

Turning the Tide

Our strategy for 2022-26





An Bord Iascaigh Mhara is a state agency that supports and develops the Irish seafood sector. We provide technical expertise, business support, funding, and training.

Seafood from Ireland enjoys an enviable reputation for quality. The waters where we catch or farm our produce are seen as clean and natural. Seafood itself is perceived as both healthy and indulgent - a unique combination - and eating seafood is not viewed as a habit that impacts climate change. This is a product that has significant potential for growth, much of it currently untapped.

The people who catch or farm the seafood that Ireland eats and exports have typically done so for generations. They are fiercely loyal and hard working. They support each other and their traditions with passion and determination.

At BIM, our aim has always been to help this community to achieve more, and to be rewarded more for their efforts. We seek ways for the Irish seafood sector to defend what is unique and yet still look for growth and improvement. Now, more than ever, we need to fulfil this role.

Meeting the challenges of the next five years

In this document, Bord Iascaigh Mhara sets out our strategic goals from 2022 to 2026. This comes at a time when the Irish seafood sector faces change on a scale that is without precedent, mainly due to Brexit. The UK / EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement of 2020 had a unique and disproportionate impact on Irish seafood. Our fleet will lose 15% of its annual quota; exports of product to the UK and imports of ingredients and supplies from the UK have become disrupted. Finally, the UK land-bridge – the fastest-route-to market for continental Europe is now less viable.

Combined with the long-term impact of climate change, this creates a singular threat to the future of our sector. This is not a time for a steady-as-she-goes approach; to pass through this storm, the people of BIM and the seafood sector we support will have to work together with absolute intent and focus. BIM has always been committed in our work to support and develop the seafood sector. But the scale of the current context requires fresh thinking, renewed energy, and an absolute focus on the new challenges ahead.

With the support of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, we have now developed our new five-year strategy. This sets out four goals that aim to redefine what we do, and to positively reshape the sector as a result. These goals are supported by four new approaches to how we work – which will change the culture and consequence of BIM as an organisation.

There are no quick fixes, and this will not be easy. But if we commit to this strategy – with the effort and intensity that it demands, we can prevail together.





The vision that guides this strategy

In early 2021, BIM started to consider how best to respond to the long-term, existential threats that now face the Irish seafood sector. Alongside the immediate measures that were introduced at the time, we also started a process of planning for systemic change. We knew this would be required across the sector, and in our own organisation.

The foundation of this process was that our mission remains unchanged and fundamental:

Our mission: To support and enable an increase in value creation of an Irish sustainable seafood sector, across the supply chain, from catch to consumer.

But how can we continue this mission in today's challenging contexts? To help define our strategic goals, we have developed a new vision for BIM: this is how we intend to successfully achieve our ongoing mission:

Our vision: We will partner with the Irish seafood sector in every possible way, with intent and urgency, to identify and drive the changes needed to ensure its sustainable future.

This vision is our benchmark for a new set of ambitious and far-reaching strategic goals, and for new approaches to how we will deliver these goals. These are outlined in the following pages.



Our goals

Lead and nurture leadership

Be the leader that Irish seafood needs

The role that BIM plays has continuously evolved since its foundation. What is needed now is strong, clear, and bold leadership. We need to proactively identify an ambitious future for Irish seafood, and then help the sector reach that objective.

To that end, we must start by talking to all stakeholders - within and outside of the sector. We need to lead a collective effort to identify constraints and potential opportunities. We can then work together to learn what insights, actions and measurable outcomes can deliver sustainable growth. BIM will become the catalyst for this change, and the beacon that guides it.

Over the next five years, we will partner with the Irish seafood industry to create and implement tailored development strategies. We will lead a process that defines the challenges, then finds and delivers ambitious solutions.

These solutions will respond to unique difficulties in each area and will also look for sector-wide opportunities. Most importantly, this process will be a true collaboration. Our support will be complimented and facilitated with learning and insights from those who work in the Irish seafood business.

Identify leaders from within the sector

We cannot lead alone. We need other leaders to work with us. We will find, develop, and encourage leadership across the Irish seafood sector.

In recent years, we have played a key role in building and developing skills within the Irish seafood sector. This has developed the capabilities and potential of the workforce and we now need to redouble our attention on this work.

We will do so by developing professional skills. We will also identify and support individuals with potential and advise businesses how to nurture their key people for a better future. Our strategy will see each of these sectoral leaders complete both formal and informal development programmes.

Gather the information we need for insight and action

BIM needs to become the recognised source for accurate, sophisticated, relevant, and timely data for the development of our sector. This will allow us to offer data-driven insights with targeted outcomes that can be meaningfully measured.

Our advice to the sector will be built on this foundation, including ways to respond to sustainability issues. Achieving this objective will need us to further develop our culture, and to invest in our capabilities and personnel. It will also see us form new strategic partnerships – national and global – with agencies and clients who can add their data and analysis to ours.

We will become the recognised expert on data for the development of the Irish seafood sector. This will need continuous improvement in the way we gather and analyse information - which will require fundamental change, but will deliver lasting benefits.



Our goals

Deliver results with solutions that effect change

Focus on outcomes

The day-to-day work we do at BIM must focus on outcomes – on achieving agreed objectives. Everything we do must serve the purpose of transforming the long-term potential of the sector. We are here to provide solutions to the challenges the sector faces; to deliver and encourage progress, never to impede it.

Encourage innovation

We do not want to needlessly change traditional practices, but we must find new solutions to the new challenges faced by the sector. This starts by identifying what Irish seafood operators need from BIM to succeed. We need to innovate: to identify, trial, measure and implement new practices and new thinking that delivers better. This will be the bar that we set for our own team, and for those we support in the sector.



Develop training that delivers results

In collaboration with other agencies, and in partnership with industry leaders, we will devise and deliver a renewed suite of training. This will give the sector the skills needed to compete, to adapt, to stay safe and to be sustainable in a digital-first world. More importantly, it will help the Irish seafood sector to attract and retain talent, and to become a more diverse and motivated workforce.

Leverage the opportunities of sustainability

This is a topic we explore in depth in a separate goal, but it's also included here to illustrate the application of this goal. For too long, the responsibility of sustaining the natural environment has been framed as an additional burden on the sector. It is, in fact, an opportunity that reflects the existing instincts and concerns of those who work in the Irish seafood sector.

BIM will continue to target our investment, training, and networking to identify and realise the potential of sustainability. The measure of this goal's success will be that, by the end of the period of this strategy, we can demonstrate specific, tangible actions that helped secure the long-term future of this sector.



Our goals

Invest for long term growth

Change our thinking

This goal aims to evolve our mindset: from one of efficiently supplying funds and resources to investing for future returns. BIM needs to focus all our supports - including funding and grants - on activities that deliver measurable benefits to the sector. When financial resources are being allocated, we must define the need, the intent, and the anticipated result.

We will direct our future investments towards competitiveness and resilience: on securing the long-term future of the sector. We will achieve this with streamlined systems that are accessible, transparent, and well governed. Our primary funding source will continue to be the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). We will also help the Irish seafood sector to attract and secure financial investment from a range of other sources.

This transformation of our funding model is a fundamental and positive change. It will require new procedures, new processes, and new measures within our organisation. We will now be seeking to create and assess clear-cut benefits from each funding decision. This change in approach will start immediately - and will then be subject to comprehensive review.

Align financial decisions to strategic goals

Our investment choices and recommendations will be based on our strategic goals. The decisions we make about what or who to invest in will be guided by clear data, or with a view to gain intelligence for future investment decisions.

We will support financial investments with investments in business advice and training - and vice versa. All our investments will be targeted to achieve ambitious, long-term returns that maximise value and benefit for the sector. We will also encourage and support the sector to make their own investments towards these goals.

Apply insights to investments

Our data assets - and the insights they underpin - will be the tools we use to inform our investments. This will include consumer and retail trends gathered in collaboration with Bord Bia, and other insight partners. We will also help the sector to unpack, understand and access the potential of changes in policy.

Integrate cross-agency supports

BIM is one of many local, national, and EU agencies and commercial entities that have a stake in the success of the Irish seafood sector. We will lead a process of collaboration with these stakeholders to amplify our collective investment in the sector. Our intent will be to make it easier for the Irish seafood sector to identify, apply and receive investment - either of expertise, resources, or funds.



Our goals

Protect our environment and our sector

Sustainability can sometimes be perceived as a constraint rather than a responsibility. But it is in the interest of the Irish seafood sector to ensure that there are always fish to catch and farm. We need to ensure that future generations of children and grandchildren can always make a living from Irish seafood. Protecting our natural environment – which supports seafood – will sustain the sector for the long term. These two outcomes are not opposed; they are intrinsically linked. BIM will continue to work with the Irish seafood sector to help them to access the potential offered by working in a sustainable way. Collaboration and cooperation with partners such as the Marine Institute will be key to achieving this goal.

Develop a unified sustainability standard

BIM will lead the sector in a campaign of reasserting the sustainability credentials of Irish seafood. Building on the foundation of existing programmes, we will develop and promote a single sustainability and quality standard for all Irish seafood. This standard will respect the needs of the sector, meet the desires and concerns of the consumer, and help protect the marine environment. By the end of our five-year plan, this standard will have been defined, created, and communicated to consumers.

Reduce and re-use waste

Catching, farming, and processing seafood inevitably leads to waste. BIM will collaborate with the sector, at every stage in the production chain, to better manage this waste. Our aim is to minimise or eliminate where possible, to reduce or mitigate, or to find uses and applications for by-products which have the potential to become products, ingredients, or raw materials. We will help the Irish seafood sector to explore the economic potential of waste, rather than see it as cost-intensive problem. Finally, we want to ensure that the seafood sector continues to protect the natural environment.

Respond to climate change

The Irish seafood sector needs to know more about the anticipated impacts of climate change. They need to learn about its long-term effect on the viability of some activities, and the potential impact this will have on livelihoods. This is a community experienced in dealing with challenge, and in finding the strength to respond together to adversity. But they need the help of BIM and partner agencies to get the information, support and responses that are now required.

BIM will help the sector adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change, and to reduce the impacts of those changes we can mitigate together. We will do this with an approach that is innovative, practical and action oriented. The scope of response needed for this scale of challenge must be embraced with ambition. By 2026, we will have helped the Irish seafood sector develop a comprehensive range of climate change responses.

Protect and restore biodiversity

To reflect all the above objectives, BIM will develop and activate solutions in response to biodiversity loss. We will do this by working together with the sector, and with local, national and EU sources of knowledge and funding.

Achieving these goals is our singular intent - but the scale of this ambition will require change in how BIM behaves as an organisation.

This can be summarised in four new ways we will now approach our work - explained in the following pages.





How we approach our goals

Achieve more by working together with purpose

Be clear and purposeful in our actions

Everything we do must focus on delivering measurable benefits for the Irish seafood sector. Our new strategic goals set a clear destination for the next five years. We must now activate this aim in our relationships with stakeholders, and in our own daily work. Tasks without purpose or tangible gain are simply not worth doing. Our people will have clarity and intent in their roles so they can identify and implement innovative actions to deliver our strategy.

Serve the Irish seafood sector with distinction

Our purpose is to serve the Irish seafood. Our organisation culture, performance measures, staffing and resources will evolve to reflect this. We will find ways to be more present and visible in the coastal regions where our support is most needed. This will allow us to build and leverage trust in our capabilities, and belief in our intent. Finally, we will tell the story of who we are and what we do – to retain and motivate our existing team, and to attract the best new people.



Be proud of who we are

We need BIM to become an inspirational representation of our goals for the sector. We will meet our obligation under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. We aim to exceed these targets for inclusivity and diversity, and to ensure that all our people feel valued and respected. We can be proud of who we are, and even more proud of what we intend to do over the next five years. We need to reflect this in our communications and in our actions.

Measure and improve our performance

Setting out to change the way an organisation behaves will be demanding of us. To ensure we are held to account for our ambition, we will identify and activate an external and objective measure of employee alignment. This will track how our people perceive and live by our new promises, and how this affects their work. In collaboration with our team, we will agree an ambitious target for this measure, and assess our progress towards it over five years.



How we approach our goals

Develop our skills and agility

Resource our team

BIM needs to ensure we have the right skills, the right people, and the right organisational culture to meet the challenge of our new strategy. As a first step, we will assess any gaps in the existing experience and ability of our team. To achieve our strategic goals, we need to develop a pool of in-house expertise in new areas for BIM. These include data analysis, data-driven decision making, business development, and sustainability skills.

We will ensure our people have the training, career-development, and upskilling support to meet our future needs. We will also assess the performance of our people to recognise our new priorities that recognises agility and responsiveness and rewards results.

By the end of our five-year plan, all staff will have tailored career development plans in place and progress will be well advanced to reach an agreed outcome that matches the potential of each individual.



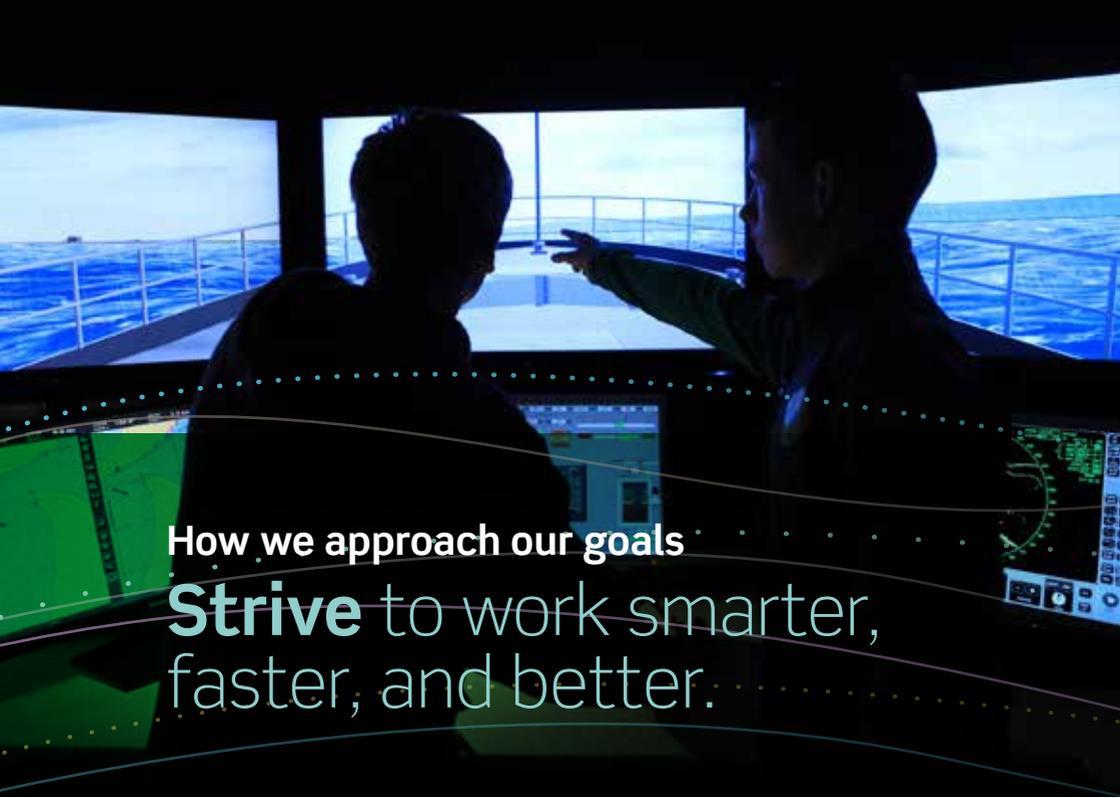
Align our structure

The BIM organisational structure needs to be assessed against our new strategic goals. Roles, teams, and work programmes will be reoriented to deliver our strategy more effectively. Responsibilities will be defined, but not isolated. We want to ensure our teams are integrated, coordinated and able to support each other at pace.

We will also ensure our organisation can respond quickly to emerging needs or new policy. We are not only reshaping BIM for this strategy, we are also preparing for a more uncertain world, particularly due to climate change. We will build this new BIM by benchmarking our capabilities, technology, and processes against international best practice.

Achieve best-practice governance

In this new environment, we will match or exceed best-practice governance standards for the public service. This will include new project management practices, led by a dedicated team that tracks strategic delivery. Key performance measures will be identified and assessed regularly against strategic project goals. Initiatives that drift from planned outcomes or timelines will be identified and supported to keep them on track. We will recognise projects that succeed and ensure accountability and learning for those that do not.



How we approach our goals
Strive to work smarter,
faster, and better.

Prioritise tasks that make a difference

We will put first the services and initiatives that create a positive impact for the Irish seafood sector. To assist this aim, we will engage with and listen to the sector, to assess their needs, identify the priorities, and be responsive in our actions. We will pursue continuous improvement in our work, and in how we work, and will ensure our structures support this efficiency ambition. All these advances will be aligned to and measured against this strategy, on an ongoing basis.

Drive efficiency

We will automate and digitise as much of what we do as possible, while broadening the reach and accessibility of our services. If we can simplify, consolidate, or eliminate a task, we will do so.



We will identify and adopt best-practice efficiencies from best practice in the private and state sector, in Ireland and abroad. We will measure the impact of these changes, to ensure we increase ease of access to what we do, and in how we do it. We will gather information on how we support clients that all our teams can access - to set standards and encourage collaboration.

Transition to digital-first services

BIM has already made significant movements towards a more agile, digital model of delivering our services. But we need to find ways to go further, faster. Our philosophy should be digital-first: for speed of access, efficiency, and to integrate information in our decisions. We aim to lead in digital services across the sector and will develop solutions that educate and benefit stakeholders. Our communications and engagement will be digitally led, to facilitate more effective personal contact. These aims will need a digital strategy that echoes the scale and ambition of our overall strategy. To enable this, we will need to make investments in infrastructure, expertise, and training.

Make informed, measurable decisions

All the information we gather, and all the digitalisation we achieve, will primarily serve to inform and guide our actions. We will ensure our decision-making is based on objective data, and our activity returns measurable benefits.



How we approach our goals

Engage to build transformative relationships

Strengthen and expand external engagement

Our ambition for the next five years requires another step-change in how we communicate with the sector and our stakeholders. This starts with the Irish seafood sector; we need to engage with them at new levels and in new ways if we are to find workable, sustainable solutions. Also, we cannot achieve our strategic goals in isolation: we need to build a new, expanded network of enablers and supporters. Finally, we need to reinforce our strategy by seeking renewed support from allies such as our parent Departments and other agencies, both here and in the EU.

The first step towards this goal will be to create a comprehensive, structured, and detailed engagement approach. This will define the purpose, objectives, and measures for each activity, tailored to our distinct audiences. We will have this completed and in use before the half-way point of our five-year plan.



Value and enable internal communication

We will engage and listen to our own internal audience to encourage transparent, open, and focused debate. We need our people to feel empowered and confident about bringing new ideas or changing legacy practices. We want to learn from our own people what they believe is necessary to reach our goals. In response, BIM will be open to new ways of working, and to flexible application and expansion of existing or new skills.

To reach our five-year goals, our team needs absolute clarity, total trust, and a genuine belief that their contributions make a difference. This will cover all we do: from how we meet our own sustainability goals, to how we manage the process of essential change in our own organisation.

Communicate clearly and accessibly

We will communicate in plain English, explaining the purpose and intent of all messaging. Our service communication will be easy to find, easy to access, and easy to comprehend. But clarity without influence is not enough - we must also ensure our communication is engaging. So, when we communicate, we will not only explain; we will also persuade.

Lead

Lead and nurture leadership to become a proactive and unifying force for positive transformation. This will be supported by developing industry expertise and informed by data-driven insights.

Achieve more by working together with purpose. Our people will have clarity, and intent in their roles. We will be proud of how we serve and grow the seafood sector, and will leverage our trust to deliver progress.

Achieve

Deliver

Deliver results with solutions that effect change. Our people and our actions will focus on specific outcomes for the seafood sector. This will be powered by our innovation, and by fostering sectoral innovation & training.

Develop our skills and agility. Our new strategy needs new skills, and a more responsive and agile way of working. We will ensure our people have the support and resources to achieve our goals.

Develop

Invest

Invest for long-term growth as active partners to help the seafood sector reach strategic goals. We will fund measurable change, and will coordinate and collaborate with external funding sources.

Strive to work smarter, faster and better. We will do more – more efficiently and measurably more effectively. We will power change with a digital-first model that is responsive, integrated and automated.

Strive

Protect

Protect our environment and our sector. Develop a marketable sustainability standard, reduce and reuse waste, and mitigate the consequences of climate change. In short: secure the future of Irish seafood.

Engage to build transformative relationships. We will clearly and persuasively engage with existing and new audiences to achieve our goals, and will foster deeper internal connections as we do so.

Engage

Turning the Tide 2022-2026
Our Strategic Goals and
How we Approach Them

How do we turn this ambition into a reality?

The scope and range of our strategy is pioneering and challenging - this reflects the existential challenges now faced by the sector. We must start planning how to deliver our goals for Irish seafood, and how to activate our new approaches when working towards those goals. It is essential that we find ways to make these objectives achievable, rather than aspirational. Setting these goals was the easy part; delivering them will be hard. But our success will secure the long-term sustenance of Irish seafood.

Our next steps towards realising these goals can be summarised as follows:

- Talk to our clients, our people, and our stakeholders - to persuasively explain our ambition and our ask, and to listen to their views on this strategy.
- Empower the leaders within our own organisation who can take command of each of our four goals and approaches.
- Develop an activation plan that reflects our strategy, and the response from stakeholders to our strategy. This will have clear timelines and measurable milestones towards our objectives.
- Start an ongoing process to update stakeholders on our progress towards these goals.



We are not underestimating the scale of the challenge we have set ourselves.

To the seafood sector: We know that you have faced disruption, stress and uncertainty in your lives and livelihoods. We want to reassure you that our future is aligned with yours, and we will do all we can to protect, defend and grow the Irish seafood sector. Creating a sustainable future for Irish seafood will require systemic and significant change. We now need to work together to achieve this.

To our own team: This is a voyage we must make together, and we must do so as a united team with a shared aspiration. In the same way that we need the sector to work in a way they can sustain for the long term, we will ask no more of our own people. We simply want an agreed focus on what matters, and on what makes a measurable difference.

Irish seafood is a precious resource that needs care and expertise to sustain and to serve. The people who bring Irish seafood to our tables have a heritage, tradition, and skill that commands respect. But they are also professionals – who strive for as much sense of financial security and certainty as any other business. Bord Iascaigh Mhara has a unique responsibility to Irish seafood, and to the people who work in the Irish seafood sector. This strategy shows our renewed promise to those who catch, farm, and enjoy Irish seafood. We want to make sure that Irish seafood remains on the menu for generations to come. We want to help the sector grow, so those who work with Irish seafood can sustain a living, and so their children can have the same opportunity, if not better. With your help, we can achieve this - together.





Bord Iascaigh Mhara

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