

# Innovative Education Partnerships in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector

## Higher Diploma in Business in Fisheries and Aquaculture

Dr. Janette Davies SETU; Mr. John Connaughton BIM; Ms. Amy Allen SETU, Mr. Patrick Morgan SETU; Dr. Karen Hennessy SETU.

'This programme produces new business leaders to nurture innovation to deliver top quality seafood and other marine bio-economic products'  
 EU Commissioner Vella at Harvesting Our Ocean Wealth Conference Galway 2018



Supported by:

Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation (ISEFPO)

Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO)

National Fishermen's Development Group (NFDC)

### Total Employment in the Irish Seafood Sector

**8,705**

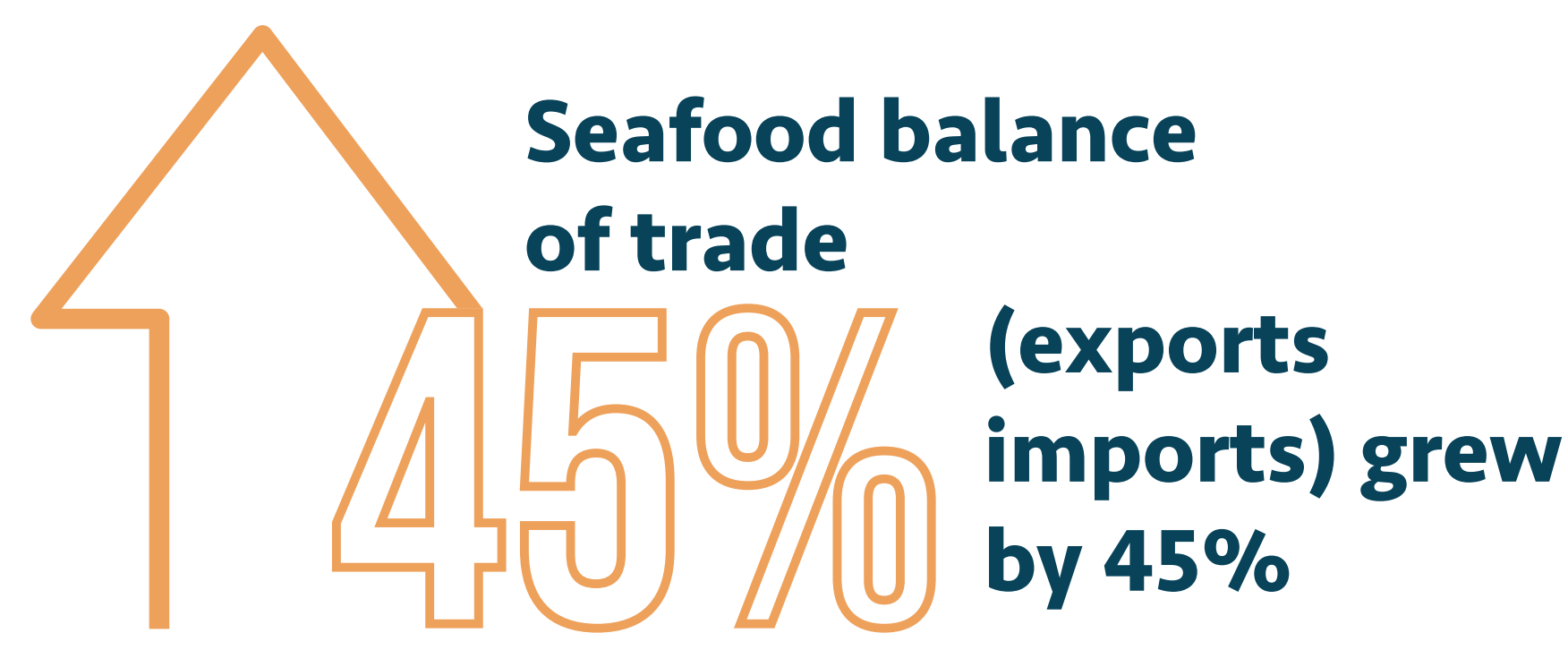
Direct Total Employees

**7,942**

Indirect Total Employees

**16,647**

Direct and Indirect Total Employees



An increase in the value of the Seafood economy to



**€1.26 BILLION**



Led mainly by growth in exports <sup>1</sup>

### Programme Aim & Rationale

This programme is a unique offering in Ireland.

It is the only QQI Level 8 programme of this kind which addresses the need to upskill business skills in this sector. This need was verified in the Agri-Food Strategy 2030<sup>2</sup> and the report of the Seafood Task Force<sup>3</sup> on the basis that technical conservation and sustainable development will require dynamic individuals with financial management, legal, innovation, strategy skills to navigate the challenges and opportunities faced by the sector. This programme was developed in consultation with Bord Iascaigh Mhara, (BIM - Ireland's Seafood Development Agency), The Irish Farmers Association (IFA) Aquaculture Committee, as well as consultation with sixty-eight Seafood Businesses in the South East Region of the country.

### Programme Structure

The programme has been delivered at the Wexford Campus since September 2017 and consists of the following modules: Fisheries & Aquaculture Marketing Management; Fisheries & Aquaculture Economics; Fisheries & Aquaculture Strategic and Innovation Management; Fisheries & Aquaculture Financial Management and Planning; Fisheries & Aquaculture Law and Regulation; Interdisciplinary project / placement. A series of guest lectures and site visits provide graduates with direct insight into industry best practice. These also provide opportunity to engage with and discuss opportunities and challenges with industry experts from the field of Marine Legislation, Common Fisheries Policy, Food processors working in both the domestic and overseas markets. Common themes include; new product development, sustainability, branding, pricing, packaging, overseas development. Modules can also be completed on an individual certificate basis.

Students also participate in a sector specific innovation workshop facilitated by BIM's Seafood Innovation Hub (SIH) in Clonakilty, Co. Cork. The applied nature of these events build the students capacity to transfer class-based learning into work ready projects.

### Programme Entry Requirements

The programme is delivered through Lifelong learning.

The standard entry requirement for the programme is an NFQ Level 7 or level 8 Award, however entry onto the programme is made more accessible and flexible through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The importance of RPL is widely acknowledged in international, European, and national reports and policy documents. It acknowledges the varied means by which learning happens and provides additional pathways to and through higher education<sup>4</sup>. For this sector it gives formal value to the knowledge, skills, and competences that individuals have obtained. This matters because learning happens everywhere - and all the time<sup>4</sup>. It occurs in many contexts, including (but not limited to) on-the-job learning, for example in a Fisherman's Co-Op.

### Programme evolution

The programme has undergone continuous modifications, initially delivered bi-weekly on campus but went online due to COVID 19. A blended delivery format was identified as critical to the uptake enabling the programme to cater for the considerable geographical spread of the sector and remove travel/time constraints. This broadened the accessibility of the programme to international students. In 2021/22 we had three students from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) a specialised Agency for food security of the United Nations working in over 130 countries worldwide.

### Student Feedback

This course improved my ability to evaluate arguments

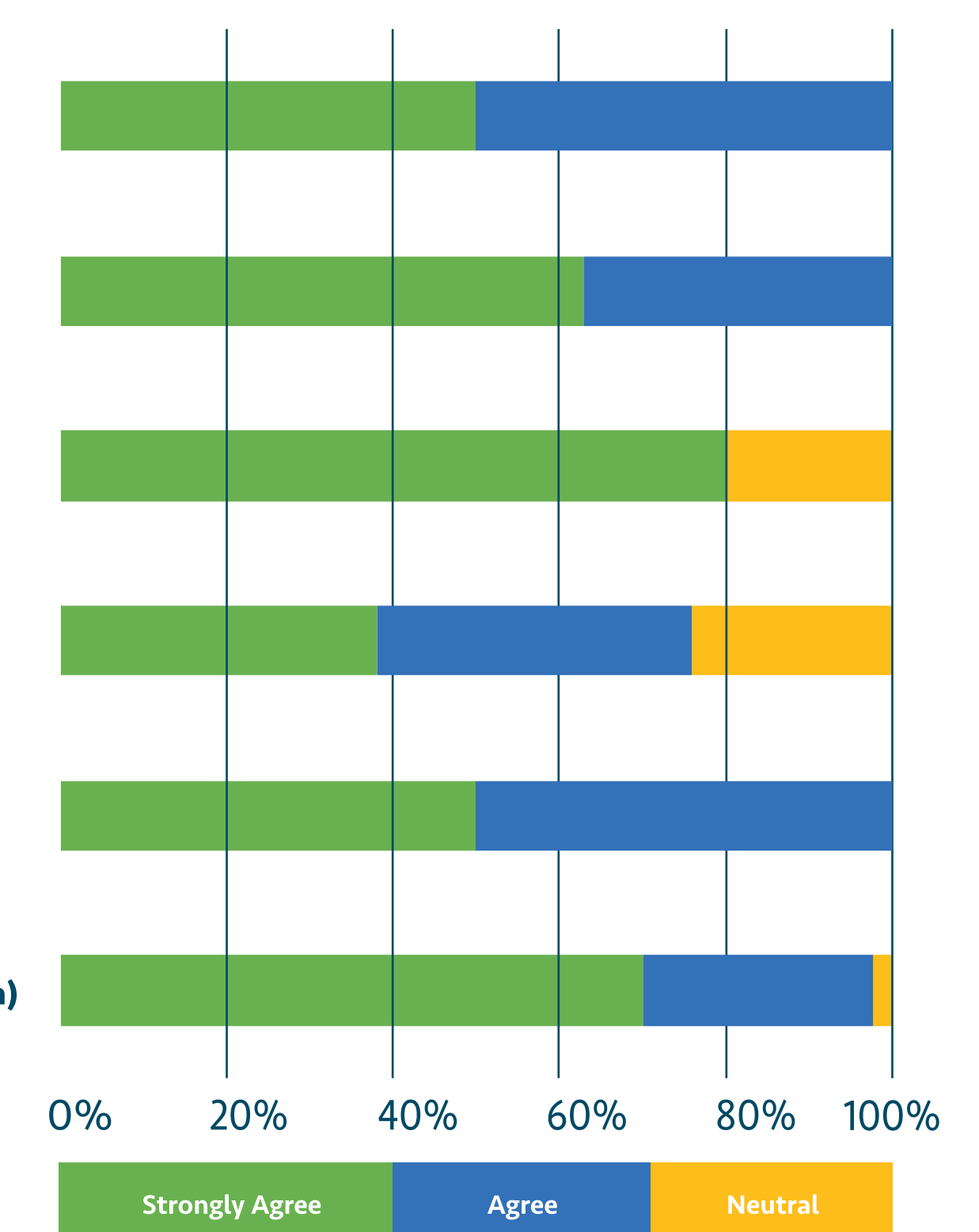
My ability to identify, formulate and solve problems has increased

This course has improved my ability to collaborate and work in teams

This course helped me investigate business opportunities

This course helped me consider the sustainability of business decisions

This course has helped me develop my managerial capability (analysing and interpreting data)



"It is a great benefit that IT Carlow Wexford Campus has a good student support system and I have always found it there when I needed it. I think as we advance in today's fisheries environment with sustainability and environment becoming a part of business innovation and strategy will become increasingly important"

Sr. Production Supervisor (Castletownbere Fisherman's Co-Op)

"The HDip in Business in Fisheries and Aquaculture has had a huge impact on my career. As an entrepreneur you have to have a good understanding of all aspects of your business, marketing, finance, economics, law and strategic innovation. The course has been instrumental in helping me develop and promote my business ventures. I believe it will be instrumental in the creation of some of the future leaders in the sector."

Kate Dempsey - Winner of the National Enterprise Awards 2022

1. BIM 2022. The Business of Seafood: A Snapshot of Ireland's Seafood Sector 2021 [online]. Available from: <https://bim.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/BIM-Seafood-Business-2021.pdf> [accessed 16 September 2022]  
 2. Brown, C. F. 2020. Agri-Food Strategy to 2030 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Statement. Dublin, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.  
 3. BIM 2022. Report of the Seafood Task Force: Navigating Change The way forward for our Seafood Sector and Coastal Communities in the wake of the EU/UK Trade & Cooperation Agreement [online]. Available from: <https://bim.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Report-of-the-Seafood-Taskforce.pdf> [accessed 16 September 2022]  
 4. IUA, THEA and HCI 2022. A Pilot Framework for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education. Dublin: IUA.