

All Projects in England

ELIGIBILITY GUIDANCE NOTES

For help with completing applications for support for re-training or professional development

The European Fisheries Fund may give financial support to meet a number of economic, environmental and social goals. These notes will help you to apply for compensation from the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) for Socio-economic Compensation for the Management of the Community Fishing Fleet projects.

Support will cover things like:

- upgrading professional skills; and
- re-training for alternative occupations.

An Application Form for the measure is the only method through which an application for compensation can be made.

Support is aimed for Fishers who do not have their own vessel and have worked on a vessel for over 12 months who:

- are affected by a local fishing effort adjustment plan; and/or
- are affected by changes as a result of a local management plan; and/or
- work on a fishing vessel which has been identified for or is due to be de-commissioned.

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General guidelines

These notes will help you to apply for EU grant aid from the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) for **Socio-economic Compensation**. You will need to use the correct form (**Form No: EFF-APP-Axis 1-SEC001**) when you apply or a decision on your application could be delayed.

In these notes:

- “You” means the applicant for grant. You can employ a consultant to help you complete your Application Form but you will still have to sign the form. You will be responsible for ensuring that all of the terms and conditions for grant are fulfilled. In particular, this means that you will be expected to keep ownership of the work which is being grant aided.
- “We” means the Marine and Fisheries Agency (MFA).

Please Note: The information provided in these Eligibility Guidance Notes must only be taken as a guide to the grants which are available. The legal basis for the grants is Council Regulation (EC) 1198/2006, Commission Regulation (EC) 498/2007 and the Grants for Fishing and Aquaculture Industries Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/3284) and Council Regulation (EC) 744/2008.

Further advice is available from your Local Area Facilitator (see Contacts) or at:

Marine and Fisheries Agency
Business Relations Team
Area 4C, Ergon House
Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 2AL

Telephone: 0207 270 8384/8042

Email: eff.projects@mfa.gsi.gov.uk

Marine and Fisheries Agency website: <http://www.mfa.gov.uk/grants/grants.htm>

Who may apply for grant?

To apply for a grant under this compensation measure you must be a Fisher who does not have your own vessel, has worked on a vessel for over 12 months, and:

- has been affected by a local fishing effort adjustment plan; and/or
- has been affected by changes as a result of a local management plan; and/or
- works on a fishing vessel which has been identified for, or is due to be, de-commissioned.

When can you apply for grant?

You may apply at any time. We reserve the right to close the Programme earlier if the funds allocated to the Programme have been used up. You should also note that the eligibility criteria will be reviewed from time to time during the lifetime of the Programme. The latest copy of these Eligibility Guidance Notes will be posted on the MFA website.

What things might be eligible for a grant?

Support will cover things like:

- upgrading professional skills; and
- re-training for alternative occupations.

What costs can you claim?

Support will be calculated on the basis of the cost of participation in the training and will be based on cost of income foregone while travelling to the course and attending it, as well as the cost of the training itself. Eligible items include:

- examination fees;
- the costs of the course;
- any loss of income due to attending a training course. (We will need to see proof of this);

- public transport costs (you will need to show us receipts for this). You must try and demonstrate value for money in the method of public transport you use, for example by booking advance tickets and travelling standard class);
- travel. We will pay 24p per mile for the costs of travelling by motorcycle and 40p if you use a car. Travelling distances will be based on the shortest route from your home to the place where the training takes place; and
- the cost of any books or other items required for the training (though basic stationery items such as pens are excluded).

The courses must have a vocational nature. We will not pay for costs associated with Value Added Tax, except for a non recoverable Value Added Tax when it is genuinely and definitively borne by you. If you are not registered for VAT you will need to complete the declaration in the Application Form.

What level of grant could you get?

You could receive up to 50% of the costs of your course. The minimum amount of grant must be £100. The maximum amount of grant you can receive is £1,000.

As the scheme is competitive, there is no guarantee that your course will receive grant. Funds will be awarded to a course that demonstrates the best value for money. We can only pay grant once you have spent money on your course.

You cannot receive grant for your course from more than one European Union fund. You must therefore confirm on the Application Form that you have not applied for European Union grant for your course under another scheme. It must have a funding package which includes match funding from UK public money and/or private funds. It should not duplicate existing, or other planned activity or expenditure.

What will the Offer Letter contain?

The Offer Letter is a mutual undertaking between you and the MFA. It will set out details of the conditions attached to the offer of grant and the agreed performance targets. You must

therefore comply with the conditions contained in the Offer Letter along with any details of eligible expenditure to enable us to pay your claim(s) for grant.

The conditions which will appear in the Offer Letter will be based on those set out in these Eligibility Guidance Notes. We may also add some conditions specific to your course.

When you receive your Offer Letter you must check it carefully. You must sign one copy and return it to us before you can start your course. You should do this within four weeks. After this period the offer will expire.

Details of applications will be treated as commercially confidential throughout the assessment stage. Once the funding for your course has been approved we will make public some details, in particular the name of the successful applicant, the amount of grant approved and the nature of the award. In accepting an offer you will be regarded as having given your consent to this.

Can I change to a different course after I have accepted an offer of grant?

You may apply to change to a different course once you have signed the Offer Letter. However, you must secure approval from us in writing before changing. If you fail to do this any resulting costs associated with the change could become ineligible for grant aid. You should note that if you change course, without our prior approval, we may revise or cancel the grant award. You must tell us about any increase or decrease in the cost of your course. If you think that this applies to you at any stage once the funding for your course has been approved you should contact us as soon as possible to discuss the situation. Changes in costs for an existing agreed course are not automatically treated as eligible for grant.

When and how will I get paid my grant?

You may apply for a claim for payment once you have paid for and participated in your course and once you have signed and returned the Offer Letter.

Do I have to pay the money before I can be reimbursed?

In general, yes. You will be expected to have made a commitment to undertaking the course and have made some of the payment towards the costs.

Completing Section G – Question 12

You must provide details showing how the payment of a grant will help you to support the objectives set for this funding. You can obtain help from your Local Area Facilitator.

What are the benefits of participating in the course?

You should show how getting a grant will help you to:

- upgrade your professional skills; and/or
- retrain for alternative occupations.

You must show how you will apply the learning in practice.

Quotes

You should obtain at least the minimum number of quotes, as shown in the following table, and supply us with the written quote(s) or course costs from the approved college or training provider copies with your Application Form. However, you may send us your application while you are waiting to receive quotes from approved educational and/or training suppliers. In that case, please send us copies of the quotes as soon as you receive them. For each item you should set out in your application which quote you have accepted or are likely to accept, and provide an explanation if you have not accepted the lowest quote.

Individual items with an estimated value (excluding VAT) of:	Number of Quotes
Up to £1,500	Single written quote/details of course costs
£1,500 - £2,000	2 written quotes/details of course costs

Offer of grant

Specific Conditions

Your course must be provided by a registered or approved college or training provider.

General Conditions

The award of grant is based on statements made by you or your representative in the Application Form and, if applicable, subsequent correspondence. The making of false statements is an offence.

You must inform the Marine and Fisheries Agency (MFA), Area 4C, Ergon House, Horseferry Road London SW1P 2AL in writing:

- if you plan to modify your course;
- if you plan to change the funding package;
- if you plan to change the contractors and/or suppliers specified in the Offer Letter; and
- if you plan to change the timetable of the course.

Your letter to us should provide justification for any changes. There is no guarantee that changes in costs or suppliers will be grant aided. However we will consider approving increased costs which could not have been foreseen at the time that the application was approved.

If you subsequently apply for or receive grant from a further source not stated on your Application Form, you must inform the other sources of grant that you are due to receive an EFF grant and, if appropriate, MFA grant for this course. You must also inform the MFA of any such award of grant. If you do receive a grant from another source this may affect your entitlement to EFF funding which may be withheld, withdrawn or be required to be repaid. In particular, you should not receive financial assistance for your course from another European Union scheme. No payments will be made until you have accepted the terms of the MFA Offer Letter.

The grant payable will relate to the amount of eligible expenditure you have incurred excluding recoverable VAT. An exception to this rule may be made if you are not registered for the purposes of VAT and you are unable to recover VAT from your costs. In such cases, a declaration

that you are not VAT registered will need to be provided before payment on a VAT-inclusive basis can be considered.

You may not use the EFF grant to cover the cost of interest on debt.

An EFF grant cannot be paid in relation to any item not owned by you. Any items on hire purchase or leasing agreement must be paid for in full before they can be aided. Second-hand equipment cannot be aided except in exceptional circumstances and only when this has been agreed with the MFA in advance.

We can pay no grant on replacements where the costs are recoverable in whole or in part under an insurance policy or by way of compensation or damages.

The European Commission and the MFA will have the right to publish brief details of successful applicants, including the applicant's name or company name, description of course and any award of grant.

The MFA will monitor the progress of all approved applications and you will be required to prove you have completed your course.

Failure to observe the timetable for completing the course could lead to the cancellation or reduction of the grant awarded. However, before any such cancellation or reduction is made, the MFA will seek an explanation for any delay. It may also wish to reclaim any assistance already paid in respect of the course, including interest thereon.

The MFA may write to you subsequently to request certain information to assist it with the monitoring and evaluation of your course. Your name and address may therefore be passed (in confidence) to an evaluator commissioned by the MFA to undertake independent evaluation. Supply of this information within a reasonable period of the request is a condition of the payment of grant. Failure to supply the information could lead to cancellation or reduction of the grant awarded, or a requirement to repay grant already paid.

Any equipment for which grant aid is paid must remain in place, be kept in good repair, and used for the same purpose, for at least six years from the date of completion of the course.

Documentary proof of compliance with these rules may be required.

Within the above time limits, you must not dispose of the grant-aided assets to another person or change their location without first obtaining the MFA's approval. If you transfer the grant-aided assets you must tell the new owner that they have been grant-aided and it must be a condition of the transfer that the new owner agrees to be bound by and comply with the conditions of grant, otherwise the MFA will recover grant from you.

Once approved, grant will be paid only after proven expenditure has been incurred and claimed. At this stage you may be asked to provide further details and information in support of your claim. There will be no increase in the EFF grant or, if applicable, MFA grant if the course costs increase but such grants will be reduced if the eligible course costs decrease.

Claims in respect of courses where work commenced before the notified start of work date may be excluded from eligibility to receive grant.

Before any payments can be made, you must submit claims on the claim form supplied by the MFA together with all necessary documentation including invoices which must be fully receipted by the approved or registered College or Training provider to show the date and amount paid and signed by a member of the firm issuing the invoice. If invoices do not comply with this condition, they will not be accepted and will be returned to you.

The dates by which your course should be completed and claim submitted are stated in the Offer Letter. The MFA will allow extensions to the relevant dates only in exceptional circumstances. Failure to register a claim by the relevant date could mean that the MFA will be unable to process it for payment and/or your grant award may be cancelled or reduced. Any difficulties likely to be incurred in meeting these deadlines must therefore be notified to the MFA as soon as they become apparent.

Awards will normally be the subject of a single claim for the full amount (but interim claims can be sought where the work is undertaken on an annual basis).

The MFA may withhold part or the entire grant if it is not satisfied that you have properly incurred the expenditure or that you have carried out any necessary actions relating to the grant.

The MFA may require part or the entire grant to be repaid if it transpires that you made a fraudulent statement in your application or subsequent correspondence, or if applicable, the grant was not used for the purpose for which it was granted or any condition of grant has not been complied with. You may be required to pay interest on the sum recovered.

Representations and complaints

If your application is unsuccessful, or if the amount of grant is reduced, we will write to you with an explanation. If you would like us to reconsider your case we will give you the opportunity to provide additional information. If you have a complaint about any aspect of the administration of the scheme, you should write to us.

Definitions

Benefit

The measurable improvement resulting from an investment.

Beneficiary

The EFF fixes a limit to public contribution granted to an operation and, where appropriate, the minimum contribution by private beneficiaries. The EFF Regulations defines the "**beneficiary**" as a natural or legal person who is the ultimate recipient of public aid. In order to determine the intensity of aid, a public enterprise acting as a normal commercial enterprise (i.e. according to the rules and practices of the market economy) shall be considered in this case as a private beneficiary. Consequently any operations implemented by it shall fall within the same group as identical operations implemented by natural or legal private persons.

Certified copy

This is a copy of any original document that has been signed as a true copy of an original. For EFF applications copies of documents can be certified by your Local Area Facilitator, a Solicitor or a Fisheries Officer.

Fisher

Any person engaging in professional fishing on board an operational fishing vessel, as recognised by the Member State.

Fishing Effort Adjustment Plan

Fishing effort adjustment plans constitute the main instrument to implement reductions in fishing effort, as defined in Article 3(h) of Council Regulation 2371/2002.

Fishing vessel

A fishing vessel is defined under the EFF, in accordance with Article 3 (c) of Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002, as any fishing vessel equipped for the commercial exploitation of living aquatic resources.

Home port

Home port means the port in which a vessel is normally based and from which it normally operates.

Contacts - Local Area Facilitators

Area	Contact details
<p>South West Region: From the Isles of Scilly to Bristol and Hampshire border.</p> <p>London</p> <p>All national and cross regional projects.</p>	<p>Steve Bailey</p> <p>07876 035733 or 01503 240384</p> <p>E-mail: s_bailey@seafish.co.uk</p>
<p>North Region: From West Wirral to the Scottish Border</p> <p>East Region: From Berwick-on-Tweed to Lincolnshire.</p>	<p>Richard Combe</p> <p>07966 764154 or 01875 616473</p> <p>E-mail: r_combe@seafish.co.uk</p>
<p>South & South East Regions: From Dorset/Hampshire border to East Anglia.</p>	<p>David Guy</p> <p>07966 764152 or 01273 517987</p> <p>E-mail: d_guy@seafish.co.uk</p>