

£23 million Seafood Disruption Support Scheme now open

Seafood exporting businesses across the UK that have been affected by the challenges of adjusting to new requirements for exporting to the EU [can apply from today](#) for financial support from the UK Government.

The UK-wide Seafood Disruption Support Scheme will provide up to £23 million of financial assistance to businesses that suffered a financial loss because of delays related to the export of fresh or live fish and shellfish to the EU during January 2021. The fund will be paid retrospectively to cover losses incurred between 1-31 January 2021.

Alongside the Seafood Disruption Support Scheme, the UK Government has been offering targeted support to help exporters with new processes. This includes the Seafood Exports Working Group, meeting twice a week to troubleshoot issues raised by the industry; and a newly established [Scottish Seafood Exports Task Force](#).

Meeting for the first time this week, the taskforce will draw together government officials and industry representatives from the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors to specifically driving forward the seafood sector in Scotland.

The fishing and seafood sector is also set to benefit from significant government investment with a £100m fund to help modernise fishing fleets, the fish processing industry, and rejuvenate a historic and proud industry in the UK, on top of the £32m that will replace EU funding this year.

The Seafood Disruption Support Scheme, [first announced](#) on 19 January, has been made available in recognition of the unique circumstances currently affecting the seafood exporting sector at a time when the industry is facing lower market prices and demand due to the pandemic.

The scheme, administered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on behalf of Defra, is a UK-wide fund offering financial assistance based on a proportion of losses that can be verified up to a maximum of £100,000 per business.

Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said:

Seafood exporting businesses across the UK can apply from today for support from this £23 million scheme, reflecting the unique challenges faced by the sector.

We will continue to work closely with the fisheries and seafood industry through our Seafood Exports Working Group to troubleshoot any issues that cause delays to the export of these highly perishable goods.

UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid said:

While recognising that huge efforts went into preparing for the required changes as we exited the EU, there are many who have incurred losses through no fault of their own. The UK Government is, therefore, stepping up with the Seafood Disruption Support Scheme.

I have been engaging with the industry for many months and continue to work with all sections of the seafood sector in Scotland as we move to maximise future opportunities and adapt to new rules.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart said:

The Seafood Disruption Support Scheme highlights the UK Government's commitment to Welsh exporters who are currently facing a uniquely challenging period.

We want to back our fantastic Welsh businesses and I encourage all who are eligible to apply for this support.

Qualifying businesses for the Seafood Disruption Support Scheme must be registered at Companies House or have evidence that they are a sole trader, partnership or other legal entity, and must meet the following conditions: having fewer than 250 employees, an annual turnover of under £36 million, and less than £18m on their balance sheet.

Applicants must be able to evidence the expected value of the consignment. Shipments affected by export rules that prevent the movement of goods to the EU will be outside the scope of the scheme. The call for applications closes on 28 February 2021 and, if successful, payments are expected to be issued during March. Further eligibility conditions apply and are outlined in the [full scheme guidance published on the MMO website](#).

The Marine Management Organisation also offers a ['one stop shop' for export guidance](#); Defra and HMRC will also be offering targeted, proactive and hands-on support to fisheries exporters to help them successfully meet the new requirements. This includes new training package and focused workshop sessions.

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