

Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Bill 2018 and Joint Committee on Education and Skills: Opening Statement

Chairman, Deputies and Senators BIM welcome the opportunity to meet with members of the Joint Committee this afternoon to assure you that BIM is actively re-engaged with QQI on a new Quality Assurance System that will cater for the provision of seafood industry training.

BIM's skills strategy 2018 to 2020 will deliver a structured career path through the provision of life long, accredited learning to create a professional, educated talent pool for the sector. The investment in training, with support from the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF), will create an increasingly skilled and more professional workforce that creates value. BIM promote best practice regarding safety and working conditions and protect the Irish seafood sector's reputation through training, to deliver high standards of seafood safety management. BIM provide targeted training, access and funding where needed to drive skills development at all levels in the sector. The agency provides business mentoring and leadership to the sector where needed to drive skills development at all levels in the sector. Skills training for the industry will equip fishers, fish farmers and seafood processors to take advantage of market opportunities and create value.

BIM has developed and delivered seafood industry training programmes for more than forty years and is a QQI recognised provider initially agreeing it's quality assurance with FETAC in 2006. The training programmes are specifically aimed at those working in the seafood industry, with specialised training offered to the sea-fishing, aquaculture and seafood processing sectors. Training is available from ab-initio QQI Level 3 NFQ to Higher Diploma at QQI Level 8 NFQ. Modern facilities in the National Fisheries College of Ireland (NFCI), Greencastle and Castletownbere are supported by mobile Coastal Training Units around the coast. Work practice and supervised experience on training vessels, fish farms and fish factories are augmented through innovation in seafood business development at the BIM Seafood Innovation Hub (SIH), Clonakilty, Co. Cork. All BIM training is monitored through the administrative hub and quality oversight function based in BIM HQ in Dun Laoghaire.

I would like to thank the members of the Joint Committee today for updating us on the passage of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Bill currently before the Dáil. I would also like to thank the chairman and members for inviting BIM to consider updating, amending or withdrawing the submission we made in October 2018 based on the latest text of the Bill. Having examined the latest version of the Bill as passed by Seanad Éireann there is no substantive reason why we would alter our submission which we restricted to three specific sections of the Bill and we are happy to leave it stand. Therefore, we will not be making an updated/amended submission.

Thank you all for your time.