

# [New financial support for the UK's fishing businesses that export to the EU](#)

Seafood exporters across the UK will receive government funding of up to £23 million, to support businesses which have been most adversely affected by the COVID pandemic and the challenges of adjusting to new requirements for exporting.

This is in recognition of the unique circumstances of the fishing sector, which has had the most significant new requirements to adjust to, and for whom even a short delay can lead to goods perishing – at a time when the industry is facing lower market prices and demand due to the pandemic.

The fund will be targeted at fishing export businesses who can evidence a genuine loss in exporting fish and shellfish to the EU. Support will be available immediately and paid retrospectively to cover losses incurred since 1 January 2021. The scheme will be targeted at small and medium enterprises and the maximum claim available to individual operators will be £100,000.

The Marine Management Organisation will administer the scheme on behalf of exporters across the UK. More details will be available on eligibility criteria in the coming days. The Government will be consulting industry across the UK and working with the devolved administrations on these eligibility criteria before they are confirmed.

## **Environment Secretary George Eustice said:**

This £23 million scheme will provide crucial support for fishermen and seafood exporters, who have experienced delays and a lack of demand for fish from the restaurant industry in the UK and Europe.

We are continuing to work closely with the fishing and aquaculture sectors to make sure that they are supported, and can continue to fish whilst contributing to the economies of our coastal communities.

## **The Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Steve Barclay said:**

This further £23 million package of support will help our hardworking fishing sector navigate the challenges of the next few months.

It is vital that no community nor region within our United Kingdom is left behind as we continue to support British jobs and build back better from the coronavirus pandemic.

In addition to funding, the UK Government will provide further support to businesses in adapting to new export processes. Defra and HMRC will be offering targeted, proactive and hands on support to fisheries exporters to help them successfully meet the new requirements. This includes a new training package and focused workshop sessions.

Seafood exports to the EU require specific procedures, customs declarations, Catch Certificates and Export Health Certificates (EHCs) and businesses have adapted to these requirements at speed. As seafood is a perishable product with a 'just in time' supply chain, it is important that the sector can export quickly.

The UK Government has been working closely with the seafood industry and individual businesses to support them through this period and to ensure that any errors or problems are tackled as early as possible. The situation has been improving over the last week and the flow of goods is improving, but we will do more.

Support provided to the industry includes:

- Issuing clear guidance on the required IT forms to stakeholder representative groups, hauliers and businesses.
- Twice-weekly meetings with businesses to understand and address issues as they arise.
- Working closely with individual businesses to help them get used to the new procedures required to ensure that errors or problems are tackled early.
- UK Government is stepping up extra physical resources to support certification in Scottish Hubs
- The UK Government has provided two specialist certifiers to support Food Standards Scotland and DFDS over the last week
- An experienced certifying officer from Defra is also currently in Lanarkshire supporting Official Veterinarians with the issuing of health certificates
- APHA has additional Official Veterinarians on standby, available to Scottish Hubs, to support exporters if required.
- Working with French authorities to ensure that minor administrative issues associated with EHCs have not prevented goods from entering the market and with the EU Commission to help member states adopt consistent approaches.
- Providing extensive guidance as part of a range of measures to help the industry meet new export requirements, including training, regular engagement and weekly bulletins.

Separately, the Prime Minister has also committed to providing 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.

Now we have left the Common Fisheries Policy, as an independent coastal state, the UK has taken its independent seat at the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, including the North East Atlantic Fisheries

Commission and the North Atlantic Fisheries Organisation. We have put in place a bilateral agreement with the EU, and a partnership agreement with Norway.

The UK-EU agreement returns 25% of the EU's catch in UK waters (worth £146m) to Scottish, English, Welsh and Northern Irish fishermen, beginning at 15%. Increases in quota this year include key fish stocks such as North Sea cod, from 47% to 57 and North Sea hake, from 18% to 54% with a mechanism to exchange quota between the UK and EU.

The fishing industry has already been hit by the reduction in demand from the hospitality sector in the UK and other export markets as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic with market prices falling by as much as 40%. The measures announced today will therefore support the industry across the UK, during this challenging time and follow an unprecedented package of financial support already announced.

This financial support is in addition to the £9 million of support provided last year to support the sector in England, and support provided by the devolved administrations.