Arna chomhchistiú ag an Aontas Eorpach

Co-Funded by the European Union

Tender Title:	**Call for Tender for the Provision of Services to Assess Ireland's Marine Bioresource Opportunity and Validation Programme**
BIM Internal Reference:	**2026-36**
Date of Issue:	**Tuesday, 3rd November 2026**
Clarification Period Closing Date:	**12 noon (Irish Standard Time), Wednesday, 18th November 2026**
Receipt of Tenders Deadline:	**12 noon (Irish Standard Time), Wednesday, 25th November 2026**

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1. Introduction

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency remit is to provide commercially relevant and innovative services to the Irish seafood industry that drive growth opportunities, add value, enhance competitiveness and create jobs in a sustainable, natural resource-based industry for the benefit of coastal communities.

BIM's vision is a scaled Irish seafood industry capitalising on the growing opportunities for seafood in global markets and providing sustainable employment in our coastal communities.

BIM's mission is to grow a thriving Irish seafood industry to deliver on the corporate strategy (Turning the Tide, 2022-2026). BIM will implement the mission through the four strategic priorities as follows:

1. **Lead** and nurture leadership
2. **Deliver** results with solutions that effect change
3. **Invest** for long term growth
4. **Protect** our environment and our sector

Further information on BIM and its programmes is available at www.bim.ie

Background

The Irish seafood processing industry has been under increasing pressure, particularly since the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement in 2020, which has limited access to raw materials. This, coupled with rising supply chain costs (including logistics, energy, and consumables) and recent substantial cuts to pelagic and whitefish quotas for key commercial species, has significantly impacted profitability.

The "Report of the Seafood Task Force"[1] highlights the necessity for greater sustainability, improved efficiency, and better value extraction from available raw materials in order to remain competitive. In 2022-2023, Irish processors invested over €70 million in value-added processing plants, processing lines, and IQF systems, supported by BIM's Brexit Processing Capital Support Scheme. These investments have led to an increase in filleting and H&G, providing processors with additional revenue streams from co-products. BIM has also collaborated closely with seafood stakeholders to leverage AI technologies to optimise processing efficiencies, traceability and quality standards.

In addition to enhancing sustainable competitiveness, maximizing the use of raw materials is in line with national and international bioeconomy initiatives, such as the 'Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025[2], and is vital for ensuring access to sustainable protein sources to feed the growing global population, projected by the FAO to reach 10 billion by 2050.

Extracting more value from available resources

[1] https://bim.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Report-of-the-Seafood-Taskforce.pdf
[2] https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/bioeconomy-action-plan-2023-2025.pdf

Ireland's Bioeconomy Strategy 2026-2030 highlights the significant opportunities that can be derived from blue bioeconomy resources. The Strategy highlights the need for support agencies to collaborate, align supports and provide the necessary clarity to industry stakeholders as to where emerging opportunities exist. In addition to the lower value opportunities in petfood and bio-stimulants, Ireland's world class marine research ecosystem has amassed a wide diversity of R&D outputs in recent decades, identifying potentially high-value proteins, minerals and biopolymers that can be processed into commercially attractive ingredients for the nutraceutical, cosmetic, biotechnology, biomedical, and pharmaceutical sectors. While the scientific research has demonstrated the potential of valorisation pathways, there is currently limited species-specific data for fish and shellfish stocks of strategic importance to Ireland, together with a lack of evidence regarding validated commercial-scaling potential.

Invitation to tender

BIM has consistently supported a diversity of R&D projects and will coordinate with other agencies and RPOs to progress commercially focused ingredient opportunities in collaboration with industry stakeholders. The medium-term strategy is the progression of scale-up trials prioritising key species and specific ingredient focus areas determined by their desirability, feasibility and viability.

This RFT seeks to provide the necessary data and insights by assessing the potential of specific Irish-sourced fish biomass, generating evidence from priority species and co-product streams, and identifying the most commercially attractive and scalable opportunities for investment and industry development. The work will help determine where Ireland can develop competitive advantages in marine bioresource utilisation and support informed decision-making on future research, innovation, and commercialisation activities.

This will strengthen BIM's ability to engage with industry stakeholders, investors, technology providers, and downstream end-users in high-value bioresource markets.

BIM estimates that the expenditure on the Services to be covered by the proposed Services Contract may amount to a maximum of €130,000 exclusive of VAT over the Term. However, Tenderers should note that this is a maximum figure, and should they wish to achieve a competitive advantage their bid should be priced accordingly.

This project is supported by the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) with secured funding through 31st December 2027; however, any contract extension or delivery beyond this date is strictly contingent upon the confirmation of continued structural funding or equivalent financial resources. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to terminate or scale back the contract should the anticipated funding become unavailable, and the award of any contract phase does not constitute a guarantee of funding for subsequent periods.

BIM does not bind itself to accept the lowest priced or any tender.

This Call for Tender (CFT) does not constitute an offer or commitment to enter into a contract.

No contractual rights in relation to BIM will exist unless, and until, a formal written contract has been executed by or on behalf of BIM.

Any notification of preferred bidder status by BIM will not give rise to any enforceable rights by the tenderer.

There is no guarantee made by BIM that services or goods contained in this CFT will be procured.

BIM may cancel this CFT at any time prior to a formal contract being executed by or on behalf of, BIM.

2. Scope of Tender

This is an Open CFT with any appropriately qualified vendors invited to respond.

Tenderers are requested to read instructions carefully for Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3 and Tender format as outlined below.

Tender responses will be evaluated in three phases:

Phase 1 – Selection Criteria

Please note tenderers will only proceed to the Phase 2 if they pass all of the criteria below.

Each of the criteria below are viewed as essential and if one or more of the criteria below is not met then the tender will be automatically eliminated.

This is a **pass/fail** phase, and no scoring will be attached to the results.

No.	Selection Criteria	Requirement
1.1	**Satisfactory Insurances** Declaration that tenderers have or will be in a position to obtain all of the following insurances by the commencement of this contract: • Public liability insurance of not less than €6,500,000. • Professional indemnity insurance of not less than €1,000,000. • Employer's liability of not less than €13,000,000. A copy of these valid insurance certificates or insurance brokers letter is required prior to contract award.	Pass/Fail

No.	Selection Criteria	Requirement
	Indemnity to Principal Clause must be included for Employers Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance and the territorial limits and jurisdiction of insurance policies include the Republic of Ireland. ***Non-resident tenderers may satisfy the insurance requirements by providing evidence of insurance cover that is equivalent in scope and level to the minimum insurance requirements specified under Irish law and practice.***	
1.2	**Experience** Provide comprehensive details including tenderer name and a description of expertise provided for **three (3) previous projects** of a similar nature, scale and complexity carried out over the last 5 years (including, where applicable, by which subcontracting parties or members of a consortium). Relevant references must be made available upon request.	Pass/Fail

Please note that when submitting a response to the criteria above it is sufficient for tenderers to declare that they have the relevant capacity. BIM will seek verification and evidence of such capacity only in the event of a tenderer being considered for the award of the contract. The declaration should clearly and unambiguously indicate the tenderers ability to meet each of the BIM requirements above.

Phase 2 – Award Criteria

This phase is concerned with the technical ability to fulfil the conditions of the tender.

Please note tenderers will only proceed to Phase 3, if they obtain 60% or more of the available marks for the applicable criteria below. If less than 60% is obtained in any of the criteria, tenderers will be eliminated.

Tender responses will be evaluated on the following criteria:

No.	Award Criteria	Maximum marks available	Minimum marks required (60%)
2.1	**Technical Capacity** Tenderers are requested to clearly demonstrate that they have the professional capacity, technical experience and capability to fulfil the tender requirements as set out in ***Section 4 Service Specification*** below.	2,500	1,500
2.2	**Proposed Project Plan** This should comprehensively address the requirements of this tender as set out in ***Section 4 Service Specification*** below including a brief strategy outline and separate	1,500	900

No.	Award Criteria	Maximum marks available	Minimum marks required (60%)
	project plan for completing the work, proposals should also include any review meetings with BIM including frequency and who will attend. Any assumptions should be clearly stated.		
2.3	**<u>Proposed Key Personnel</u>** Tenderers shall identify the Project Lead and all key personnel proposed for delivery of the contract, detailing their specific role, allocated effort and relevant experience. Responses under this section should include details of education and professional qualifications of relevant staff and experience relevant to this contract (evidenced by way of Curriculum Vitae(s)).	2,000	1,200
2.4	**<u>Environmental Responsibility</u>** In line with the Government's Climate Action Plan please provide a copy of your Environmental and Sustainability policy. If no policy is available, please provide details of what steps you will take ensure this work is carried out in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way.	500	N/A
2.5	**<u>Corporate Social Responsibility</u>** Evidence of Corporate Social Responsibility Policy, if no policy is available, please provide details of what steps you will take to ensure the work is carried out in a socially responsible way.	500	N/A
	Total	**7,000**	

Scoring methodology marks for Phase 2 will be allocated as follows:

Weighting	Meaning
91% to 100%	Excellent response with very few or no weaknesses exceeds requirements, and provides comprehensive, detailed, and convincing assurance that the Tenderer will deliver to an excellent standard.
80% to 90%	A very good response that demonstrates real understanding and fully meets the requirements and assurance that the Tenderer will deliver to a high standard.
70% to 79%	A good response which demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of requirements and gives acceptable assurance of delivery to an adequate standard.
60% to 69%	A reasonable response which demonstrates some understanding of requirements and gives reasonable assurance of delivery to an adequate standard but does not provide sufficiently convincing assurance to award a higher mark.
30% to 59%	A response where reservations exist. Lacks full credibility/convincing detail, and there is a significant risk that the response will not be successful.

Weighting	Meaning
1% to 29%	A response where serious reservations exist. This may be because, for example, insufficient detail is provided, and the response has fundamental flaws, or is seriously inadequate or seriously lack credibility with a high risk of non-delivery.
0%	Response completely fails to address the criterion under consideration.

Phase 3

Tenderers who achieved 60% or more in the applicable criteria in Phase 2 will proceed to this phase. Marks from Phases 2 and 3 will be added together and this will be the final mark.

Tender responses will be evaluated on the following criteria in Phase 3:

No.	Award Criteria	Max Marks Available
3.1	**Pricing** Complete Annex 2 Form of Tender A total of 3,000 marks are available in this phase. The lowest total price of all tenders that qualify for Phase 3 will be awarded full marks for this criterion. Other tenders will be assessed relative to the lowest priced tender using the following formula: **Lowest Price / Tendered Price x 3,000 = Number of Marks**	3,000
	Total	**3,000**

3. Tender Format

Tenders should be presented in the format and order laid out above under Section 2 Scope of Tender. Each of the sections should be clearly and separately marked and addressed in the order above.

Please complete Annex 5 - Tender Response Document (TRD) provided with this tender and complete all sections ensuring to follow all instructions. The TRD will include also include Annex 2 & 3 below.

Tenderers may be requested to attend a clarification meeting, if required.

4. Service Specification

BIM wishes to invite tenders for the assessment of a range of fish species and by-products for key valorisation opportunities including bioactive peptides, peptone, collagen and chondroitin sulphate.

This work would include the laboratory-scale validation of these opportunities across a range of fish species, namely:

- Blue whiting;
- Boarfish;
- Horse mackerel;
- Spurdog;
- Mackerel co-products.

Detailing extraction, yield, characterisation and functionality. Functionalities of prime importance would include nutraceutical and cosmetic sector applications as well as microbial growth support.

The primary purpose of this tender is to align and progress existing scientific evidence for bioactivity associated with the above-mentioned target marine resources in order create the platform to prioritise opportunities for scaling.

BIM requires the successful tenderer to:

- Conduct processing of the targeted resources to generate compounds of interest; specifically:
    - Bioactive peptides;
    - Peptone;
    - Collagen;
    - Chondroitin sulphate.
- Assess the impacts of these products to include in vitro impact on skin models and microbial support ingredients.
- Undertake structured engagement with relevant industry stakeholders and potential end users to assess the commercial attractiveness and market fit of the target compounds (bioactive peptides, peptones, collagen and chondroitin sulphate).
- Consider the scalability and commercial viability of the identified opportunities, including an assessment of the market readiness and commercial potential of the research outputs. Indicate third parties of relevance for techno-economic assessment.
- Provide a comparison of the compounds investigated within this research against existing commercially available compounds, highlighting any competitive advantages, performance differences, or unique value propositions.
- Produce a technical report detailing all methods used, data produced, impact of data, product specifications, and potential for scale up of priority species/products including preliminary business model cases with specific alignment of data linked to commercial use potential.

- Produce a concise, stakeholder-focused communication tool (PowerPoint presentation and/or short summary report) that clearly highlights the key findings, commercial opportunities, impacts, benefits, and attractiveness of the work undertaken to support knowledge transfer, stakeholder engagement, and wider adoption of the project outcomes.

Deliverables:

Project Plan & Study Protocol

- Agreed project timeline
- Agreed progress meeting timelines- interim report updates

Fish processing/extraction

Biomass processing to produce bioactive peptides and peptones

- Hydrolysis of fish biomass
- Extract characterisation
- Optimisation of hydrolysis process
- Downstream validation

Biomass extraction to produce collagen and chondroitin sulphate[3]

- Extraction of target compounds from target fish species
- Quantification and yield measurement
- Optimisation of extraction process and yield
- Characterisation of target compounds
- Downstream validation

In vitro validation of compound activity

- Bioactive peptides – impact on skin models (e.g. antioxidant, anti-inflammatory)
- Peptones – support of microbial growth
- Collagen - impact on skin models (e.g. antioxidant, anti-inflammatory)
- Chondroitin sulphate - impact on skin models (e.g. antioxidant, anti-inflammatory)

Scale up potential

- Equipment, manpower, plant, cost indications
- Assess pathway to commercialisation based on scalable technologies, stakeholder engagement and current national facilities
- Initial business model perspectives Desirability/Feasibility/Viability (e.g. market potential, value opportunities investment requirements, Return on Investment)

Data Analysis

- Statistical analysis of trial and laboratory results
- Product specifications/efficacy results
- Summary of key findings

Reporting

- Interim progress updates (as agreed)

[3] BIM will facilitate the sourcing of appropriate quality biomass for each of the species

- Final technical report detailing methods, results, and conclusions
- Concise stakeholder-focused communications

Stakeholder Engagement

- Identification and engagement of key stakeholders across:
  - Nutraceutical, cosmetics and personal care sectors.
- Collection and analysis of stakeholder feedback regarding:
  - Desired product specifications
  - Quality and purity requirements
  - Functional performance expectations
  - Regulatory and certification considerations
  - Market barriers and opportunities

Knowledge Sharing

- Presentation of findings to BIM and other outlets deemed by BIM.

5. Contract Timeframe

Any contract that may result from this Competition (the "Services Contract") shall remain in place for a period of twenty-one (21) months (the "Term"). BIM reserves the right to extend the Term for a period or periods of up to (2) two months with a maximum of (2) two such extension or extensions on the same terms and conditions, subject to the BIM's obligations at law.

6. Currency

Prices must be in euros (€) and be completed to two decimal places.

7. Validity of Tender

The tenderer agrees that their tender will remain open for acceptance for a minimum of 120 calendar days from the closing date for submission of tenders.

8. Cost of Tendering

Tenderers will bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of their tenders and BIM will not be responsible or liable for any costs or expenses regardless of the conduct or outcome of the tender process.

9. Contract Terms and Tender Documents

The tender documents issued will comprise the CFT (this document) and Annexes thereto including the Form of Tender at Annex 2 and the contract included in Annex 4
. All documents issued and information given to the tenderer will be treated as confidential.

Tenderers will not release details of the tender documents other than on an "in confidence" basis to those who have a legitimate need to know or whom they need to consult for the purpose of preparing their Tenders.

10. **Contract Notice**

Each tenderer's acceptance of delivery of this CFT constitutes its agreement to, and acceptance of, the terms set forth in the CFT and of the contract attached at Annex 4.

11. **Extension of Tender Period**

BIM reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to extend the closing date for receipt by giving notice in writing to all tenderers before the original closing date.

12. **Tax Clearance Certificate**

Tenderers being awarded a public contract must have tax clearance. Applications for Tax Clearance Certificates can be made online and can be accessed at
www.revenue.ie/en/starting-a-business/tax-clearance/index.aspx

BIM will verify the tax clearance status of vendors online before making payment.

Professional services will be subject to Irish 'Professional Services Withholding Tax' at the prevailing rate (currently at 20%) as laid down by the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland. Withholding tax, if applicable, will be deducted by BIM prior to payment to the contractor.

13. Notice from BIM

BIM may (up to three (3) working days prior to the deadline for receipt of tenders) issue a notice to all tenderers, deleting, varying or extending any item in these documents. Any such notice will then become one of the tender documents and will be treated as such by the tenderer.

14. General Data Protection Regulations/Freedom of Information

Please note that BIM will use personal information in line with the General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR"), the Data Protection Acts 2003 – 2018 and the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014. Please see BIM's Privacy Statement / Data Protection Policy for further details on the use of information. All tenderers are required to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures (in particular those required under the GDPR) to ensure a level of security appropriate to the risk to the security of Personal Data they process.

15. Standstill Period

Standstill period not applicable to this below EU threshold level tender.

16. Tenderer's Queries and Clarification Requests

Any queries arising from the tender documents or the Instructions to Tenderers or information provided to tenderers must be raised through the messaging facility at www.etenders.gov.ie not later than five (5) working days before the closing date for receipt of tenders.

17. Funding for this CFT

This CFT will be funded fully through the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).

18. Electronic Submissions

BIM will only accept responses electronically via the eTenders website www.etenders.gov.ie For comprehensive details on the eTenders Post-box policy, please refer to **Annex 1**.

19. Expressions of Interest

All parties that wish to be kept informed of any clarifications and/or additional information regarding this tender should register their interest by registering on-line with eTenders (eTenders has been developed by the Department of Finance and is designed to help Interested parties/Tenderers find notices on government and public sector procurement across Ireland): www.etenders.gov.ie

20. Closing Date for Tender Responses

All tenders must be:

- Received prior to **12:00 noon (Irish Standard Time) on Wednesday, 25th October 2026.**
- Submitted using the via the eTenders post-box at www.etenders.gov.ie

For further information in using the Irish Government's eTenders post-box please refer to **Annex 1.**

Please note that non-conformance with these requirements will result in elimination.

Please note that any information submitted may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 2014.

Annex 1 - BIM eTenders Post-box Policy

A User Guide to eTenders and instructions on submitting a response through the eTenders Post-box may be found here www.etenders.gov.ie/system-user-guides

Please note:

The onus is on the tenderer to ensure that the tender reaches eTenders on time. It is not advisable to wait until the last moment to upload documents in case of internet connection difficulties or other technical problems. Neither BIM or eTenders take responsibility for documents which do not reach BIM by the due deadline, for any reason.

Annex 2 - Form of Tender

I/We have reviewed the *Call for Tender for the Provision of Services to Assess Ireland's Marine Bioresource Opportunity and Validation Programme* and do hereby offer to provide the products or services set out therein, as may be required by BIM, in exchange for the following pricing, which is inclusive of all expenses and exclusive of VAT:

Details / service requirements	Proposed Costs (inclusive of all expenses and exclusive of VAT) (€)	VAT rate for information purposes only (%)
Proposed pricing to provide the required services and deliverables as outlined in the CFT document.		
TOTAL OVERALL COST		

Pricing above is to be quoted in Euro (€), inclusive of all expenses (including any travel or subsistence (if applicable)) and exclusive of VAT.

If awarded this contract, the tenderer accepts the terms of the *Provision of Services to Assess Ireland's Marine Bioresource Opportunity and Validation Programme* BIM 2026-36 Contract.

The tenderer agrees to keep this offer open for acceptance by BIM for a period of 120 days from the deadline date for receipt of Tenders.

The tenderer has read and confirms its acceptance of the Instructions to Tenders.

The tenderer agrees to treat the details of this offer, together with any subsequent correspondence or contract, as private and confidential.

The tenderer acknowledges that BIM will not be responsible for any costs incurred by in the preparation of its tender or any associated work effort, howsoever arising.

The tenderer acknowledges that the essence of the public procurement process is that BIM will receive bona fide competitive tenders from all tenderers. In recognition of this principle, the tenderer certifies that this is a bona fide tender, intended to be competitive, and that it has not fixed or adjusted the amount of the tender by or under or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other tenderer.

The tenderer is aware of the prohibitions contained in Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and the Competition Act 2002.

Dated this _____ day of _____2026

Signature: _____

Print Name:	
Company Name: (if applicable)	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Mobile Number:	
Email:	

This Annex is also provided in the Tender Response Document in Section C. Please refer to Section 3 – Tender Format on how your tender should be presented.

Annex 3 – Previous Contracts/Projects

PREVIOUS REFERENCE CONTRACT	
Name of Reference Contract	
Client/Contracting Authority	
Public or Private Sector?	
Contract Description	
Contract Management	
Contract Performance	
Contract Value excluding VAT	
Contract Duration (start and finish)	
Comparability to this RFT	
Describe how this Contract / Project is comparable to the services required under this tender	
Name of Client Referee	
Title/Role of Client Referee	
Telephone of Client Referee	
Email Address of Client Referee	

Please repeat the above table three (3) times.

This Annex is also provided in the Tender Response Document in Section B. Please refer to Section 3 – Tender Format on how your tender should be presented.

Annex 4 – Draft Contract

Attached separately.

Tenderers should review the draft contract in full and raise any proposed amendments, qualifications or requests for departures from the contract terms during the clarification period. Requests for amendments received after tender submission, including at contract award stage, may not be considered and could result in the tender being deemed non-compliant.

Annex 5 – Tender Response Document

Please refer to '**Annex 5 – Tender Response Document (TRD)**' document attached to this Call for Tender which is available for downloading.

All tender responses should commence with the TRD document followed by any further supporting documentation which should be explicitly referenced and linked to the requirement being addressed.

Note:
Tenderers must follow the format of this Request for Tender (RFT) as outlined in Section 3 - Tender Format.

Please also ensure to address each of the selection and award criteria as outlined in Section 2 – Scope of Tender.