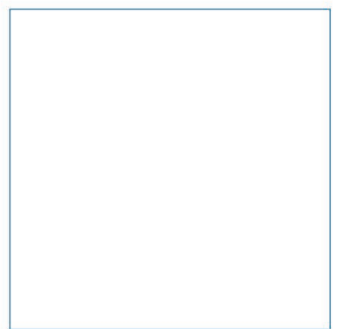
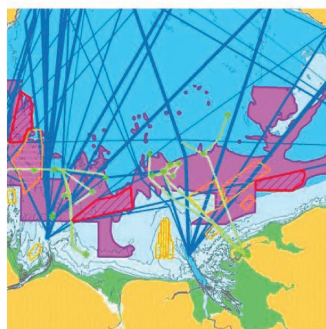
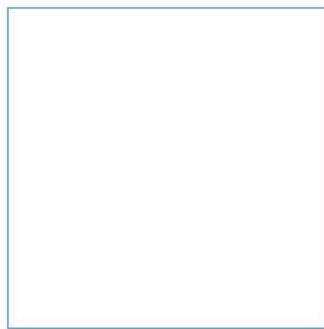


Swansea Council

Evaluation of the Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Action Group

Final Evaluation

December 2021



Innovative Thinking - Sustainable Solutions

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Evaluation of the Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Action Group


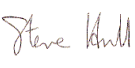

Final Evaluation

December 2021



Document Information

Document History and Authorisation		
Title	Evaluation of the Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Action Group	
	Final Evaluation	
Commissioned by	Swansea Council	
Issue date	December 2021	
Document ref	R.3666	
Project no	R/4799/1	
Date	Version	Revision Details
October 2021	1	Working Appendices A, B and C for Client Review
22 October 2021	2	Issued as Draft Final Appendices for Client and FLAG Members to Review
15 December 2021	3	Issued for Client Use

Prepared (PM)	Approved (QM)	Authorised (PD)
CA Roberts	SC Hull	SF Walmsley
		

Suggested Citation

ABPmer, (2021). Evaluation of the Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Action Group, Final Evaluation, ABPmer Report No. R.3666. A report produced by ABPmer for Swansea Council, December 2021.

Acknowledgements

The contribution of stakeholders to the evaluation, including the Swansea Bay FLAG Lead Body, FLAG members, funding recipients and wider stakeholders is gratefully acknowledged.

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Contents / Cynnwys

English.....	1
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Swansea Bay FLAG Programme.....	1
3 Programme Administration	2
3.1 Administration.....	2
3.2 Procurement Process and Eligibility Criteria	3
4 Programme Budget and Expenditure	3
4.1 Total expenditure.....	4
5 Project Outcomes and Impacts.....	6
6 Conclusions and Recommendations.....	7
Welsh.....	9
1 Cyflwyniad.....	9
2 Rhaglen FLAG Bae Abertawe.....	9
3 Gweinyddiaeth y Rhaglen.....	10
3.1 Gweinyddiaeth	10
3.2 Y Broses Gaffael a'r Meini Prawf Cymhwysedd	11
4 Cyllideb a Gwariant y Prosiect	11
4.1 Cyfanswm y gwariant.....	12
5 Canlyniadau ac Effeithiau'r Prosiect.....	14
6 Casgliadau ac Argymhellion	15

Appendices / Atodiadau

A	Swansea Bay FLAG Programme.....	18
A.1	Introduction.....	18
A.2	Background	18
A.3	Vision	18
A.4	EMFF objectives	19
A.5	LDS objectives	19
A.6	Programme timeline	20
A.7	Evaluation of the SBFLAG Programme	20
B	Programme Administration	22
B.1	Lead Body: Swansea Council	22
B.2	Welsh Government.....	23
B.3	Flag Members.....	23
B.4	Swansea Bay FLAG communication plan.....	25
B.5	The procurement process.....	25
B.6	Views on the SBFLAG processes	27
C	Programme Budget and Expenditure	30
C.1	Budget allocation	30
C.2	Total expenditure	31
D	Project Outcomes and Impacts	34
D.1	Project outcomes and contributions to SBFLAG objectives.....	34
D.2	Views on the SBFLAG programme impact	38
E	Evaluation Key Messages and Recommendations	39
E.1	Administration of the SBFLAG and programme design	39
E.2	Relevance of funding criteria to local fisheries and aquaculture sectors	40
E.3	Conclusions	41

Tables / Tablau

Table 1.	Swansea Bay FLAG Local Development Strategy Themes and Objectives.....	2
Table 2.	Status of FLAG-funded projects (as of 9 November 2021)	5
Table 3.	FLAG project expenditure (up to 30 September 2021) by activity type.....	6
Table 4.	LDS themes and objectives being delivered by the projects completed/approved up to 30 September 2021	6
Tabl 1.	Themâu ac Amcanion Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol FLAG Bae Abertawe	10
Tabl 2.	Statws prosiectau a ariannwyd trwy'r FLAG (ar 9 Tachwedd 2021).....	13
Tabl 3.	Gwariant prosiect FLAG (hyd at 30 Medi 2021) yn ôl math o weithgaredd	14
Tabl 4.	Themâu ac amcanion y Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol a gyflawnir gan y prosiectau a gwblhawyd neu a gymeradwywyd hyd at 31 Medi 2021	14
Table A1.	SBFLAG Local Development Strategy Themes and Objectives.....	19
Table B1.	Composition of SBFLAG members (as of 8 June 2021).....	24
Table B2.	Views on the SBFLAG processes obtained during consultation	28
Table C1.	Status of FLAG-funded projects (as of 9 November 2021)	32
Table C2.	FLAG project expenditure (up to 30 September 2021) by activity type.....	33
Table D1.	Projects awarded funding from the SBFLAG.....	35
Table D2.	Food festival projects in the SBFLAG area, funded through the Menter A Busnes Scheme.....	36
Table D3.	LDS themes and objectives being delivered by the projects completed/approved up to 30 September 2021	37
Table D4.	Views on the impact of the SBFLAG programme obtained through consultation	38

Figures / Ffigurau

Figure 1.	SBFLAG by budget type.....	4
Ffigur 1.	FLAG Bae Abertawe yn ôl math o gyllideb	12
Figure B1.	Number of attendees at Swansea Bay FLAG meetings since 2017	25
Figure C1.	SBFLAG by budget type.....	30

English

1 Introduction

The Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) was originally established as a local partnership in 2012 in response to opportunities opened up through Union Priority 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) between 2007-2013. The Swansea Bay FLAG was one of four FLAGs established in Wales¹, and during the 2007-2013 funding period, covered the Local Authority Areas of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend (Swansea Bay FLAG, 2018).

Further to successfully overseeing the implementation of the EFF 2007-2013 funding in Swansea Bay, the Swansea Bay FLAG has continued to administer a second period of funding under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) between 2014-2020.

An initial baseline evaluation of the Swansea Bay (SB) Fisheries Local Action group (FLAG) was published in May 2020 which described the SBFLAG's structure, procurement processes, project expenditure, project outcomes and progress towards the FLAG's objectives up to 31 January 2020.

The purpose of this final evaluation is to provide an assessment of the overall performance of the Programme at administrative body and project level, the latter with respect to meeting the EMFF and LDS objectives, and with respect to the long-term impacts of the project outputs. It also highlights any lessons for implementing future funding schemes.

This report contains the following sections:

- Section 1: Introduction (this section).
- Section 2: Swansea Bay FLAG Programme.
- Section 3: Programme administration.
- Section 4 Project budget and expenditures.
- Section 5: Project outcomes and impacts.
- Section 6: Evaluation key messages and recommendations.

2 Swansea Bay FLAG Programme

The FLAG's vision for Swansea Bay is *"By 2020 we want to see successful, sustainable, economically viable local fishing and associated industries, aware of its heritage and well equipped to meet current and future challenges."*

To help achieve this vision, The Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Development Strategy (LDS) was updated for the current funding phase (2014-2020) informed by a Fishing Industry Research Study in 2015 and the feedback from consultation with stakeholders in September 2016. The key issues identified were translated into the themes and objectives shown in Table 1. Further background on the SBFLAG is provided in Appendix A.

¹ The other FLAGs established in Wales are the North Wales FLAG, Cardigan Bay FLAG and the Pembrokeshire FLAG

Table 1. Swansea Bay FLAG Local Development Strategy Themes and Objectives

Theme	Objectives
Theme 1: Adding value, creating jobs, attracting young people and promoting innovations at all stages of the supply chain of fishery and aquaculture products	Objective 1: Improve links with other local food and other producers
	Objective 2: Achieve better links with schools and colleges to encourage young people to help develop the sector
	Objective 3: Support delivery of small-scale infrastructure projects to encourage sustainable growth of the industry
	Objective 4: Creation of opportunities for networking, marketing and promotion of local industry, including supply-chain opportunities
	Objective 5: Provision of support for trying out new processes or adding value to products to help small companies in the fishing industry to grow
Theme 2: Supporting diversification inside or outside commercial fisheries, lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries and aquaculture areas	Objective 6: Support for business to identify diversification opportunities and re-skill within or outside the sector
	Objective 7: Provision of opportunities to develop the tourism sector linked to local fisheries, including pescaturism, eco-tourism and tourist facilities
Theme 3: Enhancing and capitalising on the environmental assets of the fisheries and aquaculture areas, including operations to mitigate climate change	Objective 8: Identification and development of alternative sources of income for the fishing industry such as renewable energy
	Objective 9: Making the most of the local natural environment
	Objective 10: Sustainable and balanced development of the heritage and tourism aspects of the coastline
Theme 4: Promoting social well-being and cultural heritage in fisheries and aquaculture areas, including fisheries, aquaculture and maritime cultural heritage	Objective 11: Support for the promotion of cultural heritage, aquaculture and maritime interests
Theme 5: Local development and the governance of local fisheries resources and maritime activities	Objective 12: To further engage communities and local representatives to support and promote the local industry

Source: Swansea Bay FLAG LDS (Swansea Bay FLAG, 2018)

3 Programme Administration

3.1 Administration

The UK Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is accountable for the EMFF 2014-2020 programme across the UK, with delivery responsibility delegated to Intermediate Bodies. In Wales, Rural Payments Wales (RPW) is the delegated Intermediate Body. The FLAG Programme is delivered by individual FLAGs via Lead Bodies, which administer and manage the funding allocated to their specific FLAG. The roles of the SBFLAG Lead Body and the Welsh Government are described in further detail below and in Appendix B.

3.1.1 Lead Body

As the Lead Body, Swansea Council undertake programme and project management, financial and administrative functions, technical appraisal of grant applications and the submission of claims for funding to the Welsh Government (Swansea Bay FLAG, 2018).

3.1.2 Welsh Government

The Welsh Government has responsibility for undertaking a final eligibility check on project proposals selected by the FLAG, prior to formal approval being issued. This involves checking that the proposal meets the eligibility criteria within the EMFF guidance and regulations, that the costs are calculated correctly and that the procurement has been conducted correctly. If the proposal and procurement is compliant, confirmation of the funding offer is issued.

3.1.3 FLAG Members

As of 31 January 2020, the Swansea Bay Flag membership comprised 11 private sector members and 5 public sector members. The Swansea Bay FLAG LDS states that the FLAG should meet at least quarterly. Between July 2017 and January 2020, ten FLAG meetings have been held. The number of FLAG member attendees has ranged between 4 and 13 and all meetings have been attended by at least one public and one private sector representative.

3.2 Procurement Process and Eligibility Criteria

The application process for EMFF funding via the FLAG comprised two stages:

- i) Submission of a Project Idea Form (PIF); and, if approved by the FLAG
- ii) Submission of a full application.

The Welsh Government EMFF 2014-2020 FLAG Guidance Notes (Welsh Government, 2018) state that if the activity (project) can be clearly demonstrated as supporting the achievement of the objectives of EMFF and the aims of the LDS (Table 1) then it will be deemed to be eligible.

The activities and costs that were eligible for FLAG funding changed during the funding programme timeline. The initial Welsh Government EMFF 2014-2020 FLAG Guidance Notes (Welsh Government, 2018) highlighted that capital expenditure was ineligible for FLAG funding (paragraphs 58 and 59 of the guidance). This restriction was a key difference between the current funding phase (EMFF; 2014-2020) and the previous funding phase (EFF; 2007-2014) in which capital expenditure was eligible. It had an impact on the FLAG being able to identify potential projects, and thus on the disbursement of funds and on FLAG outcomes, and some FLAG members withdrew their support. In February 2020, the restriction on capital expenditure was removed and the SBFLAG's implementation budget was amended to enable £140,000² to be allocated to capital projects before the deadline.

4 Programme Budget and Expenditure

The total budget for the SBFLAG was £380,000, which was split between FLAG running costs, animation costs and project implementation as shown in Figure 1. Full details are provided in Appendix C.

² £70,000 in financial year 20/21 and £70,000 in financial year 21/22.

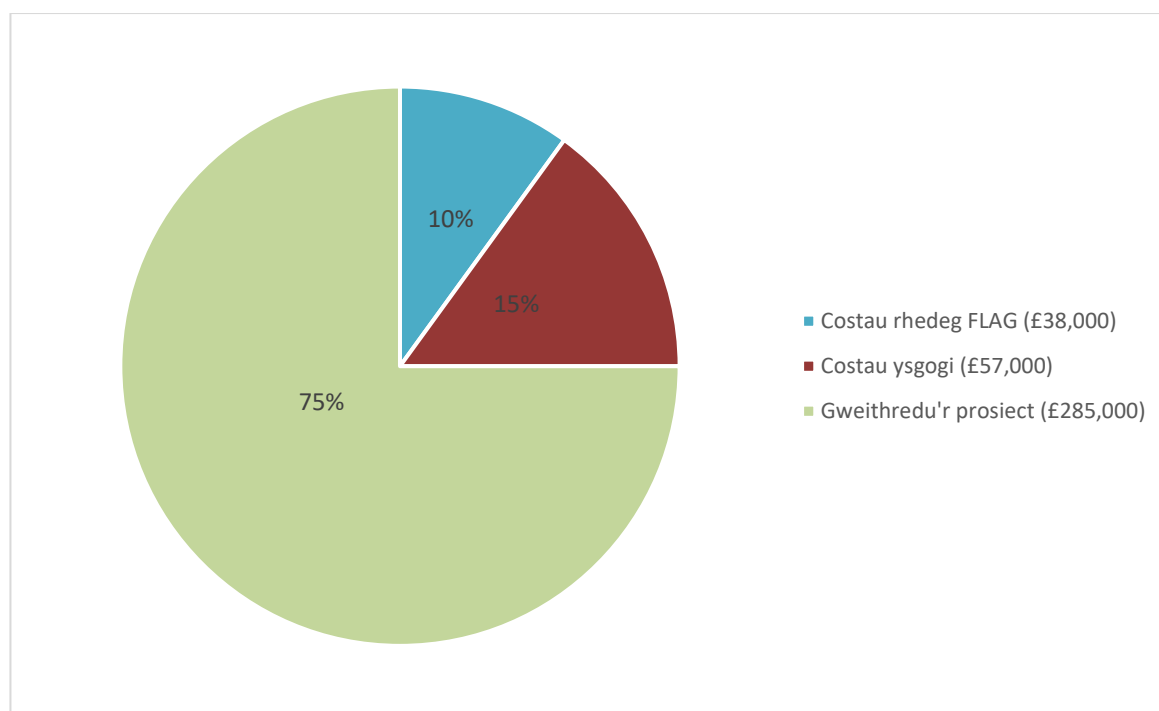


Figure 1. SBFLAG by budget type

The SBFLAG Lead Body initially understood that any FLAG staff costs and travel related to project implementation was eligible to be claimed from the project implementation budget. It was later clarified that this was not possible, and all of the Welsh FLAGs were required to re-profile their expenditure, making the necessary changes to the implementation budget.

The resulting budget redistribution resulted in a total of £285,000 being available to award for project funding and required the SBFLAG to identify additional projects to allocate the additional funding to in a relatively short time (between February 2020 and September 2020). The SBFLAG was able to identify additional projects quickly as the team had established a 'pipeline' of project ideas through liaison with stakeholders throughout the programme and had a drive to sign off projects quickly.

4.1 Total expenditure

Table 2 shows the FLAG expenditure and allocation to 30 September 2021 (the deadline for funding allocation). The table indicates that for five out of the nine approved projects, the applicant was the SBFLAG. This was because if the SBFLAG were the applicant, the project was eligible for 100% funding, rather than say 50-75% for small community groups. Hence, if the FLAG members felt the proposed project was going to benefit the community, they could offer to become the applicant. In this way the delivery and outcomes of that project were then owned by the SBFLAG and could be shared with the wider community and not just one enterprise.

Table 3 shows the FLAG project expenditure up to 30 September 2021 by activity type. Out of the total SBFLAG funding available for project implementation, 64% (£183,587) was allocated to projects with a capital investment element. Hence if the capital expenditure restriction had not been lifted, it is likely that the SBFLAG would not have been able to fully allocate the available SBFLAG funding within the funding timeline.

Table 2. Status of FLAG-funded projects (as of 9 November 2021)

Project	Type of Study	Funding Applicant	Project Delivered By	% Funded	Revenue (£)	Capital (£)	Status
Seafood Cookery Demonstrations *	Education	SBFLAG	SBFLAG	100	7,055		Complete
Oyster Feasibility Study	Feasibility	SBFLAG	Contractor	100	4,999		Complete
Fish is the Dish	Education	SBFLAG	Contractor	100	£53,860		Due for completion October 2022**
Copper Jack feasibility study	Feasibility	Community Trust	Contractor	100	4,602		Complete
Burry Port Auction House Feasibility Study	Feasibility	Local Business	Contractor	100	8,000		Complete
Mobile pontoon on River Tawe	Capital	SBFLAG	SBFLAG	100	0	137,773.70	Due for completion May 2022***
Burry Harbour improvements	Capital	SBFLAG	Contractor	100	0	58,016.06	Due for completion December 2021
Oyster Restoration Plan	Resource management	SBFLAG	Contractor	100	24,428		Due for completion September 2021
Ice Machine	Capital	Local business	Local business	50		2,639.99	Waiting on approval
Total SBFLAG Expenditure (Revenue and Capital)					301,374.29		
<p>* This project received additional funding of £1,796 from Menter a Busnes (MAB) Seafood Festival Fund (Seafood Market Development and Growth Project). See Appendix D for further details</p> <p>** Welsh Government have given approval for this project to continue into 2022, due to the impact of COVID-19 which delayed delivery of this schools education project.</p> <p>*** Initial target completion date was October 2021, however, due to various factors (e.g. expansion of original pontoon design, stakeholder and consenting body consultation and the requirement to obtain planning permission), the project completion date is now expected to be Spring 2022.</p>							

Source: Data provided by Lead Body 5 August 2021

Table 3. FLAG project expenditure (up to 30 September 2021) by activity type

Project Type	No. of Projects	Total Expenditure (£)	% of Total FLAG Project Expenditure
Feasibility	3	17,601	6
Education	2	60,915	21
Capital investment	3	198,430	64
Resource Management	1	24,428	9
Total	9	301,374	

Source: Calculated from data provided by Lead Body on 11 November 2021

5 Project Outcomes and Impacts

Table 4 highlights which objectives are being delivered by completed or approved SBFLAG projects (as of 30 September 2021). Each project is described further in Appendix D All of the LDS themes and objectives were supported by the portfolio of SBFLAG funded projects, although there was a variation in the extent to which some of the objectives were supported. For example, eight of the nine projects were considered to contribute to objective 9 (making the most of the local environment), whilst objectives 2, 5, 6 and 8 were only supported by two of the nine projects each. Given that two of the projects that contributed to objectives 5, 6 and 8 are projects with a capital expenditure, it is considered likely that the initial restriction on capital expenditure within proposals did contribute at least in part to the lack of projects directly contributing to these objectives.

Table 4. LDS themes and objectives being delivered by the projects completed/approved up to 30 September 2021

Project	Theme 1					Theme 2		Theme 3			Theme 4		Theme 5
	Objective 1		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Assessment of the oyster stock/population			●				●		●	●	●	●	
Seafood cookery demonstrations at Swansea market	●	●		●					●	●	●	●	
Fish is the dish 2020	●	●		●					●	●	●	●	
Copper Jack Feasibility Study			●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Burry Port Auction House Feasibility Study	●		●		●		●					●	
Mobile Pontoon on River Tawe			●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Harbour improvements									●	●	●		
Oyster Restoration Plan				●					●	●	●	●	
Ice Machine	●		●	●	●				●				

● = Project considered to contribute to this objective based on the Lead Body assessment of the project application.

Stakeholder views were sought on the impact of the SBFLAG programme. FLAG projects were well received. Cookery and market seafood demonstrations helped raise awareness of the programme, support fishing businesses in the region, and promote seafood locally. Feasibility studies that the FLAG has funded have helped secure further funding for implementation. Projects have also supported diversification opportunities, adding value and supplying new markets. FLAG funding was felt to have brought benefits to applicants and other stakeholders, enabled plans to be implemented rapidly, and supported projects for which funding was felt unlikely to have been available from other sources.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Full details of the key messages and recommendations are provided in Appendix E

The SBFLAG has provided £285,000 of funding across nine projects to support the local fishing, aquaculture and associated industries in Swansea Bay between 2017 and 2021. The initial implementation of the programme was negatively affected by the exclusion of capital items from the eligibility criteria, which made it difficult to support the local community's needs and resulted in an initially slow uptake and allocation of FLAG funds. Removal of the capital funding restriction, and allocation of an additional sum to project implementation, resulted in rapid allocation and uptake of funds. This was facilitated by the effective relationships the FLAG had built up, and initiation of project ideas, with stakeholders.

Projects were funded that contributed to all 12 LDS objectives, and particularly objectives 9, 10, 11 and 12 (related to the local natural environment, cultural heritage and tourism, and engaging communities). Conversely, objectives for building better links with schools, support for new processes or adding value to products, diversification opportunities, and alternative sources of income for the fishing industry, were less well served by the portfolio of projects.

Projects have supported the individual businesses involved, helping them secure further funding (following on from FLAG-funded feasibility studies), safeguard employment and add value to products. More widely, FLAG activities and projects have helped to raise the profile of seafood locally.

FLAG administration and running costs were £95,000, although an additional £99,000 was funded separately by the Welsh Government, to cover the actual costs incurred in attending meetings and providing support to projects and potential applicants. Administration of the programme was supported by Council staff, but a lack of continuity of those staff resulted in an additional training burden for FLAG staff. FLAG members' attendance at meetings fluctuated over the programme, and mechanisms for strengthening their participation should be considered.

Overall, the SBFLAG has supported local fisheries and aquaculture operators and promoted seafood to the local community. The full impact of the FLAG is not yet apparent, as a number of key projects are due for completion in 2022.

The recommendations of the evaluation are:

- Administration of the SBFLAG and programme design:
 - Where possible, consistent supporting personnel resources should be available to the Lead Body, to enable the Programme to be delivered in as efficient a manner as possible.

- Where possible, the systems and processes enabling the Lead Body to claim funding from the Intermediate Body (or equivalent) should be appropriate to the funding scheme.
- Adequate funding (for personnel, and travel/subsistence costs) needs to be allocated to ensure efficient running of FLAG processes and support to potential applicants.
- Future funding programmes should consider strengthening the rules regarding member's attendance at meetings.
- It can take a number of years for the FLAG to embed itself with the community, build relationships and encourage the development of project ideas. A minimum FLAG implementation period of 5 years is therefore recommended.
- Guidance and communications:
 - Ensure the funding guidance regarding eligibility and application process is clear and understandable to all.
 - Signpost potential applicants to the appropriate funding programme for their project by providing clear information describing what different funding programmes are designed for.
 - Outreach and communications should target potential applicants and consider the most appropriate ways of reaching and supporting them (e.g. information sessions at ports/harbours).
- Relevance of funding criteria to local fisheries and aquaculture sectors:
 - Future funding programmes should clearly set out the specific aims of the programme, including who the funding is for and examples of the types of projects that may be funded.
 - Programme design should consider the potential needs of the target stakeholders and eligibility criteria should reflect these where possible.
 - Capital expenditure is often a requirement for projects supporting growth of the fisheries and associated industries and should therefore be a key consideration in the design of eligibility criteria.

Welsh

1 Cyflwyniad

Cafodd Grŵp Gweithredu Lleol Pysgodfeydd (FLAG) Bae Abertawe ei sefydlu'n wreiddiol yn 2012 fel partneriaeth leol mewn ymateb i gyfleoedd a ddaeth yn sgil Blaenoriaeth 4 yr Undeb mewn perthynas â Chronfa Pysgodfeydd Ewrop (EFF) rhwng 2007-2013. FLAG Bae Abertawe oedd un o'r pedwar FLAG cyntaf a sefydlwyd yng Nghymru³, ac yn ystod cyfnod cyllido 2007-2013 roedd yn cwmpasu Ardaloedd Awdurdodau Lleol Abertawe, Castell-nedd Port Talbot a Phen-y-bont ar Ogwr (FLAG Bae Abertawe, 2018).

Ar ôl goruchwyllo'n llwyddiannus y modd y gweithredwyd cyllid yr EFF rhwng 2007-2013 ym Mae Abertawe, mae FLAG Bae Abertawe wedi parhau i weinyddu ail gyfnod cyllido dan Gronfa'r Môr a Physgodfeydd Ewrop (EMFF) rhwng 2014-2020.

Cyhoeddwyd gwerthusiad sylfaenol cychwynnol o Grŵp Gweithredu Lleol Pysgodfeydd Bae Abertawe ym mis Mai 2020 a oedd yn disgrifio strwythur FLAG Bae Abertawe, y prosesau caffael, gwariant prosiectau, canlyniadau prosiectau a'r datblygiadau er mwyn cyrraedd amcanion y FLAG hyd at 31 Ionawr 2020. Diben y gwerthusiad terfynol hwn yw cyflwyno asesiad o berfformiad cyflawn y Rhaglen ar lefel y corff gweinyddol a'r prosiect, yr olaf o ran bodloni amcanion yr EMFF a'r Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol (LDS), ac mewn perthynas ag effeithiau hirdymor allbynnau'r prosiect. Mae hefyd yn tynnu sylw at unrhyw wersi ar gyfer gweithredu cynlluniau ariannu yn y dyfodol.

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn cynnwys yr adrannau a ganlyn:

- Adran 1: Cyflwyniad (yr adran hon).
- Adran 2: Rhaglen FLAG Bae Abertawe.
- Adran 3: Gweinyddiaeth y Rhaglen.
- Adran 4: Cyllideb a gwariant y prosiect.
- Adran 5: Canlyniadau ac effeithiau'r prosiect.
- Adran 6: Prif ystyriaethau'r gwerthusiad ac argymhellion.

2 Rhaglen FLAG Bae Abertawe

Dyma weledigaeth y FLAG ar gyfer Bae Abertawe: "*Erbyn 2020, hoffem weld bod diwydiannau pysgota a'r rhai cysylltiedig yn llwyddiannus, yn gynaliadwy ac yn economaidd hyfyw, yn ymwybodol o'u treftadaeth ac mewn sefyllfa dda i ateb heriau'r presennol a'r dyfodol.*"

Er mwyn helpu i wireddu'r weledigaeth hon, cafodd Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol Pysgodfeydd Bae Abertawe (LDS) ei diweddarau ar gyfer y cyfnod cyllido presennol (2014-2020), ac fe'i llywiwyd gan Astudiaeth Ymchwil i'r Diwydiant Pysgota a gynhaliwyd yn 2015 ac adborth a ddeilliodd o ymgynghoriad â rhanddeiliaid a gynhaliwyd ym mis Medi 2016. Cafodd y materion allweddol eu troi'n themâu ac yn amcanion, ac fe'u dangosir yn Nhabl 1. Ceir rhagor o gefndir FLAG Bae Abertawe yn Atodiad A.

³ Y Grwpiau Gweithredu Lleol Pysgodfeydd eraill yng Nghymru yw: FLAG Gogledd Cymru, FLAG Bae Ceredigion a FLAG Sir Benfro

Tabl 1. Themâu ac Amcanion Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol FLAG Bae Abertawe

Themâu	Amcanion
Thema 1: Ychwanegu gwerth, creu swyddi, denu pobl ifanc a hyrwyddo arloesi yn holl gamau'r gadwyn gyflenwi sy'n berthnasol i gynhyrchion dyframaeth a physgodfeydd	Amcan 1: Gwella'r cysylltiadau â chynhyrchwyr bwyd lleol a chynhyrchwyr eraill
	Amcan 2: Sicrhau cysylltiadau gwell ag ysgolion a cholegau er mwyn annog pobl ifanc i helpu i ddatblygu'r sector
	Amcan 3: Cynorthwyo i gyflawni prosiectau seilwaith graddfa fach er mwyn annog twf cynaliadwy'r diwydiant
	Amcan 4: Creu cyfleoedd i rwydweithio, marchnata a hyrwyddo diwydiannau lleol, yn cynnwys cyfleoedd yn ymwneud â'r gadwyn gyflenwi
	Amcan 5: Darparu cymorth ar gyfer rhoi cynnig ar brosesau newydd neu ychwanegu gwerth at gynhyrchion er mwyn helpu cwmnïau bach yn y diwydiant pysgota i dyfu
Thema 2: Cynorthwyo arallgyfeirio oddi mewn neu oddi allan i bysgodfeydd masnachol, dysgu gydol oes a chreu swyddi yn y meysydd pysgodfeydd a dyframaeth	Amcan 6: Cymorth i fusnesau o ran pennu cyfleoedd i arallgyfeirio ac ailgilio oddi mewn neu oddi allan i'r sector
	Amcan 7: Darparu cyfleoedd i ddatblygu'r sector twristiaeth sy'n gysylltiedig â physgodfeydd lleol, yn cynnwys pysgod-dwristiaeth, ecodwristiaeth a chyfleusterau i dwristiaid
Thema 3: Gwella a manteisio ar asedau amgylcheddol y meysydd pysgodfeydd a dyframaeth, yn cynnwys gwaith i liniaru newid hinsawdd	Amcan 8: Pennu a datblygu ffynonellau incwm amgen ar gyfer y diwydiant pysgota, megis ynni adnewyddadwy
	Amcan 9: Gwneud y gorau o'r amgylchedd naturiol lleol
	Amcan 10: Datblygu agweddau treftadaeth a thwristiaeth yr arfordir mewn modd cynaliadwy a chytbwys
Thema 4: Hyrwyddo llesiant cymdeithasol a threftadaeth ddiwylliannol yn y meysydd pysgodfeydd a dyframaeth, yn cynnwys treftadaeth ddiwylliannol forol, dyframaeth a physgodfeydd	Amcan 11: Cymorth ar gyfer hyrwyddo treftadaeth ddiwylliannol, dyframaeth a buddiannau morol
Thema 5: Datblygiad lleol a dulliau llywodraethu gweithgareddau morol ac adnoddau pysgodfeydd lleol	Amcan 12: Ymgysylltu ymhellach â chymunedau a chynrychiolwyr lleol i ategu a hyrwyddo'r diwydiant lleol

Ffynhonnell: Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol FLAG Bae Abertawe (FLAG Bae Abertawe, 2018)

3 Gweinyddiaeth y Rhaglen

3.1 Gweinyddiaeth

Sefydliad Rheoli Morol y DU (MMO) sy'n atebol am raglen EMFF 2014-2020 y DU gyfan, gyda chyfrifoldeb cyflenwi wedi'i ddirprwyo i Gyrrff Canolradd. Yng Nghymru, Taliadau Gwledig Cymru (RPW) yw'r Corff Canolradd dirprwyedig. Darperir y Rhaglen FLAG gan FLAGau unigol drwy Gyrrff Arweiniol sy'n gweinyddu ac yn rheoli'r cyllid a ddyrennir i'w FLAG penodol. Disgrifir rôl Corff Arweiniol FLAG Bae Abertawe a rôl Llywodraeth Cymru yn fanylach isod ac yn Atodiad B.

3.1.1 Y Corff Arweiniol

Fel y Corff Arweiniol, Cyngor Abertawe sy'n mynd i'r afael â rheoli'r rhaglen a'r prosiectau, y swyddogaethau ariannol a gweinyddol, y broses o gynnal gwerthusiadau technegol ar geisiadau am grantiau a'r broses o gyflwyno hawliadau am gyllid i Lywodraeth Cymru (FLAG Bae Abertawe, 2018).

3.1.2 Llywodraeth Cymru

Llywodraeth Cymru sy'n gyfrifol am gynnal gwiriad terfynol ar gymhwysra cynigion prosiectau a ddewisir gan y FLAG, cyn y rhoddir cymeradwyaeth ffurfiol. Mae hyn yn golygu gwirio bod y cynnig yn bodloni meini prawf cymhwysra o fewn rheoliadau a chanllawiau'r EMFF, bod y costau'n cael eu cyfrifo'n gywir a bod y prosesau caffael wedi'u cynnal yn briodol. Os bydd y cynnig a'r prosesau caffael yn cydymffurfio, anfonir cadarnhad o'r cynnig cyllido.

3.1.3 Aelodau'r FLAG

Fel yr oedd y sefyllfa ar 31 Ionawr 2020, roedd aelodau FLAG Bae Abertawe yn cynnwys 11 aelod o'r sector preifat a 5 aelod o'r sector cyhoeddus. Mae Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol FLAG Bae Abertawe yn nodi y dylai'r FLAG gyfarfod bob chwarter o leiaf. Rhwng mis Gorffennaf 2017 a mis Ionawr 2020, cafodd deg o gyfarfodydd y FLAG eu cynnal. Gwelir bod nifer yr aelodau a fynychodd wedi amrywio o 4 i 13, a mynychwyd pob un o'r cyfarfodydd gan o leiaf un cynrychiolydd o'r sector cyhoeddus ac un cynrychiolydd o'r sector preifat.

3.2 Y Broses Gaffael a'r Meini Prawf Cymhwysedd

Roedd y broses gaffael ar gyfer cyllid yr EMFF trwy gyfrwng y FLAG yn cynnwys dau gam:

- i) Cyflwyno Ffurflen Syniad Prosiect; ac, os caiff y syniad hwn ei gymeradwyo gan y FLAG
- ii) Cyflwyno cais llawn.

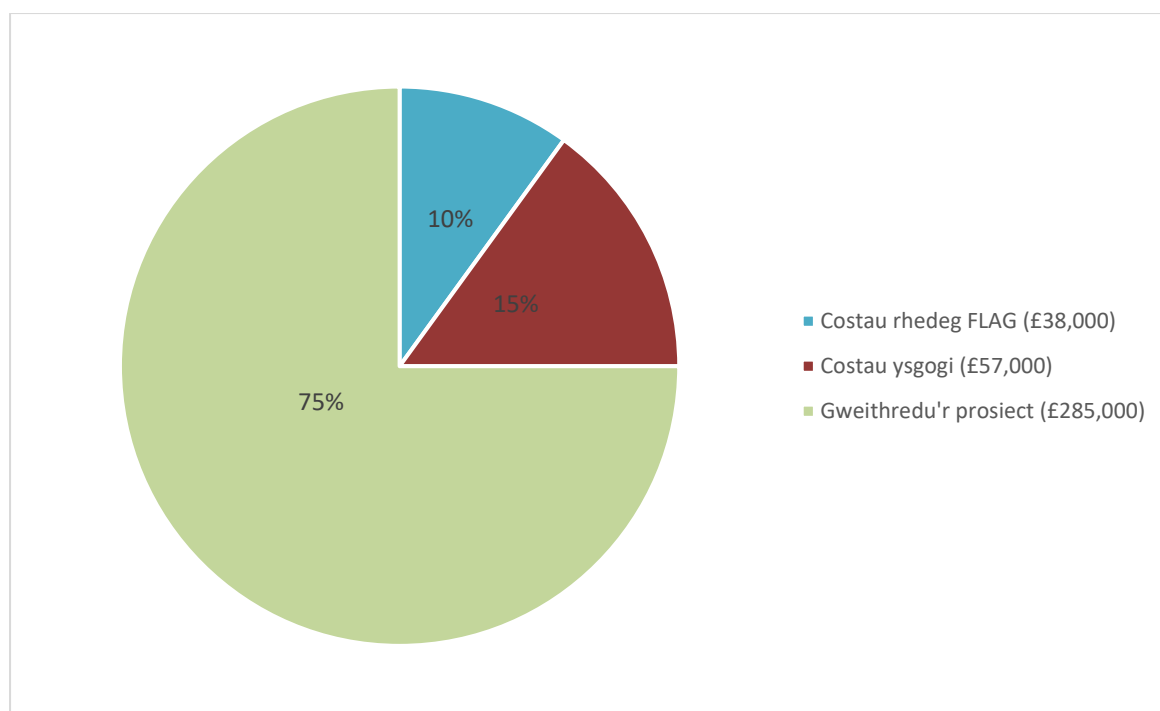
Mae Nodiadau Cyfarwyddyd Llywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer Grwpiau Gweithredu Lleol Pysgodfeydd mewn perthynas â'r EMFF (2014-2020) yn nodi yr ystyrir y gweithgaredd (prosiect) yn gymwys os dangosir yn glir y bydd yn cynorthwyo i gyflawni amcanion yr EMFF a nodau'r Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol (Tabl 1).

Newidiodd y gweithgareddau a'r costau a oedd yn gymwys i gael cyllid FLAG yn ystod llinell amser y rhaglen ariannu. Amlygodd Nodiadau Cyfarwyddyd FLAG (Llywodraeth Cymru, 2018) cychwynnol Llywodraeth Cymru 2014-2020 nad oedd gwariant cyfalaf yn gymwys ar gyfer cyllid FLAG (paragraffau 58 a 59 y cyfarwyddyd). Roedd y cyfyngiad hwn yn wahaniaeth hollbwysig rhwng y cam cyllido presennol (EMFF; 2014-2020) a'r cam cyllido blaenorol (EFF; 2007-2014) pan oedd gwariant cyfalaf yn gymwys. Cafodd effaith ar allu'r FLAG i nodi prosiectau posibl, ac felly ar dalu arian ac ar ganlyniadau FLAG, a thynnodd rhai aelodau FLAG eu cefnogaeth yn ôl. Ym mis Chwefror 2020, dilëwyd y cyfyngiad ar wariant cyfalaf a diwygiwyd cyllideb weithredu FLAG Bae Abertawe i alluogi dyrannu £140,000⁴ i brosiectau cyfalaf cyn y dyddiad cau.

4 Cyllideb a Gwariant y Prosiect

Cyfanswm y gyllideb ar gyfer FLAG Bae Abertawe oedd £380,000, a rannwyd rhwng costau rhedeg FLAG, costau ysgogi, a gweithredu prosiectau fel y dangosir yn Ffigur 1. Ceir manylion llawn yn Atodiad C.

⁴ £70,000 ym mlwyddyn ariannol 20/21 a £70,000 ym mlwyddyn ariannol 21/22.



Ffigur 1. FLAG Bae Abertawe yn ôl math o gyllideb

Ar y dechrau, dealodd Corff Arweiniol FLAG Bae Abertawe fod unrhyw gostau staff FLAG a theithio a oedd yn gysylltiedig â gweithredu prosiectau yn gymwys i gael eu hawlio o gyllideb gweithredu'r prosiect. Yn ddiweddarach eglurwyd nad oedd hyn yn bosibl, ac roedd hi'n ofynnol i bob un o FLAGau Cymru ail-broffilio eu gwariant, gan wneud y newidiadau angenrheidiol i'r gyllideb weithredu.

O ganlyniad i ailddosbarthu'r gyllideb, roedd cyfanswm o £285,000 ar gael i'w ddyfarnu i gyllid prosiectau ac roedd hi'n ofynnol i FLAG Bae Abertawe ddewis prosiectau eraill i roi'r cyllid ychwanegol iddynt mewn cyfnod cymharol fyr (rhwng mis Chwefror 2020 a mis Medi 2020). Roedd FLAG Bae Abertawe yn gallu dewis prosiectau ychwanegol yn gyflym gan fod y tîm wedi sefydlu nifer o syniadau prosiect yn yr arfaeth drwy gysylltu â rhanddeiliaid drwy gydol y rhaglen, ac aethpwyd ati i gymeradwyo prosiectau'n ddi-oed.

4.1 Cyfanswm y gwariant

Mae Tabl 2 yn dangos gwariant a dyraniad y FLAG hyd at 30 Medi 2021 (y dyddiad cau ar gyfer dyrannu cyllid). Mae'r tabl yn dangos mai'r ymgeisydd oedd FLAG Bae Abertawe ar gyfer pump o'r naw prosiect a gymeradwywyd. Digwyddodd hyn oherwydd, pe bai FLAG Bae Abertawe yn ymgeisydd, roedd y prosiect yn gymwys i gael cyllid o 100%, yn hytrach na 50-75% ar gyfer grwpiau cymunedol bach efallai. Felly, os oedd aelodau'r FLAG yn teimlo bod y prosiect arfaethedig yn mynd i fod o fudd i'r gymuned, gallent gynnig bod yn ymgeisydd. Wrth wneud hyn, roedd gweithredu a chanlyniadau'r prosiect hwnnw yn dod yn eiddo i FLAG Bae Abertawe y gellid ei rannu â'r gymuned ehangach, yn hytrach na gyda dim ond un fenter.

Mae Tabl 3 yn dangos gwariant y prosiect FLAG hyd at 30 Medi 2021, yn ôl y math o weithgaredd. O'r cyfanswm arian FLAG Bae Abertawe oedd ar gael ar gyfer gweithredu prosiectau, dyrannwyd 64% (£183,587) i brosiectau gydag elfen o fuddsoddi cyfalaf. Felly, pe na bai'r cyfyngiad gwariant cyfalaf wedi'i godi, mae'n bur debyg na fyddai FLAG Bae Abertawe wedi gallu dyrannu'r cyllid FLAG Bae Abertawe oedd ar gael yn llawn o fewn y llinell amser ariannu.

Tabl 2. Statws prosiectau a ariannwyd trwy'r FLAG (ar 9 Tachwedd 2021)

Prosiect	Math o Astudiaeth	Ymgeisydd	Prosiect yn cael ei ddarparu gan	% a ariennir	Refeniw (£)	Cyfalaf (£)	Statws
Arddangosiadau Coginio Bwyd Môr*	Addysg	FLAG Bae Abertawe	FLAG Bae Abertawe	100	7,055		Cwblhawyd
Astudiaeth Ddichonoldeb Wystrys	Dichonoldeb	FLAG Bae Abertawe	Contractwr	100	4,999		Cwblhawyd
'Fish is the dish'	Addysg	FLAG Bae Abertawe	Contractwr	100	£53,860		I'w gwblhau ym mis Hydref 2022**
Astudiaeth Ddichonoldeb 'Copper Jack'	Dichonoldeb	Ymddiriedolaeth Gymunedol	Contractwr	100	4,602		Cwblhawyd
Astudiaeth Ddichonoldeb Tŷ Ocsiwn Porth Tywyn	Dichonoldeb	Busnes lleol	Contractwr	100	8,000		Cwblhawyd
Pontŵn symudol ar afon Tawe	Cyfalaf	FLAG Bae Abertawe	FLAG Bae Abertawe	100	0	137,773.70	I'w gwblhau ym mis Mai 2022***
Gwelliannau Harbwr Tywyn	Cyfalaf	FLAG Bae Abertawe	Contractwr	100	0	58,016.06	I'w gwblhau ym mis Rhagfyr 2021
Cynllun Adfer Wystrys	Rheoli adnoddau	FLAG Bae Abertawe	Contractwr	100	24,428		I'w gwblhau ym mis Medi 2021
Peiriant lâ	Cyfalaf	Busnes lleol	Busnes lleol	50		2,639.99	Yn disgwyl am gadarnhad
Cyfanswm gwariant FLAG Bae Abertawe (refeniw a chyfalaf)					301,374.29		
<p>* Derbyniodd y prosiect hwn gyllid ychwanegol o £1,796 gan Gronfa Gŵyl Bwyd Môr Menter a Busnes (MAB) (Prosiect Datblygu a Thyfu Marchnadoedd Bwyd Môr). Gweler Atodiad D am ragor o fanylion</p> <p>** Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi cadarnhau y gall y prosiect hwn barhau yn 2022 gan fod COVID-19 wedi amharu ar gynnal y prosiect addysg mewn ysgolion.</p> <p>*** Y dyddiad targed cwblhau cyntaf oedd mis Hydref 2021, fodd bynnag, am nifer o resymau gwahanol (e.e. ehangu'r cynllun pontŵn gwreiddiol, ymgynghori â rhanddeiliaid a'r corff cydsynio, a'r angen i gael caniatâd cynllunio), disgwylir mai gwanwyn 2022 fydd dyddiad cwblhau'r prosiect bellach.</p>							

Ffynhonnell: Data a ddarparwyd gan y Corff Arweiniol 5 Awst 2021

Tabl 3. Gwariant prosiect FLAG (hyd at 30 Medi 2021) yn ôl math o weithgaredd

Math o brosiect	Nifer y prosiectau	Cyfanswm gwariant (£)	% o gyfanswm gwariant prosiect FLAG
Dichonoldeb	3	17,601	6
Addysg	2	60,915	21
Buddsoddiad cyfalaf	3	198,430	64
Rheoli Adnoddau	1	24,428	9
Cyfanswm	9	301,374	

Ffynhonnell: Cyfrifwyd o'r data a ddarparwyd gan y Corff Arweiniol ar 11 Tachwedd 2021

5 Canlyniadau ac Effeithiau'r Prosiect

Mae Tabl 4 yn tynnu sylw at ba amcanion a gyflawnir gan brosiectau FLAG Bae Abertawe a gwblhawyd neu a gymeradwywyd (hyd at 30 Medi 2021). Caiff pob prosiect ei ddisgrifio ymhellach yn Atodiad D. Cefnogwyd holl themâu ac amcanion y Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol (LDS) gan bortffolio prosiectau a ariannwyd gan FLAG Bae Abertawe, er bod maint y gefnogaeth a dderbyniodd rhai o'r amcanion yn amrywio. Er enghraifft, ystyriwyd bod wyth o'r naw prosiect yn cyfrannu at amcan 9 (gwneud y gorau o'r amgylchedd lleol), tra bod amcanion 2, 5, 6 ac 8 ond yn cael eu cefnogi unwaith gan ddau o'r naw prosiect. O ystyried bod dau o'r prosiectau a gyfrannodd at amcanion 5, 6 ac 8 yn brosiectau â gwariant cyfalaf, ystyrir ei bod yn debygol bod y cyfyngiad cychwynnol ar wariant cyfalaf o fewn cynigion wedi cyfrannu'n rhannol o leiaf at y diffyg prosiectau sy'n cyfrannu'n uniongyrchol at yr amcanion hyn.

Tabl 4. Themâu ac amcanion y Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol a gyflawnir gan y prosiectau a gwblhawyd neu a gymeradwywyd hyd at 31 Medi 2021

Prosiect	Thema 1					2		3			4		5
	Amcan												
	1		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Asesu stoc/poblogaeth wystrys			●				●		●	●	●	●	
Arddangosiadau coginio bwyd môr ym marchnad Abertawe	●	●		●					●	●	●	●	
'Fish is the dish' 2020	●	●		●					●	●	●	●	
Astudiaeth Ddichonoldeb 'Copper Jack'			●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Astudiaeth Ddichonoldeb Tŷ Ocsiwn Porth Tywyn	●		●		●		●					●	
Pontŵn symudol ar afon Tawe			●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Gwelliannau harbwr									●	●	●		
Cynllun Adfer Wystrys				●					●	●	●	●	
Peiriant lâ	●		●	●	●				●				

● = Ystyrir bod y prosiect yn cyfrannu at yr amcan hwn yn seiliedig ar asesiad y Corff Arweiniol o gais y prosiect.

Gofynnwyd am farn rhanddeiliaid ar effaith rhaglen FLAG Bae Abertawe. Cafodd y prosiectau FLAG dderbyniad da. Bu'r arddangosiadau coginio bwyd môr yn y farchnad yn gymorth i godi ymwybyddiaeth o'r rhaglen, cefnogi busnesau pysgota yn yr ardal, a hyrwyddo bwyd môr yn lleol. Mae'r astudiaethau dichonoldeb y mae'r FLAG wedi'u hariannu wedi bod o gymorth i sicrhau cyllid pellach ar gyfer gweithredu. Mae'r prosiectau wedi cefnogi cyfleoedd arallgyfeirio hefyd, gan ychwanegu gwerth a chyflenwi marchnadoedd newydd. Teimlwyd bod cyllid FLAG wedi dod â manteision i ymgeiswyr a rhanddeiliaid eraill, wedi sicrhau bod cynlluniau'n cael eu gweithredu'n gyflym, a chefnogi prosiectau y teimlwyd na fyddai cyllid wedi bod ar gael iddynt o ffynonellau eraill.

6 Casgliadau ac Argymhellion

Ceir manylion llawn y prif ystyriaethau ac argymhellion yn Atodiad E.

Mae FLAG Bae Abertawe wedi darparu £285,000 o gyllid ar draws naw prosiect i gefnogi'r diwydiannau pysgota, dyframaethu a diwydiannau cysylltiedig lleol eraill ym Mae Abertawe rhwng 2017 a 2021. Effeithiwyd yn negyddol ar weithredu'r rhaglen ar y dechrau gan fod eitemau cyfalaf wedi cael eu heithrio o'r meini prawf cymhwysedd. Gwnaeth hyn hi'n anodd cefnogi anghenion y gymuned leol ac araf iawn fu'r gweithredu a'r broses o ddyrannu arian FLAG ar y cychwyn. Ar ôl dileu'r cyfyngiad ar y cyllid cyfalaf, a dyrannu swm ychwanegol i weithredu prosiectau, dyrannwyd a defnyddiwyd yr arian yn gyflym. Hwyluswyd hyn gan y berthynas effeithiol yr oedd FLAG wedi'i meithrin gyda'r rhanddeiliaid, a'r syniadau prosiect a drafodwyd rhyngddynt.

Ariannwyd prosiectau a gyfrannodd at bob un o 12 amcan y Strategaeth Datblygu Lleol (LDS), yn enwedig amcanion 9, 10, 11 a 12 (sy'n ymwneud â'r amgylchedd naturiol lleol, treftadaeth ddiwylliannol a thwristiaeth, ac ymgysylltu â chymunedau). I'r gwrthwyneb, ni chafodd amcanion i feithrin gwell cysylltiadau ag ysgolion, rhoi cymorth i brosesau newydd neu ychwanegu gwerth at gynhyrchion, cyfleoedd arallgyfeirio, a ffynonellau incwm amgen ar gyfer y diwydiant pysgota, eu cyflwyno cystal ym mhortffolio'r prosiectau.

Mae'r prosiectau wedi cefnogi'r busnesau unigol dan sylw, gan eu helpu i sicrhau cyllid pellach (yn dilyn astudiaethau dichonoldeb a ariennir gan FLAG), diogelu cyflogaeth ac ychwanegu gwerth at gynhyrchion. Yn ogystal â hynny, mae gweithgareddau a phrosiectau FLAG wedi bod o fudd i godi proffil bwyd môr yn lleol.

£95,000 oedd costau gweinyddu a rhedeg FLAG, er bod £99,000 ychwanegol wedi'i roi gan Lywodraeth Cymru i dalu am wir gostau mynychu cyfarfodydd a rhoi cymorth i brosiectau a darpar ymgeiswyr. Cefnogwyd gwaith gweinyddu'r rhaglen gan staff y Cyngor, ond fe arweiniodd diffyg parhad y staff hynny at faich hyfforddi ychwanegol i staff FLAG. Roedd presenoldeb aelodau FLAG mewn cyfarfodydd yn amrywio dros gyfnod y rhaglen; dylid ystyried ffyrdd gwahanol iddynt gymryd mwy o ran.

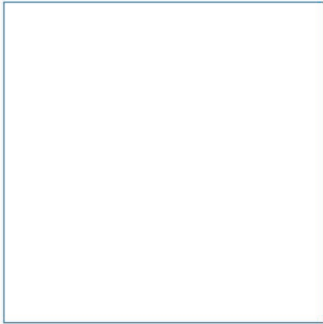
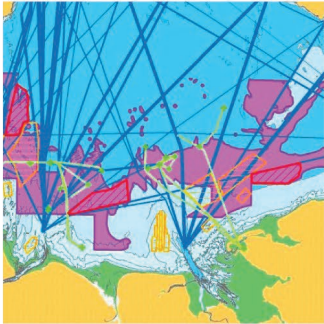
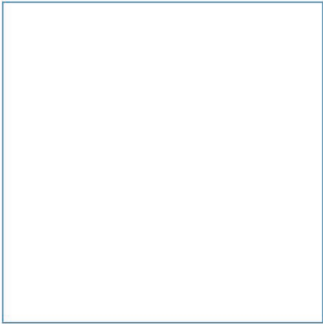
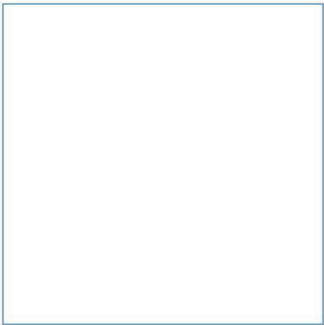
Drwyddo draw, mae FLAG Bae Abertawe wedi cefnogi gweithwyr pysgodfeydd a dyframaethu lleol ac wedi hyrwyddo bwyd môr yn y gymuned leol. Nid yw effaith lawn y FLAG yn amlwg hyd yma, gan fod nifer o brosiectau allweddol i fod i gael eu cwblhau yn 2022.

Argymhellion y gwerthusiad yw:

- Gweinyddu FLAG Bae Abertawe a dylunio rhaglen:
 - Lle y bo'n bosibl, dylai adnoddau personél ategol cyson fod ar gael i'r Corff Arweiniol, er mwyn i'r Rhaglen gael ei chyflwyno mewn modd mor effeithlon â phosibl.

- Lle y bo'n bosibl, dylai'r systemau a'r prosesau sy'n galluogi'r Corff Arweiniol i hawlio cyllid gan y Corff Canolradd (neu gyfwerth) fod yn briodol i'r cynllun ariannu.
- Mae angen dyrannu cyllid digonol (ar gyfer personél, a chostau teithio/cynhaliaeth) er mwyn sicrhau bod prosesau FLAG yn cael eu rhedeg yn effeithlon a chymorth yn cael ei roi i ddarpar ymgeiswyr.
- Yn y dyfodol, dylai rhaglenni ariannu ystyried cryfhau'r rheolau ynghylch presenoldeb aelodau mewn cyfarfodydd.
- Gall gymryd nifer o flynyddoedd i'r FLAG ymwreiddio yn y gymuned, meithrin perthnasau ac annog datblygu syniadau prosiect. Felly, argymhellir isafswm cyfnod gweithredu FLAG o 5 mlynedd.
- Canllawiau a chyfathrebu:
 - Sicrhau bod y canllawiau ariannu ynghylch cymhwysedd a'r broses ymgeisio yn glir ac yn ddealladwy i bawb.
 - Cyfeirio darpar ymgeiswyr at y rhaglen ariannu briodol ar gyfer eu prosiect drwy ddarparu gwybodaeth glir yn disgrifio pa raglenni ariannu gwahanol sydd wedi'u cynllunio ar eu cyfer.
 - Dylai allgymorth a chyfathrebu dargedu darpar ymgeiswyr gan ystyried y ffyrdd gorau i gyrraedd atynt a'u cefnogi (e.e. sesiynau gwybodaeth mewn porthladdoedd/harbwrs).
- Perthnasedd y meini prawf ariannu i sectorau pysgodfeydd a dyframaethu lleol:
 - Yn y dyfodol, dylai'r rhaglenni ariannu restru nodau penodol y rhaglen yn glir, gan gynnwys ar gyfer pwy mae'r cyllid wedi'i neilltuo ac enghreifftiau o'r mathau o brosiectau y gellir eu hariannu.
 - Wrth ddylunio rhaglenni, dylid ystyried anghenion posibl y rhanddeiliaid targed ac fe ddylai'r meini prawf cymhwysedd adlewyrchu'r rhain lle bo hynny'n bosibl.
 - Yn aml iawn, mae gwariant cyfalaf yn ofyniad ar gyfer prosiectau sy'n cefnogi twf y pysgodfeydd a'r diwydiannau cysylltiedig ac o'r herwydd fe ddylai fod yn ystyriaeth allweddol wrth gynllunio meini prawf cymhwysedd.

Appendices



Innovative Thinking - Sustainable Solutions

A Swansea Bay FLAG Programme

A.1 Introduction

An initial baseline evaluation of the Swansea Bay (SB) Fisheries Local Action group (FLAG) was published in May 2020 which described the SBFLAG's structure, procurement processes, project expenditure, project outcomes and progress towards the FLAG's objectives up to 31 January 2020.

The purpose of this final evaluation is to provide an assessment of the overall performance of the Programme at administrative body and project level, the latter with respect to meeting the EMFF and LDS objectives, and with respect to the long-term impacts of the project outputs. The final evaluation will also highlight any lessons to carry forward for implementing any future funding schemes.

A.2 Background

The SBFLAG was originally established as a local partnership in 2012 in response to opportunities opened up through Union Priority 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) between 2007-2013. The SBFLAG was one of four FLAGs established in Wales, and during the 2007-2013 funding period, covered the Local Authority Areas of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend (SBFLAG, 2018).

Further to successfully overseeing the implementation of the EFF 2007-2013 funding in Swansea Bay, the SBFLAG has continued to administer a second period of funding, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), between 2014-2020⁵. The purpose of this second funding phase was to build on the achievements of the previous EFF programme and move forward with a strategy in a wider geographic area that now includes the Burry Port area as well as the original three Local Authority areas referred to above.

The total amount of EMFF funding available for this phase was £380,000. The projects funded and the final Programme expenditure are described in detail in Appendix C. The outcomes of the funded projects and their contribution towards the strategic objectives of the Programme are described in Appendix D. Key messages and recommendations arising from this evaluation are summarised in Appendix E.

A.3 Vision

The FLAG's vision for Swansea Bay was *"By 2020 we want to see successful, sustainable, economically viable local fishing and associated industries, aware of its heritage and well equipped to meet current and future challenges."* To help achieve this vision, The Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Development Strategy (LDS) was updated for the current funding phase informed by a Fishing Industry Research Study in 2015 and the feedback from consultation with stakeholders in September 2016. The key issues identified through the fisheries study and consultation were translated into themes and objectives (see Table A1) which aligned with the objectives outlined within Union priority 4 of the EMFF Operational Programme (see Section A.4). The project procurement process, which assessed the eligibility of project applications for FLAG funding against these objectives is described in Appendix B.

⁵ Implementation of FLAG funded projects has continued into 2021 and the final two projects will be completed in 2022. See Section A.5 for further details on the timeline of the Programme. For ease of reference, hereafter the second phase of funding, under the EMFF, will be referred to as the 2014-2020 funding period.

A.4 EMFF objectives

Union priority 4 of the EMFF is a funding stream aimed at increasing employment and territorial cohesion. The specific objective of Union priority 4 is promotion of economic growth, social inclusion and job creation, and providing support to employability and labour mobility in coastal and inland communities which depend on fishing and aquaculture, including diversification of activities within fisheries and into other sectors of the maritime economy (EMFF Operational Programme).

The UK Operational Programme states that the aim of Union priority 4 is to: Support investment in training, maintaining and developing skills, capacity building, improved local marketing and supply chain logistics, diversification and improved access to match funding.

A.5 LDS objectives

The themes and objectives of the SBFLAG LDS are shown in Table A1 below.

Table A1. SBFLAG Local Development Strategy Themes and Objectives

Theme	Objectives
Theme 1: Adding value, creating jobs, attracting young people and promoting innovations at all stages of the supply chain of fishery and aquaculture products	Objective 1: Improve links with other local food and other producers
	Objective 2: Achieve better links with schools and colleges to encourage young people to help develop the sector
	Objective 3: Support delivery of small-scale infrastructure projects to encourage sustainable growth of the industry
	Objective 4: Creation of opportunities for networking, marketing and promotion of local industry, including supply-chain opportunities
	Objective 5: Provision of support for trying out new processes or adding value to products to help small companies in the fishing industry to grow
Theme 2: Supporting diversification inside or outside commercial fisheries, lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries and aquaculture areas	Objective 6: Support for business to identify diversification opportunities and re-skill within or outside the sector
	Objective 7: Provision of opportunities to develop the tourism sector linked to local fisheries, including pescaturism, eco-tourism and tourist facilities
Theme 3: Enhancing and capitalising on the environmental assets of the fisheries and aquaculture areas, including operations to mitigate climate change	Objective 8: Identification and development of alternative sources of income for the fishing industry such as renewable energy
	Objective 9: Making the most of the local natural environment
	Objective 10: Sustainable and balanced development of the heritage and tourism aspects of the coastline

Theme	Objectives
Theme 4: Promoting social well-being and cultural heritage in fisheries and aquaculture areas, including fisheries, aquaculture and maritime cultural heritage	Objective 11: Support for the promotion of cultural heritage, aquaculture and maritime interests
Theme 5: Local development and the governance of local fisheries resources and maritime activities	Objective 12: To further engage communities and local representatives to support and promote the local industry

Source: SBFLAG LDS (SBFLAG, 2018)

A.6 Programme timeline

The second programme of funding for the SBFLAG started in 2014. Towards the end of the funding phase, in December 2019, the Welsh Government confirmed that whilst the official EMFF Programme period ended on 31 December 2020, the programme would continue to operate and draw down EU funding for three years as agreed under the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020. As such, all EMFF funding in Wales needed to be committed by 31 December 2020, and all project expenditure incurred and claimed by 31 December 2023.

The Programme timeline was later changed⁶, requiring the EMFF funding to be committed by the 30 September 2020 and all FLAG projects to be completed and the funding disbursed by the end of October 2021, with the Programme closing at that time. However, with Welsh Government approval, two of the SBFLAG approved projects will extend into 2022 (see Appendix C). The impact of these changes in the Programme timeline on the ability of the SBFLAG to allocate and disburse funding is described in Appendix C.

A.7 Evaluation of the SBFLAG Programme

The 2020 Baseline Evaluation of the SBFLAG (published in May 2020) assessed the perceived effectiveness of the SBFLAG processes and the relevance of the FLAG's objectives. This final evaluation is focussed primarily on the impacts of the funded projects, with regard to the whether the projects contributed to the SBFLAG LDS objectives, the immediate and longer-term benefits of the project outputs, whether these would have been achieved without the SBFLAG programme, and lessons learned for any future funding programmes. However, this final evaluation also sought feedback on the SBFLAG processes (e.g. procurement) from applicants who had received approval for project funding since 31 January 2020, as well as the above described final evaluation metrics.

The impact of the funded projects was assessed via consultation with recipients of SBFLAG funding, FLAG members and wider stakeholders within the FLAG area during the baseline and final evaluations. Consultees participated in semi-structured interviews in which they were presented with a range of questions but also invited to discuss any aspect of their experience of the SBFLAG. The questions put to the consultees in the evaluation are shown below.

⁶ Consultation indicated that the change in timeline was initiated by the European Union (EU) and further to discussions between the EU and the Welsh Government (Lead Body, pers. comm. August 2021).

Questions for recipients of SBFLAG funding:

1. Please can you provide a brief overview of the project, including the project aims?
2. How did you find the application process with respect to ease of use? How helpful were any guidance documents available to you or any support provided by the SBFLAG during the application process?
3. Do you think the processes and procedures of the FLAG are appropriately transparent?
4. Is the project complete? If not, when is the project expected to be delivered by?
5. What has the project achieved to date (with respect to outputs) and what have the benefits and impacts been?
6. What do you anticipate the longer-term benefits will be (if the project is complete) or what do you expect the project to achieve once it is complete? Who will benefit?
7. Could the project have been implemented without FLAG funding?
8. Are there any other points you would like to raise?

Questions for FLAG Members and wider stakeholders:

1. How long have you been a SBFLAG member and how did you become a member?
2. How did the FLAG assess project applications? Was the process clear?
3. How effectively do you feel the FLAG was in undertaking its role in assessing applications, procuring projects, promoting the FLAG programme etc.?
4. How well do you think the FLAG funding criteria met the needs of the local fisheries and aquaculture sectors?
5. Have you received feedback from the local community/wider stakeholders about the FLAG funded projects that have been delivered/are being delivered?
6. What do you think the benefits of the SBFLAG have been for the local community? Are the benefits long-term?
7. Do you think there are any key lessons arising from this round of FLAG funding that would benefit any future funding programmes? If so, what?
8. Are there any other points you would like to raise?

The key messages delivered via the consultation are detailed in the subsequent appendices, whilst recommendations informed by the consultation are presented in Appendix E.

B Programme Administration

The UK Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is accountable for the EMFF 2014-2020 programme across the UK, with delivery responsibility delegated to Intermediate Bodies. In Wales, Rural Payments Wales (RPW) is the delegated Intermediate Body. The FLAG Programme is delivered by individual FLAGs via Lead Bodies, which administer and manage the funding allocated to their specific FLAG. The roles of the SBFLAG Lead Body and the Welsh Government are described in further detail below.

B.1 Lead Body: Swansea Council

Swansea Council is the Lead Body for the SBFLAG, undertaking programme and project management, financial and administrative functions, technical appraisal of grant applications (described further in Section B.6 and the submission of claims for funding to the Welsh Government (SBFLAG, 2018).

There are three staff members, housed within Swansea Council, involved in administering the FLAG, who undertake the following roles:

1. Animator (1 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)): one of the main values of Community Led Local Development (CLLD) is the ability of the FLAGs to get out into the community and encourage and support individuals and groups to present projects that contribute to the strategy. The role of the animator is to facilitate and capacity build within the FLAG area so that ideas can be turned into deliverable projects, organising meetings to bring people together and, where necessary, providing specialist technical help or consultancy. The animator is responsible for managing the budget and supporting and monitoring applicants from idea development through to implementation and delivery. The animator is also responsible for providing quarterly FLAG updates to the Economic Development & External Funding Team, the Planning and Regeneration department as well as regular updates to Welsh Government.
2. Finance officer (0.25 FTE): Finance, handles budget queries, statements, any claims, liaises with the Welsh Government to update their systems, handles day-to-day running costs, rules and guidance.
3. Assistant (0.25 FTE): Assists with procurement, ordering goods, setting up meetings, taking minutes, liaising with applicants and general administration.

The staff described above were supported by Swansea Council's Economic Development & External Funding Team, which allocated 0.5 FTE to support the SBFLAG staff with finance and 0.5 FTE to provide further assistance when required.

Information obtained through consultation in August 2021 indicated that the 0.5 FTE resource allocated to the SBFLAG team for finance and administration was not considered sufficient and that the support from the external funding team was vital to fulfilling their duties (see Appendix C for the SBFLAG budget allocation). However, the external funding unit were not able to allocate a dedicated resource for this support (four different finance officers from the Council's external funding team provided support over the programme timeline), and hence sometimes the support staff available were unfamiliar with the SBFLAG processes and procedures hence requiring training (it was stated this became "a constant training process") as well as leading to some delays and clerical errors. For any future funding programmes, it was highlighted that it would be useful to have one dedicated supporting resource from the external funding unit (Lead Body, pers. comm. August 2021).

A further issue raised through consultation with the Lead Body was that the systems used by the Welsh Government for making funding claims (Rural Payment Wales (RPW) online) was designed for rural

development programmes (i.e. agricultural funding schemes) and was not felt to be fit for purpose for FLAG funding claims. For example, the information underpinning the SBFLAG funding claim did not 'fit the fields' required by the RPW system and the Lead Body finance officer had to find alternative ways to input the claim data into the system. The Lead Body felt that this sometimes caused delays in feedback from the Welsh Government. Furthermore, consultation for this evaluation, indicated that conflicting information regarding how to make funding claims was still being received from Welsh Government (Lead Body, pers. comm. August 2021).

B.2 Welsh Government

As noted above, the Welsh Government was the Intermediate Body responsible for the delivery of the EMFF 2014-2020 programme in Wales. As such, the Welsh Government produced guidance notes regarding which activities and costs were eligible for FLAG funding. These guidance notes were updated during the EMFF 2014-2020 funding phase as eligibility criteria for FLAG-funding changed (described further in Section C.1).

Within the Welsh Government, there was a team of three staff involved in the EMFF application process, including approval, appraisal and financial management of FLAG projects. An Implementation Manager was the main point of contact for the FLAG Lead Body, to discuss applications, eligibility (of potential projects for funding) and any queries. Project reviews were undertaken once a project was delivered, or if selected for inspection. FLAG funding claims were processed by staff within a different team.

The Welsh Government had responsibility for undertaking the final eligibility check on project proposals selected by the FLAG, prior to formal approval being issued. This involved checking that the proposal met the eligibility criteria within the EMFF guidance and regulations, that the costs were calculated correctly and that the procurement had been conducted correctly. If the proposal and procurement was compliant, confirmation of the funding offer was issued. The procurement process is described in further detail in Section B.5

Consultation undertaken for the Baseline Evaluation of the SBFLAG in January 2020 confirmed that there were no formal reporting requirements between the FLAG and the Welsh Government.

B.3 Flag Members

SBFLAG membership for the 2014-2020 EMFF funding period was via an application process steered by a 'shadow' FLAG formed at the end of the EMFF 2007-2013 programme (SBFLAG, 2018). Whilst a lot of FLAG members from the first funding phase (2007-2013) applied to be members in the second funding phase (2014-2020), new members also joined, including new representatives from the aquaculture sector.

The composition of the SBFLAG membership varied during the course of the funding period. For example, the Baseline Evaluation reported that, as of 31 January 2021 five members had left the SBFLAG since 2017. This included three representatives of the local commercial fishing industry who withdrew their membership of the SBFLAG after 18 months of contributing to the Programme due to the initial restriction on funding capital purchases (this restriction was later lifted; see Section B.6). However, the FLAG membership still retained members with a wide knowledge of commercial fisheries (see Table B1). Table B1 shows the composition of the SBFLAG membership, as of 30 September 2021, which comprised 9 private sector members and 7 public sector members.

The SBFLAG Terms of Reference (TOR) set out the requirements to ensure compliance with regulation EC 1303/2013 Article 32 2(b) which requires community-led local development (CLLD) to be led by local

action groups comprising representation from public and private local socio-economic interests. The TOR state that:

- The composition of the membership of the Group should ensure that no single interest should have more than 49% of the voting rights and be truly representative of relevant local public and private socio-economic interests; and
- Ensure at least 50% of the votes in selection decision are cast by partners which are not public authorities.

Table B1. Composition of SBFLAG members (as of 8 June 2021)

Interest Type	Sector
Private	Marine Biologist
	Commercial Fisherman (Burry Port)
	Swansea Port Health Services
	South and West Wales Fishing Communities
	Swansea Bay Tourism
	Mumbles Development Trust
	Local Aquaculture Production Business (two representatives)
	Burry Port Harbour
Public	Swansea Environment Forum
	BCBC Bridgend Rural Development (REACH) (two representatives)
	Marine Biologist
	Economic Advisor
	Neath Port Talbot Council
	Natural Resources Wales

Source: Data provided by the SBFLAG Lead Body, June 2021

B.3.1 FLAG meetings

The Swansea Bay FLAG LDS states that the FLAG should meet at least on a quarterly basis (SBFLAG, 2018). Between July 2017 and April 2021, sixteen FLAG meetings have been held (i.e. at least quarterly). Figure B1 shows the attendance at FLAG meetings over this time period. The number of FLAG member attendees has ranged between 4 and 13 and all meetings have been attended by at least one public and one private sector representative.

Due to COVID-19, after March 2020, SBFLAG meetings were held virtually via MS Teams. Information provided through consultation indicated that this format worked well and the SBFLAG co-ordinator (animator) felt it improved the efficiency of the meetings as participants did not have travel to the meetings in person (Lead Body, pers. comm. August 2021).

Information obtained through consultation indicated that whilst some FLAG members were very regular attendees at the meetings, others had a very low attendance rate. This led the Lead Body to suggest that any future funding programme should consider strengthening the rules regarding member's attendance at such meetings.

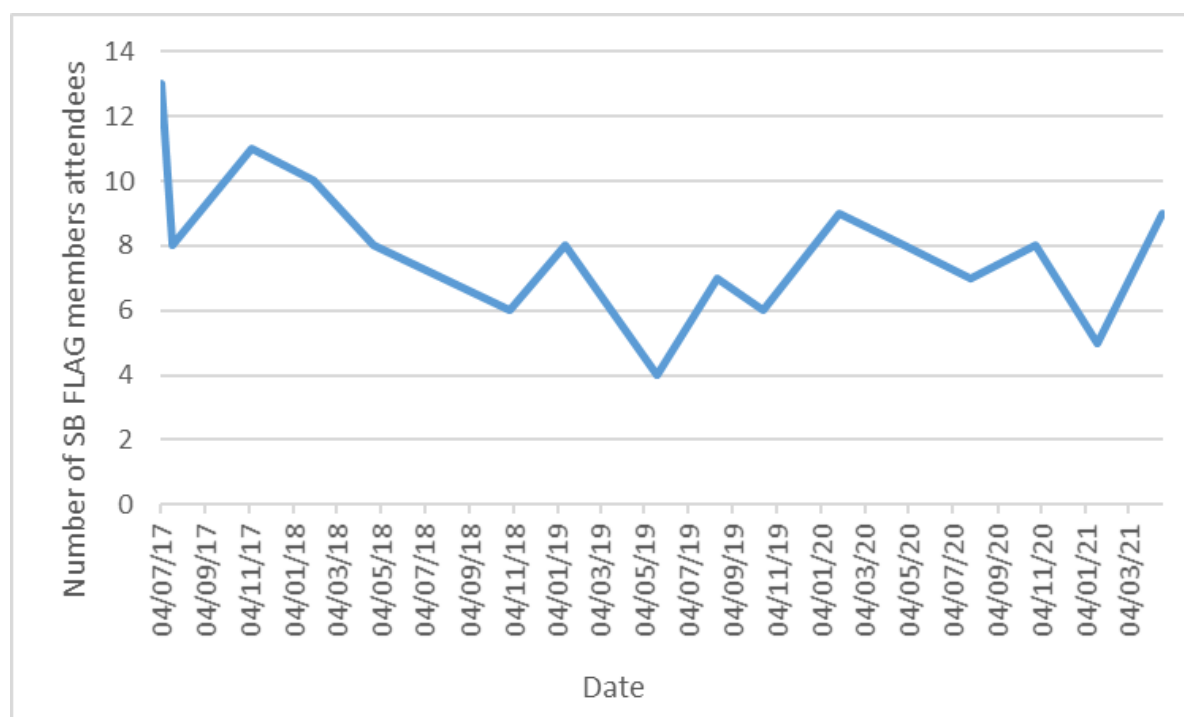


Figure B1. Number of attendees at Swansea Bay FLAG meetings since 2017

B.4 Swansea Bay FLAG communication plan

A SBFLAG communication plan was developed and implemented to promote the EMFF funding opportunities available through the FLAG and highlight the support available for individuals and groups to present projects that contributed to the Swansea Bay FLAG LDS. Engagement methods included social media campaigns via the SBFLAG website and Facebook page and the development of a SBFLAG booklet, produced in hard copy format in English and Welsh for FLAG members to distribute. FLAG funded events (such as the seafood cookery demonstrations; see Appendix C) were promoted to the public and local communities through multiple channels including social media, local newspapers, leaflets and posters.

One SBFLAG member consulted for the final evaluation felt that the Lead Body had done a “pretty good job” of promoting the FLAG Programme given the budget [for doing so], as evidenced by the available correspondence and examples of how information had been disseminated and who the FLAG had contacted.

B.5 The procurement process

B.5.1 The application process

The application process for EMFF funding via the FLAG comprised of two stages:

- i) Submission of a Project Idea Form (PIF); and, if the PIF was approved by the FLAG
- ii) Submission of a full application.

The application forms were available on the SBFLAG website (<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/47434/Applying-for-SBFLAG-funding>).

The procurement process was actively supported by the SBFLAG co-ordinator (animator) whose actions included:

- Meeting with stakeholders to discuss project ideas;
- Providing guidance on how to fill out FLAG application forms;
- Providing assistance with checking and writing the application (where required) for FLAG funding.

Welsh Government EMFF 2014-2020 FLAG Guidance Notes (Welsh Government, 2018) were also available to project applicants via the SBFLAG website. However, feedback obtained during consultation for this evaluation indicated that the wording of the Guidance Note was sometimes difficult to understand and interpret, leading to misinterpretation of what was eligible for funding (Lead Body, pers. comm. August 2021). This led the Lead Body to suggest that for any future funding programmes, guidance notes regarding eligibility should be written in a way that is easily understandable for all.

B.5.2 Eligibility criteria and determination process for FLAG funding

The eligibility of project ideas and full applications submitted to the SBFLAG was assessed initially by the SBFLAG Co-ordinator (animator) with respect to meeting the Welsh Government FLAG Guidance and the SBFLAG LDS objectives. If the idea or application was deemed to meet the LDS themes, it was then circulated to FLAG members for approval. Further to approval by the FLAG members, the applicant was invited to complete a full application for approval by the SBFLAG members before sending the application to the Welsh Government for final approval as described in Section B.2.

The Welsh Government EMFF 2014-2020 FLAG Guidance Notes (Welsh Government, 2018) stated that if the activity (project) could clearly demonstrate that it supported the achievement of the objectives of EMFF and the LDS (described in Section A.3 and A.4 respectively) then it would be deemed to be eligible.

However, the activities and costs that were eligible for FLAG funding changed during the funding programme timeline. The initial Welsh Government EMFF 2014-2020 FLAG Guidance Notes (Welsh Government, 2018) highlighted that capital expenditure was ineligible for FLAG funding, as set out in paragraphs 58 and 59 of the guidance:

(58) *"Any expenditure on ineligible activities such as capital or revenue grants to commercial businesses or other support that would constitute State Aid is not eligible under CLLD"; and*

(59) *"The following items or types of expenditure are not eligible under CLLD:*

- Capital expenditure i.e. any single item with a value of more than £10,000 and/or a useful life of more than one year"

The initial ineligibility of capital expenditure was a key difference between the second SBFLAG funding phase (EMFF; 2014-2020) and the previous funding phase (EFF; 2007-2013) in which capital expenditure was eligible. The impact of this capital spend restriction on all of the Welsh FLAGs was noted within the SBFLAG internal progress report (November 2019; provided by the Lead Body) Risk and Issue Tracker which stated that, regarding capital spend: *"The Welsh FLAGs have had difficulty being able to identify projects without a capital element being required, which has resulted in less projects and less interests in requests for funding"*. The Baseline Evaluation of the SBFLAG published in 2020 reported that up until 31 January 2020 (when the baseline evaluation was completed), the capital spend restriction had resulted in some members of the local fishing community withdrawing their membership from the FLAG and had negatively impacted the ability of the FLAG to identify relevant projects for funding, and thus on the disbursement of funds and on FLAG outcomes.

In February 2020, following a restructure and new leadership, the restriction on capital expenditure was removed by the Welsh Government and the SBFLAG's implementation budget was amended by the Welsh Government to enable £140,000⁷ to be allocated to capital projects before the funding allocation deadline (30 September 2020). The change in eligibility criteria was described as "a massive change" by the Lead Body (as there had been limited further eligible project ideas up to that time) and enabled funding to be approved and allocated to three projects with a capital spend element between February 2020 and September 2021 (see Appendix C). A recommendation for any future funding programmes was that prior to its launch it would be beneficial for the Intermediate Body to consult with the FLAGs (or equivalent body) to identify the funding needs of the target community/sectors and to focus the funding around those needs. If this had occurred, the SBFLAG would have highlighted the demand in their FLAG area, for example, for harbour infrastructure and other elements that required capital funding.

B.6 Views on the SBFLAG processes

Table B2 presents views on the processes of the SBFLAG programme. These processes include:

- The administration of the programme;
- The effectiveness of delivering the programme with respect to engagement and communications;
- The procurement and determination processes; and
- The relevance of the eligibility criteria with respect to the needs of the local fisheries and aquaculture communities.

These views were obtained through consultation undertaken for the baseline and final evaluations with the Lead Body, SBFLAG funding applicants, FLAG members and wider stakeholders (n=7) and have been presented in an anonymised form.

⁷ £70,000 in financial year 20/21 and £70,000 in financial year 21/22.

Table B2. Views on the SBFLAG processes obtained during consultation

Baseline Evaluation	Final Evaluation
<p>Administration and effectiveness in delivering programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The FLAG is meeting regularly but meetings have been poorly attended. ▪ Encouraging the fishermen to engage has been hard due to the restrictions on eligible projects for funding. ▪ Not really driven by members as the fishing community is relatively small and there is difficulty in engaging with commercial fishermen. ▪ Not undertaking the role very effectively. Most money spent on administrative things. 	<p>Administration and effectiveness in delivering programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The staff resource allocated to the SBFLAG team for finance and administration was not sufficient and Council support staff (external to the SBFLAG team) was vital to fulfilling their duties. ▪ The Council support was not a dedicated resource, hence staff required training in SBFLAG processes, sometimes leading to delays and clerical errors. ▪ The Welsh Government system for making funding claims (Rural Payment Wales (RPW) online) was not felt to be fit for purpose for FLAG funding claims. ▪ Conflicting information regarding how to make funding claims was received from Welsh Government. ▪ The Lead Body had done a “pretty good job” of promoting the FLAG Programme given the budget.
<p>Procurement and determination processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The application process is complicated and not clear, and the Welsh Government guidance has been confused and incomplete from the start. Several changes in the guidance compounded this issue. ▪ The animator appeared to have been given the wrong information and guidance from the start. ▪ Applications are generally supported by the FLAG but the variety in types of project has been limited. 	<p>Procurement and determination processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Guidance Note was difficult to understand and interpret, leading to misinterpretation regarding eligibility. ▪ The Guidance notes were technical and daunting. ▪ The application forms were well designed; clear what information was wanted. ▪ Project Idea form resulted in good feedback from FLAG members and helped the project idea to evolve for the full application. ▪ Supporting material was available. ▪ Excellent / good support from animator. ▪ Being able to contact a named person useful. ▪ Sometimes quite difficult to understand the FLAG processes and procedures. ▪ Good communication / interpretation of the regulations from the animator. ▪ Dissemination process between LB and FLAG members worked fine. ▪ Lack of clarity over how conflicts of interest in project approval process were handled, and how members assessed applications.

Baseline Evaluation	Final Evaluation
<p>Relevance of funding criteria to local fisheries and aquaculture sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The FLAG funding currently does not meet the needs of the fisheries and aquaculture sector. ▪ Money spent is not particularly usefully spent, like most EU money. ▪ Wales is significantly behind other FLAG regions (England, Scotland and Ireland) with respect to FLAG approved activity due to having a capital allowance enabling them to support a wider range of projects. In wales, the capital spending issue is greatly restricting project eligibility and has resulted in at least one application to the SBFLAG not being made. ▪ The spend to date has been restricted to revenue spending which is useful but the fishing community would benefit from having more capital investment to improve safety and welfare. ▪ The LDS is a not a good use of administrative time and effort. ▪ The LDS refers to food festivals, but Welsh Government had not allocated money for festivals. ▪ The [EU funding] mechanism as a whole is the problem. The money has not gone to help productive enterprise. Like most EU money, it has not been spent in a particularly usefully way. ▪ The change in capital spend restriction may be too late. 	<p>Relevance of funding criteria to local fisheries and aquaculture sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The funding criteria do not meet the needs of local fisheries and aquaculture very well. ▪ Not clearly defined in the criteria who the FLAG is for (e.g. community, specific industry, individual businesses?), what the goal is and how this fits in with other funding programmes. ▪ The 'narrow' funding criteria at start resulted in low numbers of project ideas, criteria were later changed; ▪ Change in funding criteria over time suggests the initial scope of the FLAG programme was not initially well thought out.

C Programme Budget and Expenditure

C.1 Budget allocation

The total budget for the SBFLAG was £380,000, which was split between FLAG running costs, animation costs and project implementation as shown in Figure C1.

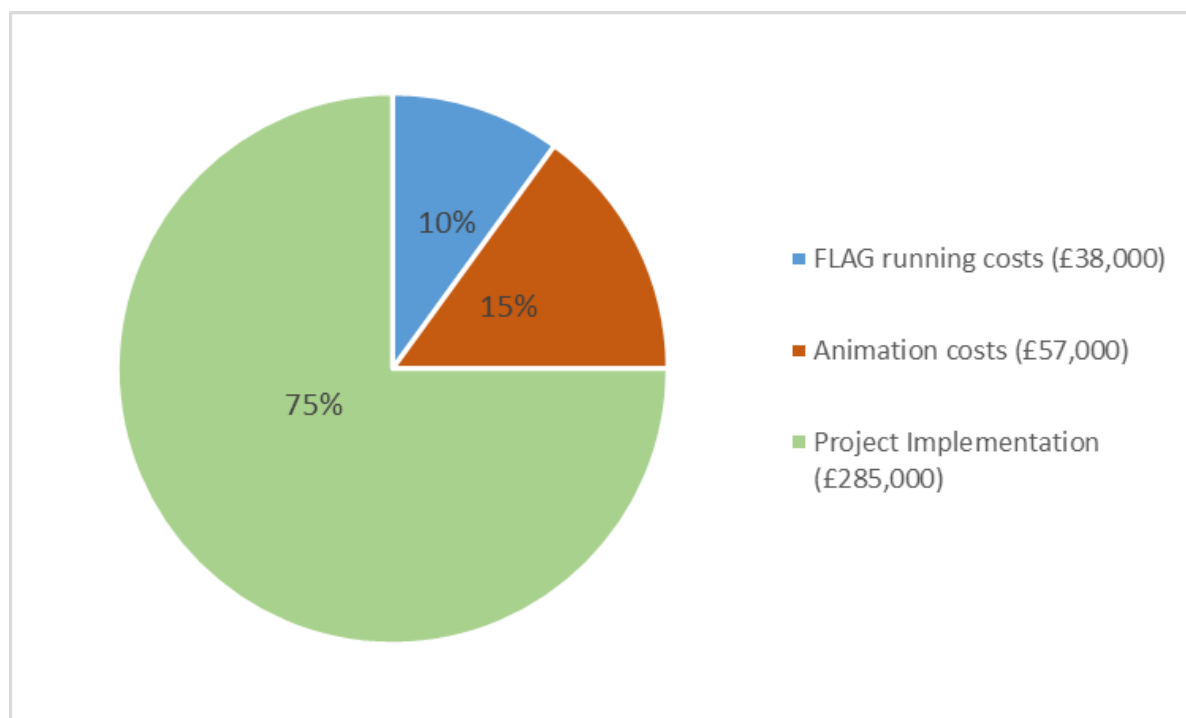


Figure C1. SBFLAG by budget type

Information obtained through consultation for this final evaluation indicated that the SBFLAG Lead Body was initially led to understand that any FLAG staff costs and travel related to project implementation was eligible to be claimed from the project implementation budget. This interpretation was based on discussions with the previous EFF (2007-2013) SBFLAG co-ordinator who confirmed that the Welsh FLAG leads were advised at a meeting in 2015-16 with the then Welsh Government's Head of the Scheme Management Unit (SMU), that the budget should be split as follows: 10% running costs, 15% animation and 75% implementation. As such, the 2020 SBFLAG Baseline Evaluation report described how initially within the project implementation budget, £132,245 was allocated to be available to award as project funding whilst the remainder (£152,755) was allocated to support staff costs and travel related to project implementation.

However, further to a meeting between the EMFF Wales Intermediary Body and the Welsh FLAG network in September 2019, the current head of the SMU issued a guidance note in December 2019 stating that "FLAG staff costs cannot be claimed against implementation costs" and that "The total expenditure of proprietary, animation and running costs at the end of the programme period cannot exceed 25% of the total FLAG expenditure i.e. the eligible 'implementation' costs must cover at least 75% of total FLAG expenditure". As such, all of the Welsh FLAGs were required to re-profile their expenditure, making the necessary changes to the implementation budget. However, it can be noted that the Welsh Government offered a limited funding guarantee if the eventual running costs exceeded 25% of the final expenditure incurred under the FLAG (i.e. they would cover these costs). Furthermore, the Welsh Government agreed

to cover the costs of the FLAG staff time and costs that had been incurred up to that time, for the implementation of projects, from Welsh Government's Domestic Funds (approximately £99,000; Lead Body pers. comm. August 2021).

The resulting budget redistribution resulted in a total of £285,000 being available to award for project funding and required the SBFLAG to identify additional projects to allocate the additional funding to in a relatively short time (between February 2020 and September 2020). The SBFLAG reported that they were able to identify additional projects quickly as the team had established a 'pipeline' of project ideas through liaison with stakeholders throughout the programme and had a "drive to sign off projects quickly" (Lead Body, pers. comm. August 2021).

In May 2021, the SBFLAG Lead Body requested a further £50,000 for a capital expenditure project (Establishment of a mobile pontoon on the River Tawe). Although this request was originally denied, subsequently the Welsh Government did offer the SBFLAG a further £28,500 for existing or new FLAG-funded projects. The additional funding arose from fluctuation in the exchange rates since the start of the FLAG programme (assumed 2014), such that there was scope to allow "over-programming" of the FLAG implementation projects of up to 10%, equating to roughly £28,500 per FLAG (Lead Body, pers. comm. October 2021). The distribution of this additional funding between three existing approved projects (Harbour Improvements; Ice machine and a Pontoon on the River Tawe; see Table C1) was being finalised at the time of writing (October 2021).

C.2 Total expenditure

This section summarises the allocated expenditure of the SBFLAG as of 30 September 2021.

Table C1 shows the FLAG expenditure and allocation to 30 September 2021 (the deadline for funding allocation). Each project is described further in Appendix D. The table also shows who applied for the project funding and, where different, who delivered the project. The table indicates that for five out of the nine approved projects, the applicant was the SBFLAG. This was because if the SBFLAG were the applicant, the project was eligible for 100% funding, rather than say 50-75% for small community groups. Hence, if the FLAG members felt the proposed project was going to benefit the community, they could offer to become the applicant. In this way the delivery and outcomes of that project were then owned by the SBFLAG and could be shared with the wider community and not just one enterprise (Lead Body, pers. comm. October 2021).

Table C2 shows the FLAG project expenditure up to 30 September 2021 by activity type. Out of the total SBFLAG funding available for project implementation, 64% (£183,587) was allocated to projects with a capital investment element. Hence if the capital expenditure restriction had not been lifted, it seems reasonable to assume that the SBFLAG would not have been able to fully allocate the available SBFLAG funding within the funding timeline.

Table C1. Status of FLAG-funded projects (as of 9 November 2021)

Project	Type of Study	Funding Applicant	Project Delivered By	% Funded	Revenue (£)	Capital (£)	Status
Seafood Cookery Demonstrations *	Education	SBFLAG	SBFLAG	100	7,055		Complete
Oyster Feasibility Study	Feasibility	SBFLAG	Contractor	100	4,999		Complete
Fish is the Dish	Education	SBFLAG	Contractor	100	£53,860		Due for completion October 2022**
Copper Jack feasibility study	Feasibility	Community Trust	Contractor	100	4,602		Complete
Burry Port Auction House Feasibility Study	Feasibility	Local Business	Contractor	100	8,000		Complete
Mobile pontoon on River Tawe	Capital	SBFLAG	SBFLAG	100	0	137,773.70	Due for completion May 2022***
Burry Harbour improvements	Capital	SBFLAG	Contractor	100	0	58,016.06	Due for completion December 2021
Oyster Restoration Plan	Resource management	SBFLAG	Contractor	100	24,428		Due for completion September 2021
Ice Machine	Capital	Local business	Local business	50		2,639.99	Waiting on approval
Total SBFLAG expenditure (revenue and capital)					301,374.29		
<p>* This project received additional funding of £1,796 from Menter a Busnes (MAB) Seafood Festival Fund (Seafood Market Development and Growth Project). See Appendix D for further details</p> <p>** Welsh Government have given approval for this project to continue into 2022, due to the impact of COVID-19 which delayed delivery of this schools education project.</p> <p>*** Initial target completion date was October 2021, however, due to various factors (e.g. expansion of original pontoon design, stakeholder and consenting body consultation and the requirement to obtain planning permission), the project completion date is now expected to be Spring 2022.</p>							

Source: Data provided by Lead Body 5 August 2021

Table C2. FLAG project expenditure (up to 30 September 2021) by activity type

Project Type	No. of Projects	Total Expenditure (£)	% of Total FLAG Project Expenditure
Feasibility	3	17,601	6
Education	2	60,915	21
Capital investment	3	198,430	64
Resource Management	1	24,428	9
Total	9	301,374	

Source: Calculated from data provided by Lead Body on 11 November 2021

D Project Outcomes and Impacts

D.1 Project outcomes and contributions to SBFLAG objectives

Table D1 presents the projects that were approved and awarded funding from the SBFLAG by 30 September 2021. The table provides an overview of each project and a brief description of the project output(s).

It should be noted that, in contrast to the original EFF funding programme from 2007-2013, the SBFLAG was not able to award EMFF funding for the delivery of food festivals. As such, any applicants wanting to deliver a food festival were signposted to the *Menter a Busnes* (MAB) scheme⁸ (an independent economic development company reporting to Welsh Government). Table D2 describes the projects that received funding through MAB and were delivered within the SBFLAG area.

Table D3 highlights which objectives are being delivered by completed or approved SBFLAG projects (as of 30 September 2021). The objectives that the project contributed to was stated in the project applications and reviewed by the SBFLAG Lead Body when the project applications were received. If the project idea or proposal met at least one objective, the idea or application was submitted to FLAG members. During the final project approval process the Welsh Government also checked that the proposal met the eligibility criteria within the LDS.

The table shows that all of the LDS themes and objectives were supported by the portfolio of SBFLAG funded projects, although there was a variation in the extent to which some of the objectives were supported. For example, eight of the nine projects were considered to contribute to objective 9 (making the most of the local environment), whilst objectives 2, 5, 6 and 8⁹ were only supported by two of the nine projects each. Given that two of the projects that contributed to objectives 5, 6 and 8 are projects with a capital expenditure, it is considered likely that the initial restriction on capital expenditure within proposals did contribute at least in part to the lack of projects directly contributing to these objectives.

⁸ <https://menterabusnes.cymru/about/>

⁹ Objective 2: Achieve better links with schools and colleges to encourage young people to help develop the sector); Objective 5: Provision of support for trying out new processes or adding value to products to help small companies in the fishing industry to grow; Objective 6: Support for business to identify diversification opportunities and re-skill within or outside the sector; and Objective 8: Identification and development of alternative sources of income for the fishing industry such as renewable energy.

Table D1. Projects awarded funding from the SBFLAG

Project	Description	Output
Seafood cookery demonstrations at Swansea market (£7,055)	Seafood cookery demonstrations were held in Swansea Market in September 2019 over a 5 day period. Local chefs gave live cookery demonstrations using local seafood purchased in Swansea market, including cockles and laverbread, enabling the audience to see and taste the food prepared. Recipe cards were given out so that people could purchase the ingredients within the market and try the recipes at home. The cookery demonstrations also included other local businesses selling wines and preserves. Additional funding of £1,796 was received from Menter a Busnes (MAB) Seafood Festival Fund (Seafood Market Development and Growth Project) (see Table D2). These monies were spent on marketing and promotional materials.	Event raising awareness of local seafood.
Oyster feasibility Study (£4,999)	Swansea Bay and Gower native oyster survey - a survey of the wild native oyster population in Swansea Bay and along the Gower coast to establish the current status of native oysters. The resulting information can be used to underpin appropriate management of this once important commercial species and this information can inform the potential for future fisheries.	Feasibility report
Fish is the dish (£53,860)	Building on a smaller, but previously successful delivery of Fish is the Dish in 2014, the Fish is the Dish 2020 project will focus on raising awareness of local seafood, sustainability issues, and the health benefits of seafood amongst primary school students aged 9-11 years old. It is anticipated the project will involve at least half of the 191 primary schools in the FLAG area and provide an education pack and interactive cooking lessons.	Education events and resources for schools
Copper Jack Feasibility Study (£4,602)	A feasibility study to design and cost for a mobile landing pontoon to enable the Swansea Community Boat 'Copper Jack' to moor alongside existing river quays that served the historic Copper Works. The study also updated costs for extending the visitor boat trip from the Taw Navigation to the Swansea and Tennant canals to support longer-term aspirations to bring together Swansea's Maritime and Fishing, Copper Works and Inland Waterways Heritage to create a heritage visitor destination of national importance.	Feasibility report (which contributed to securing a subsequent SBFLAG funded capital investment project; see Mobile pontoon on River Tawe) and promotional video.
Burry Port Auction House Feasibility Study (£8,000)	A study to understand the feasibility of increasing productivity and adding value (e.g. grade, clean, process) to locally supplied seafood to enable supply into new and larger markets, and of establishing an auction house.	Feasibility report (which led to a further funding application to take parts of the work forward)
Mobile Pontoon on River Tawe (£137,774)	Provision of a landing pontoon at Copper Works Quay (further to Copper Jack feasibility study)	Infrastructure

Project	Description	Output
Harbour improvements (£58,016)	Purchase of equipment for harbour improvements across the four SBFLAG harbours: Porthcawl marina, River Afan, Swansea Marina and Burry Port Harbour. Equipment included harbour lighting, installation of electrical power to pontoons, defibrillators and Atlantis Pedestals where required.	Infrastructure and equipment
Oyster Restoration Plan (£24,428)	Development of a native oyster restoration plan for Swansea Bay. The plan will outline the key actions and associated work packages necessary to establish a healthy and self-sustaining native oyster population which could again support a fishery in the Bay and around the surrounding coast together with the significant associated ecosystem services and benefits provided by oysters. The plan will also outline potential shore-side cultural and heritage activities that may be associated with restoration. Key outputs will include a roadmap and timeline and identify key stakeholders best placed to deliver actions. The plan will enable FLAG members and stakeholders to deliver key work packages by targeting additional relevant funding.	Action plan for oyster restoration in Swansea Bay
Ice Machine (£2,640; if approved)	An ice machine and an ice bin will be purchased and set up at the site of a local aquaculture production business, so that daily ice can be made to support the onsite mussel farm. The equipment will be used for mussel packaging and holding (keeping them fresh whilst on land for longer periods of time, therefore creating larger delivery time slots), and have the ability to provide support to local seafood projects	Equipment

Source: Data/information provided by Lead Body and consultation with funding recipients

Table D2. Food festival projects in the SBFLAG area, funded through the Menter A Busnes Scheme

Project	MAB Funding (£)	Description
Mumbles oyster festival	£993.40	Festival celebration of the heritage of the Mumbles Oyster and inshore fisheries of Mumbles, Gower and Swansea Bay. The event was delivered in October 2019 in Mumbles and included an oyster bar, cooking demonstrations, local produce market and educational workshops.
Seafood Cookery Demonstrations	£1220.10	Additional funding of £1,220.10 was received from MAB Seafood Festival Fund (Seafood Market Development and Growth Project). These monies were spent on marketing and promotional materials.

Source: SBFLAG website and data provided by Lead Body

Table D3. LDS themes and objectives being delivered by the projects completed/approved up to 30 September 2021

Project	Theme 1					Theme 2		Theme 3			Theme 4	Theme 5
	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6	Objective 7	Objective 8	Objective 9	Objective 10	Objective 11	Objective 12
Seafood cookery demonstrations at Swansea market	●	●		●					●	●	●	●
Assessment of the oyster stock/population			●				●		●	●	●	●
Fish is the dish 2020	●	●		●					●	●	●	●
Copper Jack Feasibility Study			●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Burry Port Auction House Feasibility Study	●		●		●		●					●
Mobile Pontoon on River Tawe			●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Harbour improvements									●	●	●	
Oyster Restoration Plan				●					●	●	●	●
Ice Machine	●		●	●	●				●			
Total number of projects contributing to the objective	4	2	5	6	2	2	4	2	8	7	7	7
● Project considered to contribute to this objective based on the Lead Body assessment of the project application												

Source: Data provided by SBFLAG Lead Body, August 2021

D.2 Views on the SBFLAG programme impact

Table D4 presents views on the impact of the SBFLAG programme obtained through consultation. Views provided during both the baseline and final evaluations are presented.

Table D4. Views on the impact of the SBFLAG programme obtained through consultation

Baseline Evaluation	Final Evaluation
<p>Benefits of the Projects delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Projects that have been delivered by the FLAG have been well received. ▪ The cookery demonstration held in Swansea Market generated a large crowd and helped boost following and awareness of the FLAG funding scheme, whilst supporting fishing businesses in the region. ▪ The market seafood demonstrations were successful. 	<p>Benefits of the Projects delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Copper Jack feasibility study helped to secure funding to implement the project, by providing evidence of community support. ▪ The Burry Port Auction House feasibility study led to a further funding application to take the work forward. ▪ Projects helped raise the profile of seafood (where from, sustainability, how to cook it, health benefits etc.) locally. <p>Expected longer term benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safeguard 1.5 FTE staff posts. ▪ Raise the profile of the area, highlighting potential for tourism and recreation (i.e. supporting local tourism). ▪ Facilitate recreational activity. ▪ Support potential diversification opportunities. ▪ Enable a local business to add value to existing products, develop new added value products and supply new markets. ▪ Additional beneficial impacts could be realised if further funding is approved, with respect to facilitating higher prices and new markets for locally landed fish and shellfish. <p>Could the project have been undertaken without the SBFLAG funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unlikely funding would have been available from another source. ▪ The relatively small amount of FLAG funding will bring considerable benefits to the applicant and other stakeholders. ▪ SBFLAG funding reduced the timescale to being able to implement the idea.

E Evaluation Key Messages and Recommendations

This appendix draws together the findings of the final evaluation and notes a number of key recommendations in relation to lessons learned for any future funding programmes targeted at the local fisheries and aquaculture sectors and communities.

E.1 Administration of the SBFLAG and programme design

The budget allocated to the SBFLAG team for the running of the programme does not appear to have been sufficient, as evidenced by the Welsh Government agreeing to cover approximately £99,000 of the FLAG staff time and costs that were incurred for implementing projects, from the Welsh Government's Domestic Funds. The Lead Body also stated that the services of additional Council support staff with the SBFLAG team, was vital to enable them to fulfil their duties. However, as there couldn't be designated support staff, additional time was frequently required to train the support staff that were available. It was noted that in any future funding programmes, it would be useful to have a dedicated supporting resource.

The Lead Body also felt that the Welsh Government system through which they claimed FLAG funding was not appropriate, being designed for rural development programmes rather than the FLAG programme.

Regarding FLAG membership, it was noted that attendance at SBFLAG meetings was variable, leading to the suggestion that any future funding programme should consider strengthening the rules regarding member's attendance at such meetings.

Recommendations:

- Where possible, consistent supporting personnel resources should be available to the Lead Body, to enable the Programme to be delivered in as efficient a manner as possible.
- Where possible, the systems and processes enabling the Lead Body to claim funding from the Intermediate Body (or equivalent) should be appropriate to the funding scheme.
- Adequate funding (for personnel, and travel/subsistence costs) needs to be allocated to ensure efficient running of FLAG processes and support to potential applicants.
- Future funding programmes should consider strengthening the rules regarding member's attendance at meetings.
- It can take a number of years for the FLAG to embed itself with the community, build relationships and encourage the development of project ideas. A minimum FLAG implementation period of 5 years is therefore recommended.

There appeared to be consensus amongst the stakeholders interviewed (Lead Body, SBFLAG members and applicants) that the Welsh Government EMFF Guidance Note was difficult to understand and that, certainly at the start of the programme, this led to misinterpretations of what was eligible for funding and the opinion that the application process was complicated and unclear.

However, views provided by consultees for this final evaluation were very positive regarding the support and interpretation regarding eligibility that they received from the Lead Body animator during project applications made in 2021. Furthermore, it was stated that the SBFLAG application forms were well designed, clearly setting out the information required.

Recommendations:

- Ensure the funding guidance regarding eligibility and application process is clear and understandable to all.
- Signpost potential applicants to the appropriate funding programme for their project by providing clear information describing what different funding programmes are designed for.
- Outreach and communications should target potential applicants and consider the most appropriate ways of reaching and supporting them (e.g. information sessions at ports/harbours).

E.2 Relevance of funding criteria to local fisheries and aquaculture sectors

There also seemed to be a consensus amongst stakeholders that the funding criteria did not meet the needs of the local fishery and aquaculture sectors very well. Again this seemed to be related, at least in part, to the initial restriction on capital spend elements of proposed projects, which clearly impacted on the number of project ideas and applications that were submitted to the SBFLAG and hence the Lead Body's ability to disburse the funds. Furthermore, it impacted on the composition of the FLAG membership, leading to several fishermen resigning as FLAG members after 18 months of input. It seems unlikely, based on information/opinion provided by stakeholders, and from the level of expenditure of the project implementation budget as of 31 January 2020 (56%), that the full budget for project implementation would have been allocated had the restriction on capital spending not been removed. Indeed, it seems unlikely that the following two objectives in the SBFLAG LDS could have been met without a capital expenditure component being allowed:

- Objective 3: Support delivery of small-scale infrastructure projects to encourage sustainable growth of the industry; and
- Objective 5: Provision of support for trying out new processes or adding value to products to help small companies in the fishing industry to grow

The change in eligibility criteria, which enabled projects with a capital spend element to be approved after January 2021, was suggested by one stakeholder to indicate that the initial scope of the FLAG programme in Wales had not initially been well thought out. This led to the suggestion that any future funding programmes should set out clearly who the funding is for, what the programme is trying to achieve and provide examples of the kind of projects that would be eligible.

Regarding the future of FLAGs in Wales, one stakeholder suggested that if the Welsh Government is serious about developing a co-management approach to fisheries (i.e. between regulators and industry) in the future, it is worth looking at how the FLAG could be restructured to have a role. For the FLAG to be effective in such a role it would need adequate resources and staff expertise to deliver more effective management and development of fisheries.

Recommendations:

- Future funding programmes should clearly set out the specific aims of the programme, including who the funding is for and examples of the types of projects that may be funded.
- Programme design should consider the potential needs of the target stakeholders and eligibility criteria should reflect these where possible.
- Capital expenditure is often a requirement for projects supporting growth of the fisheries and associated industries and should therefore be a key consideration in the design of eligibility criteria.

E.3 Conclusions

The SBFLAG has provided £285,000 of funding across nine projects to support the local fishing, aquaculture and associated industries in Swansea Bay between 2017 and 2021. The initial implementation of the programme was negatively affected by the exclusion of capital items from the eligibility criteria, which made it difficult to support the local community's needs and resulted in an initially slow uptake and allocation of FLAG funds. Removal of the capital funding restriction, and allocation of an additional sum to project implementation, resulted in rapid allocation and uptake of funds. This was facilitated by the effective relationships the FLAG had built up, and initiation of project ideas, with stakeholders.

Projects were funded that contributed to all 12 LDS objectives. Those objectives that had most projects contributing to them were:

- 9 – making the most of the local natural environment;
- 10 – sustainable and balanced development of the heritage and tourism aspects of the coastline;
- 11 – support for the promotion of cultural heritage, aquaculture and maritime interests; and
- 12 – engage communities and local representatives to support and promote the local industry.

Conversely, objectives for building better links with schools, support for new processes or adding value to products, diversification opportunities, and alternative sources of income for the fishing industry, were less well served by the portfolio of projects.

Projects have supported the individual businesses involved, helping them secure further funding (following on from FLAG-funded feasibility studies), safeguard employment and add value to products. More widely, FLAG activities and projects have helped to raise the profile of seafood locally.

FLAG administration and running costs were £95,000, although an additional £99,000 was funded separately by the Welsh Government, to cover the actual costs incurred in attending meetings and providing support to projects and potential applicants. Administration of the programme was supported by Council staff, but a lack of continuity of those staff resulted in an additional training burden for FLAG staff. FLAG members' attendance at meetings fluctuated over the programme, and mechanisms for strengthening their participation should be considered.

Overall, the SBFLAG has supported local fisheries and aquaculture operators and promoted seafood to the local community. The full impact of the FLAG is not yet apparent, as a number of key projects are due for completion in 2022.

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