



31 October 2023

Mr. Martin Hughes
Clerk of the Public Accounts Committee Dail Eireann,
Kildare Street Dublin 2

By Email to PAC@Oireachtas.ie

Re: Marine Agencies Annual Reports 2022

Dear Martin,

I refer to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 24 of 2021 *'Timely Production and Submission of Financial Statements/ Accounts of State Bodies and Funds audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Laying of Special Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General before the Houses of the Oireachtas'* with respect to the following 4 marine agencies under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM);

- Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA)
- Marine Institute (MI)
- Aquaculture Licenses Appeals Board (ALAB)

I refer also to previous undertakings to the committee given in 2020 to set out the dates on which the reports of the above marine agencies (DAFM) were formally laid before the Oireachtas.

The processing timelines for the 4 marine agencies annual reports 2022 are set out in the below table. **Please note, in the case of all 4 marine agencies, the Department is required to first present the financial statements/accounts to the Government before the reports are laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.**

2022 Annual Report Timelines			
	Date of the C&AG Audit Certificate	Date the Annual Report was submitted to DAFM	Date Annual Report was laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas
BIM	23/06/2023	31/07/2023	18/10/2023
SFPA	30/06/2023	28/07/2023	18/10/2023
MI	30/06/2023	28/07/2023	18/10/2023
ALAB	Expected to issue later this year	TBA	TBA



In accordance with Section 9 of the Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform Circular 24 of 2021, I wish to advise that

1. Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) annual report and financial statements for 2022 did not adhere to the timeframe set out in Section 5 of Circular 24 of 2021;

“The financial statements/accounts of bodies and funds under the aegis of Departments and Offices must be submitted to their sponsoring Department within one month of the audit certificate being issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General”

The Marine Agencies Corporate Governance Oversight Unit has written to Bord Iascaigh Mhara to note the delay with regards to Section 5 and to reiterate the timelines in Circular 24 of 2021. BIM have confirmed the timelines in the Circular will be adhered to going forward.

2. Aquaculture Licensing Appeals Board (ALAB) annual report and financial statements for 2022 has not yet been received by this Department. Aquaculture Licenses Appeals Board (ALAB) has advised the Department that the Comptroller and Auditor General audit of the Board's 2022 financial statements commenced on 9 October 2023.

The Department will ensure that the report is formally laid as soon as possible following receipt of the final report.

The Department is acutely cognisant of the reporting requirements outlined in Circular 24 of 2021 and will continue to work with the marine agencies to ensure that compliance with the timeframes will be achieved for all future annual reports.

Donal King

Donal King

Assistant Principal Officer

Sea Fisheries Policy and Management Division