

The Marine/Maritime Economy could create 10,000 new jobs up to 2020, says Expert Group on Future Skills Needs.

30th April 2015

Our ocean wealth is a national asset, supporting a diverse marine economy, with vast potential to tap into a €1,200 billion global marine market. The aim of this study is to ensure that the right skills will be available for enterprises in the developing Irish Marine Economy out to 2020. The key sectors of this Economy are: Seafood and Bio-Products; Maritime Transport, Shipbuilding and Services; Offshore Energy; Marine Tourism; and Maritime Monitoring, Security and Surveillance.

There are approximately 16,155 persons employed in the marine economy in marine and coastal regions around the country. The roles are spread across the key sectors and straddle the full range of occupations from managerial and professional to operatives, including engineers, marine biologists, maritime lawyers, environmental scientists, naval architects, technicians, and crane operators, fish filleters. The report estimates that Ireland has the potential to create up to 16,900 job vacancies in the period to 2020 arising through expansion and replacement demand with around 10,000 of these being new jobs owing to growth of the marine economy.

While no major skills shortage was identified the skills in demand include engineers, people with boat handling skills and hydrographic surveyors. Many roles are not exclusive to a marine environment for example electrical and mechanical engineers, lawyers, technicians and welders which are all land based occupations but with a top up qualification or training an individual's skills can be "marinised" to enable them work in a marine or offshore environment.

The seafood sector in particular has an ageing workforce for which measures will need to be put in place to attract and upskill younger workers. Operatives and low skill roles are a major component of the marine economy but there is evidence of a shift towards more professionals being employed right across the economy including sectors such as seafood which is predominantly a low skill employer and the emerging sectors, such as marine renewable energy and maritime monitoring where professionals such as engineers is the major skill in demand. A key finding in the study is the lack of awareness about possible careers in the Marine Economy and the time delay in obtaining current economic data for the marine economy.

Welcoming the launch of the report, the Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation Damien English T.D said: “I welcome the report which was a key deliverable under the Action Plan for Jobs. It highlights the positive outlook for the future of the sector and shows that there is significant employment growth expected. The study also highlights the scope for regional job creation and opportunities for young people to obtain local employment in growing sectors; such as aquaculture, supply and services to the offshore energy sector and technology in the marine environment.

Chairperson of the EGFSN, Una Halligan said “With our position on the western periphery of Europe facing the Atlantic Ocean and its energy resources, our deep water ports and our 7,500 km coastline Ireland is well placed to capitalise on the growing potential of the global marine economy and create sustainable jobs in the coastal regions. However, an important aspect will be the co-ordinated effort on the part of all the marine sectors to raise awareness of the excellent and rewarding careers in the sector and attracting people to the opportunities available.”

The full report, *A Study of the Current and Future Skills Requirements of the Marine/Maritime Economy to 2020*, and its recommendations are available on the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs website www.skillsireland.ie

Background Notes

Taking our seabed area into account, Ireland is one of the largest EU states; with sovereign or exclusive rights over one of the largest sea to land ratios (over 10:1) of any EU State. Our coastline of 7,500km is longer than that of many European countries. *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth - an Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland, (HOOW)*, sets out a roadmap for the Government’s vision, high-level goals and integrated actions across policy, governance and business to enable our marine potential to be realised. One such action was to “Identify future skills needs and labour market supply and demand trends in the marine/maritime area in the context of *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth*”.

The complex web of maritime economic activities grouped around five sectors, each made up of a number of related sub-sectors, are presented in the following table along with the key economic indicators.

Sector	Direct Employment (FTE)*	GVA (€millions)‡	Turnover (€millions)‡
Seafood and Bio-Products	5,359	256	745
Sea Fisheries	2,513	116	202
Marine Aquaculture	918	47	123
Seafood Processing	1,586	80	390
Marine Biotechnology and Bioprocessing	342	13	30
Maritime Transport, Shipping and Services	5,689	540	1,658
Shipping and maritime transport	4,633	422	1,422
Marine Retail Services	252	34	58
Marine Manufacturing, Construction and Engineering	726	44	111
Marine Commerce and Ship Leasing	78	40	67
Energy	1,148	65	138
Oil and Gas Exploration and Production	861	61	126
Marine Renewables - Offshore wind, Wave and Tidal	287	4	12
Tourism	3,502	337‡	858
Marine Tourism and Leisure	3,502	337	841
International Cruise Industry	N/A	N/A	17
Maritime Monitoring, Security and Surveillance	457	21	56
High-tech marine products and services	457	21	56
Total	16,155	1,219	3,455

* 2014 employment estimates based on 2010 data

‡ 2010 data - latest official figures available at the time

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About the EGFSN

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) advises the Irish Government on current and future skills needs of the economy and on other labour market issues that impact on Ireland's enterprise and employment growth. It has a central role in ensuring that labour market needs for skilled workers are anticipated and met. Established in 1997, the EGFSN reports to the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The Strategic Policy Division within the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in conjunction with the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit, SOLAS, provides the EGFSN with research and analysis support.