



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

# Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme: guidance relevant to all rounds

Guidance on applying for grants under the Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme.

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# Introduction: Supporting the Marine, Fisheries and Aquaculture sector

The Welsh Marine and Fisheries scheme is a funding scheme to support environmentally and economically sustainable growth in the Welsh seafood industry and encourage the Welsh coastal communities to thrive.

This scheme has been tailored to support Welsh interests in the new UK and international context. A balance has been struck between continuity with the past, a degree of consistency with other UK Administrations and looking forward to capitalising on new opportunities. Operationally, the scheme will be flexible to allow the Welsh Government to adapt to changing priorities whilst advancing towards our strategic aims.

## Section A: Aims of the Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme

The Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme will be available for funding applications to facilitate activities that benefit Wales and/or the Welsh marine zone. The scheme is for individuals and organisations in the private, public and third sectors to access financial assistance.

The aims of the scheme are:

- To provide Welsh Ministers with the scope and flexibility to provide financial assistance over a wide range of subject areas within the Welsh marine, fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
- To invest strategically for the long-term benefit of the sectors
- To adapt to short-term challenges and opportunities.

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- To support our seafood producers, coastal communities and marine environment to thrive together

These guidance notes contain the overarching information for the Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme. As this is a multi-annual, multi round scheme and its ambitions cover a wide range of funding possibilities, the detail provided in this document serve only as general guidance and further additional specific guidance will be published for each funding round to be read in conjunction with these general guidance notes.

Please read this document carefully together with the specific funding round guidance booklet. If you then consider your investment plans may qualify for support under this scheme, please see 'Applying for the WMFS' at section D of this booklet in conjunction with the specific funding round guidance booklet.

## Scheme design

The scheme itself comprises of Regulations, a broad policy base and periodic funding rounds that target specific policy objectives. The funding rounds are the dynamic aspect of the scheme. The scheme utilises new powers for Welsh Ministers contained in the UK Fisheries Act 2020 and is consistent with the new policy framework.

The scheme has been designed this way to future-proof Welsh Government funding arrangements for the sector and navigate the ongoing changes within the Marine and Seafood industries as a result of the UK leaving the European Union. This approach also allows the Welsh Government to address the unpredictable results of the Covid pandemic and recent disruptive international events.

The scheme's overarching policy details a core list of 18 funding activities which can be used individually or combined to form the basis for a funding round to

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address specific priorities within the sector.

For the purposes of this guidance, the activity or activities to be funded by an application will be referred to as a project.

## **Activities that can be funded under the scheme**

1. Activities which promote innovation.
2. Activities relating to professional advisory services.
3. Activities which promote human capital, networking.
4. Activities which improve hygiene, health, safety and wellbeing.
5. Activities which support diversification of businesses.
6. Activities which mitigate the effects of adverse extenuating circumstances.
7. Activities which establish or improve infrastructure for marine and freshwater users.
8. Activities which promote job creation and encourages new entrants to the marine, fishing and aquaculture industries.
9. Activities which support fishers or aquaculture farmers to establish new fishing or aquaculture businesses.
10. Activities which contribute to the sustainable development of aquaculture sites.
11. Activities which support the marketing of marine, fisheries and aquaculture products or recreational fishing.
12. Activities which lead to new or improved products, processes or management and organisation systems.
13. Activities which reduce the impact of seafood production on the marine environment.
14. Activities which contribute towards conservation, restoration or enhancement of aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity.
15. Activities which contribute to the design and implementation of conservation measures.
16. Activities which support marine spatial planning for the sustainable use of

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marine and coastal resources.

17. Activities which contribute towards the mitigation of climate change or its effects.
18. Activities which maintain or improve animal health and welfare.

## Funding Rounds

Each funding round would be delivered via Rural Payments Wales (RPW) and aim to achieve specific policy objectives.

Funding rounds can be for very specific and defined activities (for example a standard cost application for specific gear) or open to a wide range of activities to achieve a particular policy objective (for example a two stage application process). The format of the funding rounds and application criteria will be set out in the specific funding round guidance.

Funding rounds addressing a single policy objective or multiple policy objectives could fund one or more activities from the list above. The intention is for the policy objective to cut across as many activities as necessary. For example, a funding round to invest in sustainable aquaculture businesses could fund innovation, training and marketing.

The number of funding rounds open at any time is subject to Welsh Ministers' discretion. As the objective of each funding round can vary, the following would be tailored to the individual funding round objective:

- Eligibility criteria
- Financial assistance in the form of a grant or loan
- Application process and criteria
- Compliance requirements
- Duration of application window

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Each funding round will have its specific policy objectives, eligibility criteria and funding conditions clearly set out in specific funding round guidance booklet when the application window opens. The opening of funding rounds under the scheme will be appropriately publicised, for example, via the Welsh Government website, social media and through stakeholder networks.

## Section B: Eligibility

### Who can apply?

Dependent on the specific funding round aims, the eligibility criteria would be different. Projects will need to be in relation to Wales or the Welsh Zone of the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone (as defined by UNCLOS) or Welsh fishing vessels.

Details on eligibility will be detailed in the specific funding round guidance booklet that will be published when the funding round is opened.

### Who cannot apply?

Each funding round may have specific and additional ineligibility criteria to the listed below, which will be stated in its specific guidance.

You are not eligible to apply for and receive funding if you:

- Have been convicted of fraud under any other grant scheme
- Have been found to have committed a serious violation of conservation or management measures within the preceding 12 months
- Are listed by the flag State, the subsidising Party, the FAO or a relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, or Arrangement for IUU

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- fishing in accordance with the rules and procedures of that State, Party, organisation, or arrangement and in conformity with international law; or
- Have been convicted of an offence that is considered to be a 'serious infringement' (Including any illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing or fraud), in the 12 months before applying.

## Eligible activities

This will be specific to each Funding round.

## Ineligible activities

The following activities will not be eligible for funding under the Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme:

- Anything that negatively affect fish stocks that are in an overfished condition
- Activities that would negatively affect the exploitation of fish stocks
- Operations that increase the fishing capacity of a fishing vessel, or for equipment that increases the ability of a fishing vessel to find fish, except where they meet legitimate public policy goals such as improved safety or sustainability
- Fishing for fish stocks managed by a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation or Arrangement to which the UK is not a member or cooperating non-member of the Organisation or Arrangement
- Fishing or fishing-related activities conducted without the permission of the flag State where required and, if operating in another State's waters, without permission of that State
- Importing fishing vessels
- The transfer of fishing vessels from Wales to other States, including through the creation of joint enterprises
- Increasing the capacity of fish holds on licensed fishing vessels,

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- Carrying out exploratory fishing,
- Pulse trawling,
- The same type of equipment for the same vessel if you have already received support through the scheme,
- Transferring ownership of a business,
- Direct restocking unless explicitly provided for as a conservation measure or in the case of experimental restocking,
- Statutory or mandatory undertakings – items and services that are statutory or mandatory requirements of law and bylaws cannot be funded,
- Preventative or scheduled maintenance costs,
- Maintenance and mandatory costs for any vehicles,
- Purchasing or leasing of vehicles that are not used exclusively to provide a direct contribution to the project,
- Interest on a debt,
- The purchase of land or housing that's worth more than 10% of your project's total expenditure,
- Your business's operating costs,
- The re-payments of loans on any item(s) you have purchased,
- The costs of any item(s) bought with a loan until the loan is repaid (this does not include leased items if your offer letter allows funding for them),
- Any costs that have been fully or partially funded through an alternative grant,
- Any costs that you could recover in part or in total by making a claim on an insurance policy or by seeking compensation or damages,
- Cost for any items purchased prior to receiving acknowledgement of receipt of your funding application by the RPW.

Each funding round may have additional ineligible activities to those listed above, which will be stated in its specific guidance.

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## Section C: Intervention Rate

It is your responsibility to source and provide match funding, such as business loans or cash resources. Evidence of this funding source will be required as part of the application process.

The intervention rate is dependent on your type of business or organisation as detailed in the table below with the maximum rate listed.

Applicant/Project Type	Max intervention rate
Private SME (Micro entity) A micro-entity is a business that has any two of the following characteristics: a) a turnover of £632,000 or less; b) £316,000 or less on its balance sheet; or c) 10 employees or less at the time of application.	80%
Private SME (non-micro entity SMEs) An SME is a business that has any two of the following characteristics: a) turnover of less than £36 million; b) £18 million or less on its balance sheet; and c) 250 employees or less at the time of application.	50%
Private (Non-SMEs)	30%
Private - organisations of marine users acting in a collective manner (e.g., Producer organisations and Fishermen's associations etc.)	75%
Public bodies	100%

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Applicant/Project Type	Max intervention rate
<p>Projects which benefit the public good through sharing of outcomes. Examples of a public good could include projects which contribute to the Net Zero Wales by 2050 ambition and mitigate against climate change. This could involve collaborations between public law bodies, private entities, third sector bodies, etc.</p>	100%

## World Trade Organisation and Subsidy Control compliance

Since leaving the EU regulatory jurisdiction, spending on fisheries and most related topics has had to comply with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement on subsidies and countervailing measures (ASCM) and the UK's obligations under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

The Subsidy Control Act 2022 received Royal Assent in April 2022. This will set the rules for subsidies when it comes into force.

The WTO made a new agreement to prohibit some subsidies for fishing in June 2022. When in force the Welsh Government will not be able to provide funding for fishing overfished stocks. Subsidies for anyone found to be illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing are prohibited.

There are different transparency reporting requirements to WTO, Subsidy Control Act, other international agreements such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and each trade agreement. Your details may be published on a register of public funding recipients if the funding meets the criteria for public disclosure.

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## Section D: Applying for funding under the WMFS

Application processing for the WMFS will be carried out by Rural Payments Wales.

Each funding round will specify its application process in its guidance.

### RPW Online

In order to apply for any Welsh Marine and fisheries scheme funding round, you will need to be registered on Rural Payments Wales (RPW) Online. If you already have a Customer Reference Number (CRN) you should have received a letter informing you of your Activation Code to set up your account. If you no longer have this, please telephone the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 062 5004 (Monday – Friday 9:00 – 16:00) and tell the operator your CRN. They will send you a new Activation Code.

To register your business details for the first time, you need to complete the online registration form. Please refer to the [RPW Online: How to Register](#) guidance for further details. The vast majority of changes to business details can be done online. However, Welsh Government may require further details on any major changes. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further information.

Once registered, you can access your [RPW Online account](#).

If you have any questions about registering for RPW Online or completing your application, please contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 062 5004. They will be able to provide advice, including the digital assistance that is available to you.

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Further details regarding RPW Online are available on the [Welsh Government Website](#).

You will be notified whether or not your expression of interest and/or application (for all stages) has been selected via your RPW online account.

## **Section E: Conditions for Grants**

Conditions for grants will be specified in each specific funding round guidance booklet.

## **Section F: Contacts**

### **Enquiries – Customer Contact Centre**

For all enquiries, please contact the [RPW Customer Contact Centre](#).

Enquiries can be submitted via RPW Online at any time.

### **Access to Welsh Government offices for people with disabilities or special needs**

If you have any special needs which you feel are not met by our facilities, contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 062 5004. Welsh Government officials will then endeavour to make arrangements to accommodate your requirements.

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau'n Gymraeg / We welcome calls in Welsh.

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## Welsh Government Website

For all the latest Marine and Fisheries information, visit the [Welsh Government's website](#).

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