejacket Awareness Training Courses (Practical Training)	35
6	IOSH Lead Safety Training course	14
7	PHECC (FAR Training courses)	2
8	2 x PHECC FAR (Refresher) training courses	13
9	1 x Fire Warden Training course	10
10	1 x Safety Rep Training Refresher courses	3
11	Health and Safety Rep (New Training)	3
12	DSE & Pregnancy Risk Assessments	26
13	Risk Assessment Training	10
14	Working at Height	50
15	Occupational Driving Course	55
16	Tetra Refresher	25

Note FAR (First Aid Response).

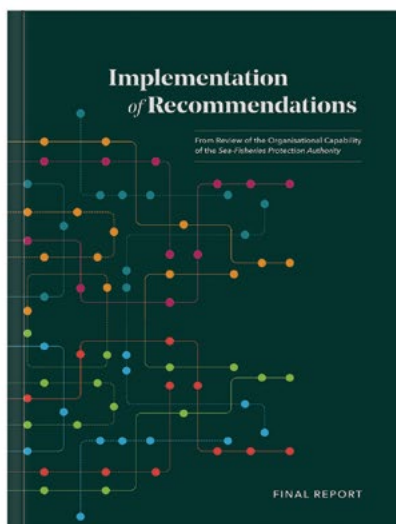
Note PHECC (Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council PHECC is an independent statutory agency with responsibility for standards, education, and training in the field of pre-hospital emergency).

# Organisational Capability Review

The implementation of the SFPA capability review, with a view to enhancing governance issues was included in the Programme for Government. The implementation of the recommendations from the Review will be instrumental in ensuring that the SFPA have the agility and capacity to deliver on its statutory mandate in a constantly changing operating environment.

The fulfilment of the actions to implement the Review was overseen by an Independent Advisory Board consisting of three experienced professionals with public & private sector backgrounds. Appointed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) in July 2020 the remit of the Advisory Board, in line with the Organisational Review recommendations, was to provide broad support to the Authority and to oversee the implementation of the Review recommendations. The Advisory Board met with the SFPA on over thirty occasions over the course of the implementation process.

The Advisory Board presented a closure report to the Secretary General of DAFM in July 2023. This report outlined the actions which were taken by the SFPA to deliver the forty-six recommendations detailed in the Review. The Advisory Board report indicated that, at that point, forty-three of the forty-six recommendations were fully implemented. The three remaining recommendations were in progress with some further actions required. These actions were completed in the latter half of 2023.



## Key strategic deliverables from the implementation of the review recommendations include:

- Revised organisational structure and mechanisms to enhance governance.
- The introduction of a new business planning framework, with an emphasis on accountability aligned with the delivery of organisational strategy.
- Resolution of a number of long running Industrial Relations matters in dispute and the establishment of a discussion forum and engagement protocol to support an effective working relationship between SFPA Management and the representative Union.
- Development of IT and data strategies with associated implementation plans to enable the SFPA to leverage data and technology to deliver on its core mandate in a more streamlined and agile manner.
- Investment in project management, quality, and data to promote cross organisational collaboration and support continuous improvement.

The completion of this body of work will see the finalisation of a major change programme across the SFPA that was initiated to fundamentally reset the organisation and ensure that it is well placed to deliver on its mandate in a complex and challenging environment. The evolution to a more efficient and more effective organisation involved and continues to involve, significant cooperation and commitment by all staff.

## Acknowledgement

It is important to acknowledge the assistance of those who supported and delivered the work required to implement the recommendations contained in the Review. The Advisory Board oversaw the change programme. Staff across the SFPA completed an exceptionally large quantum of work and partook in the internal steering group and working groups. Thanks also to the SFPA Consultative Committee and Fórsa for their collaboration and support. The delivery of substantive change would not have been possible without co-operation from all parties.

# REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



## Contents

General Information	51
Governance Statement and Authority Members' Report	52 - 55
Statement on Internal Control	56 - 58
Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General	59 - 60
Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves	61
Statement of Comprehensive Income	62
Statement of Financial Position	63
Statement of Cash Flows	64
Notes to the Financial Statements	65 - 76



## General Information

### Members of the Authority:

Mr. Paschal Hayes  
Mr. Michael Finn  
Mr. Jonathan Hoare

---

### Head Office:

National Seafood Centre  
Park Road  
Clogheen  
Clonakilty  
Co. Cork

---

### Telephone Number:

+353 23 88 59300

---

### Email:

[sfpa\\_info@sfpa.ie](mailto:sfpa_info@sfpa.ie)

---

### Website:

[sfpa.ie](http://sfpa.ie)

---

### Bank:

Bank of Ireland  
Clonakilty  
Co. Cork

---

### Auditors:

Comptroller and Auditor General  
3A Mayor Street Upper  
Dublin 1

---

# Governance Statement and Authority Members' Report

## Governance

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority was established under the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006. The functions of the Authority are set out in Section 43 of this Act. The Authority is responsible for ensuring good governance of the organisation. The regular day-to-day management, control and direction of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority is the responsibility of the Executive Chairperson, who is an Authority member and two other Authority members. The Authority members are also members of the Senior Management Team. The Senior Management Team follows the broad strategic direction set by the Authority and has a clear understanding of the key activities and decisions related to the organisation, and of any significant risks likely to arise. Under the provisions of Section 68 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006, the Executive Chairperson is accountable to the Public Accounts Committee and the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

## Authority's Responsibilities

The work and responsibilities of the Authority are provided for in:

- the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006,
- other relevant legislation including; Health & Safety Law, Employment Law, Data Protection Law, Freedom of Information Law, Sea-Fisheries Law and Food Safety Law,
- the public Financial Procedures published by the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform,
- the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016,
- the Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreement with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine 2021-2023,
- the Service Contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, and
- the Service Level Agreement with the Department of Defence.

Matters specifically reserved for Authority decision are set out in the organisation's Corporate Governance Policies and Procedures.

Section 65 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 requires the Authority to keep, in such form as may be approved by the Minister for the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, all proper and usual accounts of money received and expended by it.

In preparing these financial statements, the Authority is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently,
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that it will continue in operation, and
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

The Authority is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, its financial position and enables it to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 65 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006. The maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information on the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority's website is the responsibility of the Authority.

The Authority is responsible for approving the annual plan and budget. An evaluation of the performance of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority by reference to the annual plan and budget has been carried out.

The Authority is also responsible for safeguarding its assets and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Authority considers that the financial statements of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority give a true and fair view of the financial performance and the financial position of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority at 31 December 2023.

# Governance Statement and Authority Members' Report (CONTINUED)

## Authority Structure

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority does not have a Board but currently comprises a three-member Executive Authority. One of the members of the Authority is the Executive Chairperson. The table below details the Authority members.

Authority Member	Role	Date Appointed from/to
Mr. Paschal Hayes	Executive Chairperson	14 January 2022 to 13 January 2029
Mr. Michael Finn	Authority Member	03 October 2022 to 02 October 2029
Mr. Jonathan Hoare	Authority Member	03 October 2022 to 02 October 2029

## Schedule of Attendance

A schedule of attendance at Authority Meetings is set out below. Authority Meetings were held on 13 February 2023, 22 May 2023, 06 September 2023 and 12 December 2023.

### Authority Meetings

Number of Meetings	4
Paschal Hayes	4
Michael Finn	4
Jonathan Hoare	4

## Audit and Risk Committee

The Authority has established an Audit and Risk Committee which comprises five independent non-executive members. The role of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is to support the Authority in relation to its responsibilities relating to risk, control, and governance and associated assurance. The ARC is independent from the financial management of the organisation. In particular, the Committee ensures that the internal control systems including audit activities are monitored actively and independently. The ARC reports to the Authority formally in writing annually.

During 2023, the members of the Audit and Risk Committee were: Peter Cowap, Chairperson, Seán Angland, Pat Farrell, Rav Vithaldas, Shane McCarthy and Chris Reynolds. There were six meetings of the ARC in 2023.

Seán Angland resigned from the ARC on 10 February 2023. Chris Reynolds was appointed to the ARC on 01 September 2023.

Rav Vithaldas was reappointed to the ARC for a further five-year term commencing on 04 September 2023.

## Schedule of Attendance, Fees and Expenses

A schedule of attendance at the Audit and Risk Committee meetings for 2023 is set out below including the fees and expenses received by each ARC member:

Audit & Risk Committee		Fees 2023 €	Expenses 2023 €
Number of Meetings	6		
Peter Cowap, Chair	6	2,414	547
Pat Farrell	3	848	1,757
Rav Vithaldas	6	1,697	233
Shane McCarthy	5	1,414	-
Chris Reynolds	3	848	935
		<b>7,221</b>	<b>3,472</b>

# Governance Statement and Authority Members' Report (CONTINUED)

## Review of the Organisational Capability of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

Government policy as expressed in their strategy "Civil Service Renewal Plan" provides for the implementation of a programme of organisational reviews, the purpose being:

'To embed a culture of regular and objective assessments of the capacity and capability of each Department to achieve its objectives and take the necessary action to close any gaps'. In 2019, the Authority commissioned a Review of the Organisational Capability of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority. The principal objective of the review is to contribute to the ongoing and future development of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority so that it is recognised as an agency of excellence and role model for other agencies.

An Organisational Capability Review was completed by external service providers and a report issued on 3 April 2020. An independent advisory board was appointed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to support the Authority and to oversee the implementation of the Review recommendations. The Advisory Board completed their work and submitted their final report to the Secretary General of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in July 2023. The Advisory Board report indicated that, at that point, forty-three of the forty-six recommendations were fully implemented. The three remaining recommendations were in progress with some further actions required. These actions were completed in the latter half of 2023. The implementation of the review recommendations has seen the organisation take significant strides in reforming its management and operational structures, its industrial relations engagement, its internal and external communications and its relationships with stakeholders.

## Disclosures Required by Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority has complied with corporate governance requirements, including those of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies ("the Code"), as published by the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform in August 2016.

The following disclosures are required by the Code:

## Employee Short-Term Benefits Breakdown

Employees' short-term benefits in excess of €60,000 are categorised into the following bands:

Range From	To	Number of employees 2023	2022
€60,000	- €69,999	20	13
€70,000	- €79,999	14	10
€80,000	- €89,999	31	38
€90,000	- €99,999	16	7
€100,000	- €109,999	7	5
€140,000	- €149,999	-	1
€160,000	- €169,999	1	-

Note: For the purposes of this disclosure, short-term employee benefits in relation to services rendered during the reporting period include salary, allowances, overtime and other payments made to the employee, but exclude employer's PRSI.

## Consultancy Costs

Consultancy costs include the cost of external advice to management and exclude outsourced 'business-as-usual' functions.

	2023 €	2022 €
Financial/accounting advice	-	35,713
Human resources	25,514	25,514
Legal advice	100,432	214,329
Public relations	7,738	90,985
Business improvement projects	139,437	22,140
Strategy development /implementation <sup>1</sup>	109,356	81,426
EMFF/AF project management support	456,083	932,705
<b>Total consultancy costs</b>	<b>838,560</b>	<b>1,402,812</b>
Consultancy costs charged to the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves	838,560	1,402,812
<b>Total</b>	<b>838,560</b>	<b>1,402,812</b>

<sup>1</sup> In 2023, strategy development/implementation consultancy costs includes the cost of the external service provider engaged to assist with the development of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority's Statement of Strategy for 2024-2026. The prior year 2022 costs includes the cost of the external service provider engaged to undertake the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategy review of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority.



# Governance Statement and Authority Members' Report (CONTINUED)

## Legal Costs and Settlements

The table below provides a breakdown of amounts recognised as expenditure in the reporting period in relation to legal costs, settlements and conciliation and arbitration proceedings. This does not include expenditure in relation to general legal advice received by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority which is disclosed in Consultancy costs above.

	2023 €	2022 €
Legal fees - legal proceedings	201,798	336,281
Settlements	40,000	63,986
<b>Total</b>	<b>241,798</b>	<b>400,267</b>

Included in these legal costs is an amount of €161,416 (2022: €Nil) in relation to on-going matters involving the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority.

## Travel and Subsistence Expenditure

Travel and subsistence expenditure is categorised as follows:

	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Domestic</b>		
Authority <sup>2</sup>	26,034	13,388
Employees <sup>3</sup>	811,961	710,318
Audit & Risk Committee	3,472	1,173
Consultative Committee	4,351	3,375
<b>International</b>		
Authority <sup>2</sup>	2,733	1,692
Employees <sup>3</sup>	50,220	25,039
<b>Total</b>	<b>898,771</b>	<b>754,985</b>

## Hospitality Expenditure

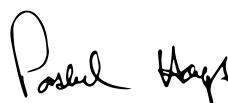
The Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves includes the following hospitality expenditure:

	2023 €	2022 €
Staff hospitality	-	-
External stakeholder hospitality	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## Statement of Compliance

The Authority has adopted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) and has put procedures in place to ensure compliance with its corporate governance responsibilities including those laid down in the Code, as they apply to the Authority. Where other relevant legislation including the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 specifies corporate governance obligations, these supersede the provisions of the Code.

On behalf of the Authority



**Mr. Paschal Hayes**  
EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON  
18 June 2024

<sup>2</sup> Includes travel and subsistence of €27,538 (2022: €15,137) paid directly to Authority members relating to 2023. A balance of €1,920 (2022: €459) relates to expenditure paid by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority on behalf of the Authority members. During 2023, €691 (2022: €516) of the total amount of travel and subsistence costs for the Authority members was reimbursed to the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority by EU agencies.

<sup>3</sup> During 2023, €20,886 (2022: €6,908) of the total amount of travel and subsistence costs for employees was reimbursed to the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority by EU agencies.

# Statement on Internal Control

## Scope of Responsibility

On behalf of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority I acknowledge the Authority's responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated. This responsibility takes account of the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

## Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a tolerable level rather than eliminate it. The system can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner.

The system of internal control, which accords with guidance issued by the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, has been in place in the Authority for the year ended 31 December 2023 and up to the date of approval of the financial statements except for the internal control issues outlined below.

## Capacity to Handle Risk

The Authority has established an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) comprising five independent non-executive members with financial, audit, governance and technical expertise, one of whom is the Chair. The ARC met six (6) times in 2023.

The Authority has outsourced its internal audit function to a professional services firm. Internal audit operates in accordance with the Authority's internal audit charter and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016). The programme of work performed by internal audit is agreed in advance with the ARC. The programme is reviewed annually and revised as and when required. The current internal audit work programme takes account of areas of potential risk identified by the organisation having regard to its strategic objectives and risk management framework. All internal audit reports are considered by the Authority and ARC. These reports highlight deficiencies or weaknesses, if any, in the system of internal control and the recommended corrective actions to be taken where necessary.

The Authority has developed a risk management policy which sets out its risk appetite, the risk management processes in place and details the roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to risk. This policy has been issued to all staff who are expected to work within the Authority's risk management policies, to alert management on emerging risks and control weaknesses and assume responsibility for risks and controls within their own area of work.

## Risk and Control Framework

The Authority has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, to mitigate those risks.

The Authority's Risk Management Policy complies with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016). The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority has appointed a Chief Risk Officer. Each business unit owns the risk management process for its area and updates its unit risk register. Each unit's risk register identifies the key risks facing the Authority and is subject to on-going review.

Risks are identified, assessed and measured according to their significance. Any risks deemed to be fundamental risks or exceeding a certain score will be included as part of the overall risk register for consideration and discussion by the Authority. This risk register is reviewed and updated by the Authority at least four times a year and subsequently presented to the ARC. The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level.

The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibility for operation of controls assigned to specific business units/managers. The Authority has taken steps to ensure an appropriate control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- procedures for all key business processes have been documented,
- clearly defined management responsibilities and powers,
- there is a comprehensive budgeting system with an annual budget which is reviewed, approved and kept under review by the members of the Authority and senior executive management,
- regular reviews by the Authority and senior executive management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts,
- financial and operational responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability,
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of information and communication technology systems,
- there are systems in place to safeguard assets, and
- regular internal audit reviews on financial, operational and compliance controls and procedures.

# Statement on Internal Control (CONTINUED)

## Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Formal procedures have been established for monitoring control processes and control deficiencies are communicated to those responsible for taking corrective action and to management and the Authority members, where relevant, in a timely manner. I confirm that the following ongoing monitoring systems are in place:

- key risks and controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies,
- reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned, and
- there are regular reviews by Authority members and senior executive management of periodic and annual performance and financial reports which indicate performance against budgets/forecasts.

## Procurement

I confirm that the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines as set out by the Office of Government Procurement.

## Withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU)

Due to its regulatory role, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority is one of the key Marine agencies post the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. Significant resources have been put in place to implement the monitoring of landings from UK fishing vessels including providing services in 2023 to newly designated third country landing ports. The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority continues to operate the trade support measures that it has put in place to facilitate the import of seafood products from Great Britain. Substantial planning, policy interpretation, operational preparedness and industry outreach communications are underway to support industry for the introduction of a UK regulatory requirement for Pre-Notification and Export Health Certification of fishery products to Great Britain which came into effect from 31 January 2024.

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority is required to continue to provide additional certification, control and enforcement actions in the following areas as a result of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU: Import Consignments, Import Direct Landings, Export Consignments and Export Direct Landings. The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine designated an additional Irish port for fish landings by third country registered fishing vessels during 2023, in order to facilitate Northern Ireland registered vessels landing into Ireland. Dunmore East has been added to the list of so-designated ports.

## New Control Plan

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, in its capacity as the competent authority for sea-fisheries control has put in place a range of extensive measures to address the issues raised in a 2019 Administrative Inquiry initiated by the European Commission.

Under a new control plan which is in place since 01 January 2023, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority has implemented additional internal control measures to ensure that Ireland adheres to its obligations under the EU Common Fisheries Policy, including:

- appropriate guidance and training provided for operational staff members,
- there is appropriate oversight of port operations by Executive Managers,
- meetings and engagement with industry representatives,
- participation and representation in relevant European fora, and
- ongoing monitoring and review of the control plan carried out on a quarterly basis.

This control plan is a central component in Ireland receiving a derogation allowing 'weighing after transport' for 95% of its fishery products.

## Review of Effectiveness

The Authority's review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- the senior managers within the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority who have responsibility for the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority procedures and practices that uphold the internal control and assurance framework,
- the work of the Internal Auditor,
- the Audit and Risk Committee which oversees the work of the internal auditor,
- the work of External Auditors, including the Comptroller and Auditor General and European Commission, and
- oversight of management activity through the risk management system and compliance functions including health & safety and procurement.

The Statement on Internal Control has been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and the Authority members to ensure it accurately reflects the control system in operation during the reporting period.

I confirm that the Authority members conducted an annual review of the effectiveness of the internal controls for 2023, in February 2024.

# Statement on Internal Control (CONTINUED)

## Internal Control Issues - Details of Weaknesses in 2023

### 1. Data, data governance and ICT

The Capability Review Report of the SFFPA issued on 03 April 2020, made a number of recommendations in relation to inadequacies in the SFFPA's data management, data analytics capability and IT capability.

In 2023, an ICT strategy was completed. The strategy identified a number of recommendations including the development of IT infrastructure to support unified data systems, the transition to a new IT operating model and the eventual transition of IT infrastructure to the OGCIO. The investment required is significant and it will be a multi-annual programme. The SFFPA advanced the development of IT infrastructure to support unified data systems in Q1 2024 through a 'Digital Platform/Inspection Service' proof of concept (POC) project. This project will be followed by a procurement process for this key infrastructure in Q3/Q4 2024. The remaining elements of the ICT strategy will be delivered between 2024-2026. A data strategy and roadmap, that aligns with the ICT strategy, was also completed in 2023. Implementation of the data roadmap commenced in Q1 2024.

In 2023, a cyber security maturity assessment and a privacy maturity assessment were undertaken by the SFFPA's internal auditors. These reports identify a number of areas for improvement in the SFFPA's cyber security capabilities and data governance framework. Corrective action plans are being put in place to address the recommendations in both reports.

### 2. Executive Management

During 2022, there were significant changes in the Executive Management of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, due to a number of resignations and retirements and at 31 December 2022, there were five further vacancies in the Executive Management structure.

Since 31 July 2023, all vacancies in the Executive Management structure have been filled and it is now operating at full complement. The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority responded to this risk by ensuring that:

- appropriate guidance and training is provided for staff members who have taken on additional responsibilities,
- there is appropriate oversight of the areas by Senior Executive Managers,
- clear, documented procedures and roles are in place, and
- appropriate segregation of duties is maintained.

### 3. Fixed Assets

An internal audit and external C&AG audit identified a number of weaknesses in control over fixed assets and made a number of recommendations. There is a risk that all assets on the Fixed Asset Register are not tagged, that the Asset Tag listing is incomplete and that obsolete assets are not identified.

During 2023, the SFFPA conducted a physical inventory reconciliation of its assets at all locations and where necessary adjusted fixed asset values accordingly. In 2024, the SFFPA shall update its Fixed Asset Policy to ensure that appropriate internal controls are in place to monitor and track assets on an ongoing basis. Appropriate guidance and training shall be provided to relevant staff.

No other weaknesses in internal control were identified in relation to 2023 that require disclosure in the financial statements.

On behalf of the Authority



**Mr. Paschal Hayes**  
EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON  
18 June 2024

# Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General

## Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

### Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

#### Opinion on the financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority for the year ended 31 December 2023 as required under the provisions of section 65 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006. The financial statements comprise:

- the statement of income and expenditure and retained revenue reserves
- the statement of comprehensive income
- the statement of financial position
- the statement of cash flows, and
- the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority at 31 December 2023 and of its income and expenditure for 2023 in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 – The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

#### Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit of the financial statements in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. My responsibilities under those standards are described in the appendix to this report. I am independent of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

#### Report on information other than the financial statements, and on other matters

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority has presented certain other information together with the financial statements. This comprises an annual report, a governance statement and Authority members' report, and the statement on internal control. My responsibilities to report in relation to such information, and on certain other matters upon which I report by exception, are described in the appendix to this report.

I have nothing to report in that regard.



**Colette Drinan**

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE  
COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL  
26 June 2024

# Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CONTINUED)

## Appendix to the report

### Responsibilities of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority members

The governance statement and Authority members' report sets out the Authority members' responsibilities for:

- the preparation of annual financial statements in the form prescribed under section 65 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006
- ensuring that the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with FRS102
- ensuring the regularity of transactions
- assessing whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate, and
- implementing such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I am required under section 65 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 to audit the financial statements of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority and to report thereon to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

My objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so,

- I identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- I evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures.
- I conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, on whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority to cease to continue as a going concern.
- I evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

I report by exception if, in my opinion,

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- the accounting records were not sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records.

### Information other than the financial statements

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information presented with those statements, and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, I am required under the ISAs to read the other information presented and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or with knowledge obtained during the audit, or if it otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

### Reporting on other matters

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation. I report if I identify material matters relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

I seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit. I report if I identify any material instance where public money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them.

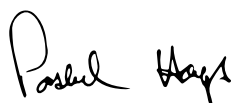
# Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
<b>INCOME</b>			
Oireachtas Grants	2	18,272,000	17,063,000
EMFF/AF Project Income	3/12	3,423,213	3,788,299
Net Deferred Funding for Pensions	15 c	3,182,000	3,825,000
Less: Pension contributions refundable to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform	15 a	(610,000)	(584,000)
Fee and Other Income	4	89,423	105,415
Profit on Disposal of Fixed Assets		-	4,000
		24,356,636	24,201,714
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Employee Benefits	5	12,428,946	11,608,019
Retirement Benefit Costs	15 a	3,468,000	4,106,000
Accommodation and Establishment	6	548,630	550,992
Support Services	7	1,297,561	1,006,374
General Administration	8	1,163,988	1,021,798
Professional Fees	9	4,421,194	4,907,686
Audit Fee		34,300	34,700
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets		603	-
Depreciation	10	364,439	491,658
		23,727,661	23,727,227
Surplus for year		628,975	474,487
Transfer from/(to) Capital Account	14	146,664	(107,098)
<b>Operating Profit for year</b>		<b>775,639</b>	<b>367,389</b>
Balance brought forward at 1 January		649,194	281,805
<b>Balance carried forward at 31 December</b>		<b>1,424,833</b>	<b>649,194</b>

All income and expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2023 and the previous year relate to continuing operations.

The Statement of Cash Flows and Notes 1 to 21 form part of these financial statements.



**Mr. Paschal Hayes**

EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON

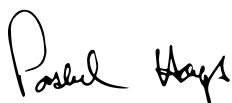
18 June 2024

# Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
Operating Profit for year		775,639	367,389
Experience (losses)/gains on retirement benefit scheme		(1,804,000)	214,000
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of retirement benefit scheme liabilities		(66,000)	23,118,000
Actuarial (losses)/gains on retirement benefit liabilities	15	(1,870,000)	23,332,000
Adjustment to deferred retirement benefit funding	15	1,870,000	(23,332,000)
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>775,639</b>	<b>367,389</b>

The Statement of Cash Flows and Notes 1 to 21 form part of these financial statements.



**Mr. Paschal Hayes**

EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON

18 June 2024

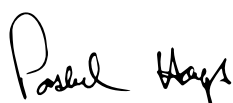


# Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Property, Plant and Equipment	10	994,557	1,141,221
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents		3,209,705	2,547,139
Receivables	11	162,971	223,365
		3,372,676	2,770,504
<b>Less Current Liabilities</b>			
Payables	12	1,551,955	1,698,422
Forfeiture Funds	13	395,888	422,888
		1,947,843	2,121,310
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		1,424,833	649,194
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities before Retirement Benefits</b>		<b>2,419,390</b>	<b>1,790,415</b>
Retirement Benefit Obligations	15 b	(57,033,000)	(51,981,000)
Deferred Retirement Benefit Funding Asset	15 e	57,033,000	51,981,000
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>2,419,390</b>	<b>1,790,415</b>
<b>Financed By:</b>			
Retained Revenue Reserves		1,424,833	649,194
Capital Account	14	994,557	1,141,221
		<b>2,419,390</b>	<b>1,790,415</b>

The Statement of Cash Flows and Notes 1 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

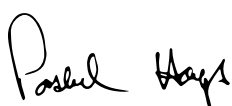


**Mr. Paschal Hayes**  
EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON  
18 June 2024

# Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>			
Operating Profit for year		775,639	367,389
Transfer (from)/to Capital Account	14	(146,664)	107,098
Depreciation	10	364,439	491,658
Loss/(profit) on Disposal of Fixed Assets		603	(4,000)
Decrease/(increase) in Receivables	11	60,394	(72,737)
(Decrease)/increase in Payables	12	(146,467)	419,240
Decrease in Forfeiture Funds	13	(27,000)	(9,962)
Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities		880,944	1,298,686
<b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>			
Payments to Acquire Fixed Assets	10	(218,378)	(598,756)
Proceeds from Sale of Fixed Assets		-	4,000
Net Cash Outflow from Investing Activities		(218,378)	(594,756)
Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents		662,566	703,930
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the Year		2,547,139	1,843,209
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents at the end of the Year</b>		<b>3,209,705</b>	<b>2,547,139</b>



**Mr. Paschal Hayes**

EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON

18 June 2024

# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 1. Accounting Policies

The basis of accounting and significant accounting policies adopted by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority are set out below. They have all been applied consistently throughout the year and for the preceding year.

### a) General Information

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority was established on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, under the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006. The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority is committed to the effective and fair regulation of the sea-fishing and seafood sectors that fall within its mandate. This means all fishing vessels operating within Ireland's 200-mile limit, Irish fishing vessels wherever they operate, and all seafood produced in Ireland wherever it is marketed.

### b) Statement of Compliance

The financial statements of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority for the year ended 31 December 2023 have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102, the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC).

### c) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis, under the historical cost convention and comply with the financial reporting standards of the FRC, except as indicated below.

The financial statements are in the form approved by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine with the concurrence of the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

The financial statements are prepared in Euro which is the functional currency of the Authority.

### d) Oireachtas Grants

Income arising from Oireachtas Grants is accounted for on a cash receipts basis.

### e) Fee Income

Fee income from fish processors is accounted for on a cash receipts basis. This fee income is generated from set charges for the approval of fishery establishments and fixed payment notices.

Fee income related to the mandatory application of fees for official controls provided for under EU Regulation 2017/625 is recognised on an accruals basis. Invoiced fee income owed by food business operators at the end of the financial year is recorded as Trade Debtors and shown as a Receivable on the Statement of Financial Position.

### f) The European Maritime and Fisheries/Aquaculture Fund (EMFF/AF) Project Income

Income received in relation to EMFF/AF EU projects is recognised on an accruals basis whereby the income is recognised in the accounting period in which the related expenditure is charged. Income received in advance is treated as deferred income and included within Payables on the Statement of Financial Position. Expenditure incurred where the related income has not been received is treated as accrued income and shown as a Receivable on the Statement of Financial Position.

### g) Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, plant and equipment are stated at their historical cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is charged to the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves on a straight line basis, at the rates set out below, so as to write off the assets, adjusted for residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows:-

Vehicles	20% per annum
IT, office equipment and software	33.33% per annum
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	20% per annum
Leasehold	10% per annum
Vessels and water separator	20% per annum
IT special projects	33.33% per annum

The residual value and useful lives of fixed assets are considered annually for indicators that these may have changed. Where such indicators are present, a review will be carried out of the residual value, depreciation method and useful lives, and these will be amended if necessary. Changes in depreciation rates arising from this review are accounted for prospectively over the remaining useful lives of the assets.

### h) Trade Debtors

Trade Debtors are recognised at fair value, less a provision for doubtful debts. The provision for doubtful debts is a specific provision and is established when there is objective evidence that SFPFA will not be able to collect all amounts owed to it. All movements in the provision for doubtful debts are recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves.

### i) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash consists of cash on hand and demand deposits.

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

**For the Year Ended 31 December 2023**

## **j) Foreign Currencies**

Transactions denominated in foreign currencies are translated into euro and recorded at the rate of exchange ruling at the dates of transactions.

## **k) Employee Benefits**

### **Short-term Benefits**

Short-term benefits include basic pay, allowances, overtime and holiday pay. They are recognised as an expense in the year in which they are incurred with the exception of the accrual element of basic pay which is currently not included in the short-term benefits figure. Accrued short-term benefits are included in the Payables figure on the Statement of Financial Position.

### **Retirement Benefits**

The Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act, 2006, provides that the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, shall make and carry out superannuation schemes in respect of the members of staff of the Authority as well as the Authority members. Pension contributions in respect of members of staff and Authority members are deducted and paid over to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The financial statements recognise the pension costs and liabilities in respect of members of staff and Authority members.

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority also operates the Single Public Services Scheme (Single Scheme) which is a defined benefit scheme for pensionable public servants appointed on or after 1 January 2013. Single Scheme members' contributions are paid over to the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

Pension scheme liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method. Pension costs reflect pension benefits earned by employees in the period and are shown net of staff pension contributions which are refundable to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in accordance with the funding arrangements. An amount corresponding to the pension charge is recognised as income to the extent that it is recoverable from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and offset by grants received in the year to discharge pension payments. Actuarial gains or losses arising from changes in actuarial assumptions and from experience surpluses and deficits are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year in which they occur and a corresponding adjustment is recognised in the amount recoverable from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Pension liabilities represent the present value of future pension payments earned by the staff to date. Deferred pension funding represents the corresponding asset to be recovered in future periods from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

## **l) Forfeiture Account**

Following the detention of a vessel on fisheries charges, a Court may order that a bond is to be provided by the vessel owners to cover potential liabilities and confiscation of catch and gear. The Authority hold such Court bonds made payable to the Authority until such time as directed by the Court to refund the bond to the vessel owner or to submit the bond to the Court.

## **m) Capital Account**

The Capital Account represents the unamortised value of income used by the Authority to acquire fixed assets.

## **n) Contingencies**

Contingent liabilities arising as a result of past events, are not recognised unless (i) it is not probable that there will be an outflow of resources or that the amount cannot be reliably measured at the reporting date or (ii) when the existence will be confirmed by the occurrence or non-occurrence of uncertain future events not wholly within the Authority's control. Contingent liabilities are disclosed in the financial statements unless the probability of an outflow is remote.

Contingent assets are not recognised. Contingent assets are disclosed in the financial statements when an inflow of economic benefits is probable.

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

## For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

### o) Critical Accounting Judgements and Estimates

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities at year end and expenses during the year.

Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experiences and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The Authority makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant effect on the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the financial statements are discussed below:

#### **Going Concern**

There is no material uncertainty regarding the Authority's ability to meet its liabilities as they fall due, and to continue as a going concern. On this basis, the Authority considers it appropriate to prepare financial statements on a going concern basis. Accordingly, these financial statements do not include any adjustments to the carrying amounts and classification of assets and liabilities that may arise if the Authority was unable to continue as a going concern.

#### **Depreciation and Residual Values**

The Authority members have reviewed the asset lives and associated residual values of all fixed asset classes, and in particular, the useful economic life and residual values of fixtures and fittings and have concluded that asset lives and residual values are appropriate.

#### **Impairment of Property, Plant and Equipment**

Assets that are subject to amortisation are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less cost to sell and value in use. For the purpose of assessing impairment, assets are grouped at the lowest levels for which there are separately identifiable cash flows (cash generating units). Non-financial assets that suffered impairment are reviewed for possible reversal of the impairment at each reporting date.

#### **Provision for Doubtful Debts**

The Authority makes an estimate of the recoverable value of trade debtors and uses estimates based on historical experience in determining the level of debts, which may not be collected. These estimates include such factors as the current rating of the debtor, the ageing profile of debtors and historical experience. The level of provision required is reviewed on an on-going basis.

#### **Retirement Benefit Obligation**

The assumptions underlying the actuarial valuations for which the amounts recognised in the financial statements are determined (including discount rates, rates of increase in future compensation levels, mortality rates and healthcare cost trend rates) are updated annually based on current economic conditions, and for any relevant changes to the terms and conditions of the pension and post-retirement plans.

The assumptions can be affected by:

- (i) the discount rate, changes in the rate of return on high-quality corporate bonds;
- (ii) future compensation levels, future labour market conditions; and
- (iii) healthcare cost trend rates, the rate of medical cost inflation in relevant regions.

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 2. Oireachtas Grants

Funding was made available under subhead D.6 of Vote 30 Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the year. The funds are used for pay, general administration and capital costs.

	2023 €	2022 €
Oireachtas Grants received	<b>18,272,000</b>	<b>17,063,000</b>

## 3. EMFF/AF Project Income

The European Maritime and Fisheries/Aquaculture Fund (EMFF/AF) is one of the five European Structural and Investment Funds which complement each other to deliver more jobs and growth in the EU. Funding was made available under the Operational Programme of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and supported by EMFF/AF in the year. EMFF/AF project receipts in 2023 were €3,350,562 (2022: €3,869,802):

EMFF/AF project expenditure breakdown	2023 €	2022 €
Union Priority 3 - Fostering the implementation of the CFP (Note 12)	<b>3,423,213</b>	<b>3,788,299</b>

## 4. Fee and Other Income

	2023 €	2022 €
Regulation 625 fee income	83,460	103,615
Awards	3,500	-
Other income	2,463	1,800
	<b>89,423</b>	<b>105,415</b>

Awards income relates to the award of costs following the outcome of legal proceedings.

## 5. Remuneration

### (a) Aggregate Employee Benefits and related expenses

The number of staff employed by the Authority at 31 December 2023 was 180 (2022: 167). The average number of employees in the Authority during the year was 177. Aggregate employee benefits and related costs were as follows:

	2023 €	2022 €
Staff short-term benefits	11,261,060	10,276,480
Lump sum benefits	61,052	279,137
Employer's contribution to social welfare	1,191,886	1,083,536
Social welfare costs recovered	(85,052)	(31,134)
	<b>12,428,946</b>	<b>11,608,019</b>

Additional superannuation contributions of €404,692 (2022: €375,383) have been deducted from staff and €404,692 (2022: €375,383) paid over to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in 2023.

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 5. Remuneration (continued)

### (b) Staff Short-Term Benefits

	2023 €	2022 €
Basic pay	9,573,907	8,756,260
Allowances	1,602,626	1,435,438
Overtime	84,527	84,782
	<b>11,261,060</b>	<b>10,276,480</b>

### (c) Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel in the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority consists of the three members of the Authority including the Chairperson of the Authority and two Senior Executive Managers. The total value of employee benefits for key management personnel is set out below:

	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Salary</b>	<b>545,087</b>	<b>403,165</b>

This does not include the value of retirement benefits earned in the period.

### (d) Chief Executive's Remuneration

The role of Chief Executive is performed by a full time Chairperson of the Authority in accordance with the relevant legislation establishing the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority.

	2023 €	2022 €
Basic pay	<b>160,154</b>	<b>140,577</b>

The Chairperson is a member of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority Superannuation Scheme for Authority members and the entitlements in that regard do not extend beyond the terms of the model public service pension scheme. The value of retirement benefits earned in the period is not included above.

## 6. Accommodation and Establishment

	2023 €	2022 €
Rent	192,537	173,870
Lighting and heating	92,879	119,743
Maintenance - premises	200,286	194,679
Office furnishings	34,508	50,301
Office expenses	28,420	12,399
	<b>548,630</b>	<b>550,992</b>

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 7. Support Services

	2023 €	2022 €
IT hardware and software	412,698	300,401
IT consumables and services	272,791	189,936
Staff development, training and support	284,629	304,178
Maintenance - vehicles	12,583	11,875
Official control analysis	146,464	83,712
Safety and control equipment	168,396	116,272
	<b>1,297,561</b>	<b>1,006,374</b>

## 8. General Administration

	2023 €	2022 €
Stationery and office supplies	154,449	107,626
Telephone	64,512	92,416
Insurance	8,445	5,889
Room hire	10,916	39,736
Travel and subsistence	909,603	765,769
Subscriptions	4,704	5,652
Provision for doubtful debts	6,514	-
Other operating costs	4,845	4,710
	<b>1,163,988</b>	<b>1,021,798</b>

## 9. Professional Fees

	2023 €	2022 €
Legal and professional	4,086,721	4,495,783
Accountancy	113,264	87,302
Recruitment	179,988	157,011
Public relations and marketing	41,221	167,590
	<b>4,421,194</b>	<b>4,907,686</b>



# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 10. Property, Plant and Equipment

	Vehicles €	IT, office equipment & software €	Furniture, fixtures & fittings €	Leasehold improvements €	IT special projects €	Vessels & water separator €	Total €
<b>Cost</b>							
Balance at 01/01/23	242,517	2,684,109	552,378	1,666,557	2,444,555	441,429	8,031,545
Acquisitions	48,785	14,179	43,698	87,805	23,911	-	218,378
Disposals	-	(1,014,498)	(2,159)	(69,818)	(310,909)	-	(1,397,384)
Balance as at 31/12/23	291,302	1,683,790	593,917	1,684,544	2,157,557	441,429	6,852,539
<b>Depreciation</b>							
Balance at 01/01/23	208,186	2,423,465	443,394	961,678	2,442,303	411,298	6,890,324
Charge in year	17,650	166,309	37,530	131,004	3,578	8,368	364,439
Disposals	-	(1,014,447)	(2,159)	(69,266)	(310,909)	-	(1,396,781)
Balance as at 31/12/23	225,836	1,575,327	478,765	1,023,416	2,134,972	419,666	5,857,982
Net book value as at 31/12/23	65,466	108,463	115,152	661,128	22,585	21,763	994,557
Net book value as at 01/01/23	34,331	260,644	108,984	704,879	2,252	30,131	1,141,221

## 11. Receivables

	2023 €	2022 €
Trade debtors	10,315	7,221
Other debtors and accrued income	52,768	42,647
Prepayments	99,888	173,497
	<b>162,971</b>	<b>223,365</b>

A provision for doubtful debts amounting to €6,514 has been offset against trade debtors and charged to the Statement of Income and Expenditure for 31 December 2023 (2022: €Nil).

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 12. Payables

	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade payables	24,476	89,459
Accruals	452,338	382,867
EMFF/AF deferred income	8,852	81,503
PAYE/PRSI/USC/LPT	380,743	340,613
VAT/RCT	9,102	65,848
Professional services withholding tax	81,343	100,201
Other payroll accruals	595,101	637,931
	<b>1,551,955</b>	<b>1,698,422</b>

Tax and social insurance are subject to the terms of the relevant legislation.

## 13. Forfeiture Funds

	2023 €	2022 €
Forfeiture funds held at 1 January (gross of bank charges)	422,888	432,850
Add Receipts	3,000	9,198
Less Payments	(30,000)	(19,160)
<b>Forfeiture funds held at 31 December</b>	<b>395,888</b>	<b>422,888</b>

## 14. Capital Account

	2023 €	2022 €
Balance at 1 January	1,141,221	1,034,123
Transfer from Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves		
- Income used to purchase fixed assets	218,378	598,756
- Amount released on disposal of fixed assets	(603)	-
- Income amortised in year in line with depreciation of asset	(364,439)	(491,658)
	(146,664)	107,098
<b>Balance as at 31 December</b>	<b>994,557</b>	<b>1,141,221</b>

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 15. Retirement Benefit Costs

### (a) Analysis of total retirement benefit costs charged to expenditure

	2023 €	2022 €
Current service cost	2,235,000	3,597,000
Interest on retirement benefit scheme liabilities	1,843,000	1,093,000
Employee contributions refundable to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform	(610,000)	(584,000)
	<b>3,468,000</b>	<b>4,106,000</b>

### (b) Movement in net retirement benefit liability during the financial year

	2023 €	2022 €
Net retirement benefit liability at 1 January	51,981,000	71,488,000
Current service cost	2,235,000	3,597,000
Interest on retirement benefit scheme liabilities	1,843,000	1,093,000
Benefits paid in year	(896,000)	(865,000)
Actuarial loss/(gain)	1,870,000	(23,332,000)
<b>Net retirement benefit liability at 31 December</b>	<b>57,033,000</b>	<b>51,981,000</b>

### (c) Deferred funding for retirement benefits

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority recognises these amounts as an asset corresponding to the unfunded deferred liability for pensions on the basis of the set of assumptions described below and a number of past events. These events include the statutory basis for the model public sector defined benefit superannuation scheme, and the policy and practice in relation to funding public service pensions including contributions by employees and the annual estimates process.

The Authority has no evidence that this funding policy will not continue to meet such retirement benefit liabilities in accordance with current practice.

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 15. Retirement Benefit Costs (continued)

### (c) Deferred funding for retirement benefits (continued)

The net deferred funding for pensions recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves is as follows:-

	2023 €	2022 €
Funding recoverable in respect of current year retirement benefit costs	4,078,000	4,690,000
State grant applied to pay retirement benefits	(896,000)	(865,000)
	<b>3,182,000</b>	<b>3,825,000</b>

(d) Retirement benefit contributions deducted by the Authority from staff salaries are refundable to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

### (e) History of defined benefit obligations

	2023 €	2022 €	2021 €	2020 €	2019 €
Defined benefit obligations	57,033,000	51,981,000	71,488,000	62,929,000	54,410,000
Experience losses/(gains) on scheme liabilities	1,804,000	(214,000)	1,043,000	505,000	515,000
Percentage of the present value of scheme liabilities	(3.2%)	(0.4%)	1.4%	0.8%	0.9%

### (f) General description of the Scheme

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority was established under the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006. Sections 59 and 60 of the Act provide that the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority shall make schemes for the granting of superannuation benefits to and in respect of members of the Authority and members of staff, subject to Ministerial approval. Two such approved schemes – the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (Employees) Superannuation Scheme 2016 and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority Superannuation Scheme 2016 are being operated by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority. The former scheme provides retirement benefits (lump sum and pension) to staff members, death gratuity benefits in respect of death in service and provides pension benefits for the surviving spouses and dependent children of deceased members. The latter scheme provides these benefits for members of the Executive Authority.

Both schemes are defined benefit superannuation schemes and adopt the rules set out in the Schedule to the Rules for Pre-existing Public Service Pension Scheme Members Regulations 2014 i.e. current “model” public sector scheme regulations. Pensions for those employees paying Class A PRSI are integrated with the State Pension. Normal retirement age is a member’s 65th birthday, and pre 2004 members have an entitlement to retire without actuarial reduction from the age of 60. Staff superannuation contributions are paid to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Retirement benefits in payment (and deferment) normally increase in line with general public sector salary inflation.

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

## For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

### 15. Retirement Benefit Costs (continued)

#### (f) General description of the Scheme (continued)

The Single Public Service Pension Scheme (Single Scheme) is the defined benefit pension scheme for pensionable public servants appointed for the first time on or after 1 January 2013 in accordance with the Public Service Pension (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012. The scheme provides for a pension and retirement lump sum based on career-average pensionable remuneration, and spouses and children's pensions. The minimum pension age is 66 years (rising in line with State pension age changes). It includes an actuarially-reduced early retirement facility from age 55. Pensions in payment increase in line with the consumer price index. Staff superannuation contributions are paid to the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

For the purposes of reporting in accordance with FRS102, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority has been advised by a qualified independent actuary who has prepared a full valuation in order to assess the scheme liabilities at 31 December 2023.

The main actuarial assumptions used were:

Valuation Method	2023	2022
Discount rate	3.20%	3.50%
Salary increases	3.80%	4.10%
Pension increases-Superannuation scheme	3.30%	3.60%
Pension increases-Single scheme	2.30%	2.60%
Inflation rate	2.30%	2.60%

The average remaining life expectancy according to the mortality tables used to determine pension liabilities is as follows:

	2023	2022
Male aged 65	22.1	22.1
Female aged 65	24.4	24.4
Male aged 45	24.3	24.3
Female aged 45	26.4	26.4

### 16. Authority Members' Expenses

Authority members' expenses reimbursed were as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Mr. Paschal Hayes	9,317	9,639
Mr. Michael Finn	9,456	3,914
Mr. Jonathan Hoare	8,765	713
Mr. Timothy Donovan	-	871
	<b>27,538</b>	<b>15,137</b>

The Authority member Mr. Timothy Donovan resigned from his position on the 11 February 2022.

# Notes to the Financial Statements (CONTINUED)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 17. Property Costs

	Location	Status	Annual Rent	Lease Expiry
Headquarters	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	OPW Owned <sup>4</sup>	N/A	N/A
Castletownbere port office	Co. Cork	Lease in negotiation <sup>5</sup>	19,500	2055
Castletownbere utility building	Co. Cork	Lease in negotiation <sup>5</sup>	3,500	2057
Howth port office	Co. Dublin	Lease in negotiation <sup>5</sup>	30,400	2042
Clogherhead office	Co. Louth	Leased	4,834	2024
Dunmore East port office	Co. Waterford	Leased	15,500	2042
Dingle port office	Co. Kerry	Lease in negotiation <sup>5</sup>	7,500	2042
Dingle storage	Co. Kerry	Lease in negotiation <sup>5</sup>	5,200	2024
Ros a Mhil port office	Co. Galway	Lease in negotiation <sup>5</sup>	17,262	2025
Killybegs port office	Co. Donegal	Lease in negotiation <sup>5</sup>	43,000	2042
Killybegs storage	Co. Donegal	Leased	8,900	2057
Greencastle port office	Co. Donegal	Leased	29,400	2042
			<b>184,996</b>	

<sup>4</sup> The premises located in Clonakilty are Office of Public Works buildings which the Authority occupies. No rent is payable on these buildings.

<sup>5</sup> Expiry dates for leases and licenses in negotiation are based on dates agreed during pre-lease negotiations or draft lease/license agreements as appropriate.

### Lease Commitments

Total future minimum lease payments in respect of these leases are as follows:

	As at 31 December 2023 €	As at 31 December 2022 €
Under 1 year	184,996	164,021
Between 2 - 5 years	648,062	585,600
Over 5 years	2,637,500	2,096,250
	<b>3,470,558</b>	<b>2,845,871</b>

Lease payments recognised as an expense in 2023 were €192,537 (2022: €156,002).

## 18. Authority Members' Interest / Related Party Transactions

The Authority follows procedures in accordance with guidelines issued by the Standards in Public Office Commission of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 in relation to the disclosure of interests by Authority Members. There were no transactions declared in the year in relation to the Authority's activities in which the Members of the Authority had any material interest.

## 19. Contingent Liabilities

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority was involved in a number of legal proceedings relating to its statutory role at the year end. An accurate quantification of the settlement of costs or timing of such settlement cannot be made at the reporting date.

## 20. Events after the end of the Financial Year

The Authority is not aware of any events occurring after 31 December 2023 which affect these financial statements.

## 21. Approval of Financial Statements

The Financial Statements were approved by the Authority on the 10 June 2024.





AN t-ÚDARÁS UM  
CHOSAINT  
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES  
PROTECTION  
AUTHORITY

An t-Údarás um Chosaint Iascaigh Mhara,  
Lárionad Bia Mara Náisiúnta,  
Príomhoifig, An Cloichín,  
Cloich na Coillte, Co. Chorcaí,  
P85TX47

Head Office,  
National Seafood Centre,  
Park Road, Clogheen,  
Clonakilty, Co. Cork,  
P85TX47

**T** +353 23 885 9300  
**E** [sfpa\\_info@sfpa.ie](mailto:sfpa_info@sfpa.ie)

[sfpa.ie](http://sfpa.ie)