

**Note of Discard Action Group (DAG) meeting held at Friends House, London.
Tuesday 18 July 2017**

Seafish discards page – for minutes and further information on discards and the Discard Action Group (DAG) activities see:
<http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/discussion-forums/the-discard-action-group>

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Mike Park welcomed everyone to the meeting and commented that as many fishermen as possible had been invited to this meeting to answer any questions.

Attendees

Aaron Hatcher	University of Portsmouth
Adam Green	Lyons Seafoods
Aisla Jones	Co-op
Andrew Nicholson	2 Sisters Food Group
Ansen Ward	FAO
Arina Motova	Seafish
Arvind Thandi	Defra
Barrie Deas	NFFO
Ben Collier	Northern Ireland Gear Trials
Clarus Chu	WWF
Conor Nolan	North Western Waters Advisory Council
David Parker	Young's Seafood
Debbie Crockard	Marine Conservation Society
Dominik Leeson	Defra
Duncan Vaughan	Natural England
Emiel Brouckaert	North Western Waters Advisory Council
Emily Botsford	ADM Capital Foundation
George West	Skipper
Giles Bartlett	Sealord Caistor
Hannah McIntyre	Marks & Spencer
Helen Duggan	Seafish
Jamie Davies	Pew Trusts
Jess Sparks	Seafish
Jim Portus	South Western Fish Producers' Organisation
Jimmy Buchan	Skipper, SWFPA
Karen Green	Seafish (Minutes)
Katrina Ryan	Mindfully Wired Communications
Kenn Skau Fisher	Danish Fishermen PO
Kenny Coull	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Liane Veitch	ClientEarth
Mark Robertson	Skipper, SWFPA
Mark Simmonds	British Ports Association
Mark Stafford	Welsh Government
Mike Montgomerie	Seafish
Mike Park	SWFPA, Seafish Board member (Chair)

Mike Platt	Marine Stewardship Council
Jurgen Batsleer	VisNed
Ruth Hoban	New England Seafood
Richard Slaski	Fisheries Innovation Scotland
Sara Vandamme	North Western Waters Advisory Council
Tara Marshall	Aberdeen University
Tom Catchpole	Cefas
Tristram Lewis	Funding Fish

Apologies

Aoife Martin	Seafish
Alaric Churchill	Milford Haven Ports Authority
Barry O'Neill	Marine Scotland
Claire Pescod	Marine Stewardship Council
Erin Priddle	Environmental Defense Fund
Grant Course	SeaScope Fisheries Research Ltd
Hazel Curtis	Seafish
Heather Hamilton	ClientEarth
Jane MacPherson	Marine Scotland
Jennifer Mouat	The Aegir Consultancy
Jonathan Shepherd	Seafish Board
Jim Masters	Fishing into the Future
Kevin McDonell	SAFPO
Paddy Campbell	DAERA
Pim Visser	VisNed
Phil Taylor	Open Seas
Gus Caslake	Seafish
Ross Jolliffe	Cefas
Tim Silverthorne	National Federation of Fishmongers

2. Minutes from the last meeting held on 25 November 2016.

The final minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting and have been added to the DAG page. Attendees were asked to take note of the meeting guidelines. In the following minutes Seafish will provide a link to the various presentations given at the meeting but not summarise the whole presentation. In the main we do not attribute the comments made at the meeting.

The issues being raised

The landing obligation is now embedded with very few small fish are being landed. What is being said? What are the issues being raised? What analysis has there been?

3. The Landing Obligation (LO): Issues and fact-finding. Jurgen Batsleer, VisNed.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702595/dag_july2017_visned.pdf

Jurgen explained the practical issues facing fishermen and the scientific advance being made. In terms of feasibility there are parallel monologues running between the Dutch fleet saying 'the landing obligation is impossible; we want a principle discussion; there are impossibilities, problems and dilemmas' and the Dutch Ministry saying 'the landing obligation is a fact; there is no principle discussion; and let us find room to manoeuvre at implementation'. However there are many examples of scientific advances and developments in survivability research and the use of watertight cisterns, gear innovation

and the SepNep project, observing fish behavior and improving best practice. The aim is to make sure the data and science is out there and useable. The LO is here to stay but it is still not clear in exactly what form or shape. There needs to be a paradigm shift for all involved and it is essential to get fishers alongside. There is also an awareness of too much too fast and an autopilot implementation will lead to collision.

Discussion

- **Question.** What is the current response of the Dutch Government to this work?
Answer. To be honest they look and stare but there is no real movement. It is important they look at the practical aspects.
- **Q.** Has there been any analysis of how the sleeve over the cod end improved survivability? **A.** That gear selectivity project did not look at that aspect. With a limited budget the parameters for the research have to be very clearly defined.
- **Q.** Has there been much work on spatial analysis and how fish react? **A.** Yes there will be. A brand new study will look at mapping and it would be interesting to look at fleet dynamics.

4. Where's the Catch? The reputational risk of IUU from discards. Mike Mitchell, Fair Seas.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702601/dag_july2017_reputationalrisk_fairseas.pdf

From a supply chain perspective Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated (IUU) fishing is now widely considered in the UK to be a form of 'Food Fraud'. The UK seafood industry has been proactive in recognising the reputational risk of IUU discarding. Because of the implementation challenges of the LO in some sectors, there is a tacit understanding that some vessels are continuing to discard despite the introduction of the discard ban with evidence that this is the case in some trawl fisheries. During the latter half of 2016, two independent reports indicated the risk of IUU discarding in EU fisheries: namely the Blyth-Skyrme/Borges report which concluded that in the event of weak LO implementation, EU demersal trawl fisheries appear to be at particular risk of failing an MSC assessment; and the Scheveningen Control Expert Group report which stated that of the 12 North Sea trawl fisheries assessed, four were considered to represent a 'high' or 'very high' risk of illegal discarding. This was supported by a presentation at the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership LO workshop in Vigo in May 2017 when Miguel Nuevo of EFCA reported that; based on the agency's last haul inspections in the Baltic Sea, "there appeared to be a problem in reporting discards". Out of five demersal fishing gear groups assessed by EFCA in different areas of the Baltic Sea, two were considered to be at 'high risk' of illegal discarding and one at 'medium risk' (two were 'low risk'). Miguel concluded that in his opinion, the North Sea would represent greater challenges to the LO implementation than in the Baltic.

The issue now is how the supply chain reacts and how retailers and brands can align to bring commercial pressure to bear on the Member States to protect fishermen from this dilemma, and protect their own brand integrity. For the first time in many years, the market faces the very real prospect that some EU fishery products in their supply chains are likely to be sourced from vessels that are fishing illegally and that this threatens the viability and reputation of consumer facing sustainability schemes. In October 2016, on seeing the Scheveningen Control Expert Group report, seafood brands and retailers wrote a private letter to the Defra Minister responsible for fisheries, urging action on transparent actions to prevent IUU discarding in UK fisheries. In May 2017 a wider coalition of retailers and processors aligned on the issue of IUU discarding through the trade federations, the British Retail Consortium (BRC - retail) and Provision Trade Federation/FDF Seafood Industry Alliance (SIA - processing). A joint positioning has

been agreed where retailers and brand owners have been contacting their upstream fishery supply chains to seek assurances of no IUU discarding. The BRC/SIA joint position supports four initiatives

- Increased selectivity in fishing activities both in terms of fishing practice and gear development.
- Comprehensive and cost-effective monitoring and enforcement of measures.
- Innovation in access to quota – including the creation of new, more flexible quota trading platforms.
- Incentivising innovation in fishing practices to address potential choke situations.

Action: Circulate links to two reports.

Discussion

- **Question.** Is there a contradiction here? Can you have effective implementation of the current legislation without recognising the inherent current practical problems with regards to this legislation? **Answer.** We would not rule out changing the legislation but can't ignore the problem. There is recognition that in some cases the framework is unworkable which raises questions over whether the legislation is fit for purpose, but equally what we can't do is ignore the problem.
- **Q.** With regard to access to quota, Brexit could allow changes to quota split which would be welcomed. Is there a chance there is a system that could work? **A.** Whilst attention has certainly shifted here the talk has been about complying with the current rule book, which will be in place until 2019. Whilst we are working towards leaving the EU we need open and honest investigation to think beyond 2019.
- **Q.** Could the future be Fully Documented Fisheries (FDF) where discarding still features so long as it is fully recorded as opposed to landing all catches? **A.** The LO is the paramount concern at the moment, but equally we need to understand the level of mortality. The supply chain needs to be assured of 100% legal fisheries and there is evidence that skippers had been asked by the supply chain to produce evidence that no discarding was occurring.

5. Economic impact assessment (EIA) of the Landing Obligation: testing possible LO implementation in 2018. Arina Motova. Seafish.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702604/dag_july2017_eia_seafish.pdf

This was an update on the how the EIA of the LO has been progressed to show the work done in 2016 and its results, the effort distribution in 2015-2016, preliminary results testing 2017-2019 with the 2016 baseline and work planned in 2017. The purpose of the 2016 update and published analysis was to improve the flexibility of the model and test different policy scenarios, as well as accept new data as easily as possible. In addition the aim was to provide analysis of the LO to better understand the scale of the challenge created by potential choke stocks and to ask whether the UK had sufficient quota to address the challenge. In conclusion the quota trading scenarios are the best case scenarios for most of the fleets. Enabling effective quota exchange within UK and between other countries in the region would reduce choke risks, however there are still some choke risks due to low UK quota in some areas, e.g. whiting area 7a or hake in the North Sea in 2019. Other choke mitigation measures, such as selectivity and avoidance would play an important role for further reduction of choke risks.

Action: Circulate links to two reports published in April 2017.

Discussion

- **Question.** Did you take into account the costs associated with quota trading?
Answer. It is difficult to model because the price of quota fluctuates. The analysis mostly focusses on choke analysis.
- **Q.** Do you know why effort went up? **A.** There are a number of possible reasons. The number of vessels has not increased but the Days at Sea scheme was relaxed, the location of vessels has possibly changed, there has possibly been an increase in effort for some vessels or they are targeting a different species or some vessels could be spending more time at sea.

6. Spatial avoidance measures. Tara Marshall, Aberdeen University.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702607/dag_july2017_spatialavoidancemeasures.pdf

Spatial avoidance is all about what can be done to avoid unwanted catch by improving gear selectivity (how vessels catch fish) and improving spatial selectivity (where and when vessels fish). What is needed is a map showing where unwanted fish are to allow fishermen to make a tactical decision as to where/when to fish. Real-time reporting was demonstrated - after the catch comes onboard fishing vessels rapidly upload information to a central database. This catch data is then combined with the corresponding VMS data about where the fish were caught and geo-referenced information about unwanted catch is disseminated. Examples were given about how this had been used for the Alaskan Pollock fishery and for Pacific whiting. The advantages of real-time reporting systems are that they improve the alignment between the fishing opportunity and available quota allocation; they are industry-led; they can be used to manage quota uptake (bookkeeping); they are recognised as a form of results-based management; and they are favourably perceived by the public and can contribute to securing a 'social license to operate'.

Action: Circulate links to reports on this topic.

Discussion

- **Question.** This is very encouraging. What was the size of the vessels? **Answer.** With the Alaskan Pollock fishery this was mostly trawlers, not massive, reporting to a mother ship and usually at sea for long periods. They report on bycatch species, not target species.
- **Q.** There was mention of alternatives to observer coverage. What is happening?
Answer. This is an area of investment in Scotland using images and image recognition software of the length and composition of the catch. There are now questions over how to convert this to quantifiable data.
- **Q.** How does fisheries management requirements interact with real time reporting for the Alaskan Pollock fishery? **A.** A third party agency is required to make a report and produce evidence that no discarding is taking place.

7. Results from Fisheries Innovation Scotland Project. An economic analysis of quota allocation under a landing obligation. Aaron Hatcher, University of Portsmouth. Presentation under embargo.

The aim of the project is to identify LO economic impacts and chokes by gear type and PO (under existing quota allocation) while adjusting effort in order to maximise profitability, and to see whether outcomes under a LO can be improved if quota is reallocated between (groups of) vessels. Various scenarios were presented covering profits and days, profits by PO and gear type, days by PO and gear type and quota uptake and discards. Allowing a more flexible system of quota allocation would seem to have the potential to at least ameliorate some of the effects of the LO.

Discussion

- **Question.** In the main all models are wrong but some models are useful. How can we use this model in discussions about fisheries management policy?
Answer. At the moment it is not very easy to use the system and the policy implications are that it should be made easier for skippers to exchange quota. We need a platform for quota exchange in real-time.
- **Q.** This analysis makes a number of assumptions and assumes there will be no change in fishing behaviour and yet the whole purpose of the LO is to effect change. Did you look at this? **A.** It is possible to do provided we determine what that change is likely to be.
- **Q.** It is now accepted that there are direct costs associated with leasing and these are applied on a routine basis. Could these be factored in? **A.** We understand that quota leasing is a financial cost to individual vessels, but this analysis looks at the total amount of profit generated for the fleet overall and recognises that profit moves around.
- This analysis recognises that a level of quota swapping is going on. However the main issue is access in the right places and the willingness to swap at the right time.

Addressing the issues

Industry response to the issues being raised. Highlighting the positive steps being taken by industry and what is happening?

Looking ahead

8. North Seas Advisory Council (NSAC) Implementation of the Landing Obligation in 2018. Kenn Skau Fisher, Danish Fishermen PO.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702610/dag_july2017_nsac.pdf

The NSAC prepares and provides advice on the management of fisheries in the North Sea on behalf of its members; fisheries organisations and other stakeholders including environmental organisations. Due to the regionalised process and the constructive cooperation with the Scheveningen Group (the EU countries with quotas in the North Sea: Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and the UK) the NSAC has been able to produce constructive advice. Since 2014 the NSAC has produced at least 11 papers/letters on the LO (more or less half of the total work of advice in the same period). Throughout this process the NSAC has commented on the phasing schedule i.e. the stock by stock approach was not adopted but instead a fishery by fishery approach, the phasing in of plaice has been deferred from 2018 to 2019. The latest work has included looking at monitoring and control under the LO, phasing of the LO letter, looking at the implementation of the LO and implications for cod, plaice, saithe and whiting in 2018 and looking at the introduction of plaice to the LO. The easier to manage stocks have been phased in first but the LO will be a challenge in many fisheries in 2018 especially for cod, saithe and whiting. The NSAC can highlight challenges and provide possible solutions – but any action is for the Scheveningen Group and the Commission. However the NSAC will continue to do its best to support an implementation of the LO that makes it possible to have economic, sustainable fisheries after January 2019.

9. The implementation of the LO in North Western Waters. Liane Veitch, North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC)/ClientEarth.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702613/daq_july2017_nwwac.pdf

Currently 46% of demersal fish (assumed to be landings) are subject to the LO in North Western Waters. The focus so far has been on 'low hanging fruit' however one fishery choked in 2016 (June) - the Belgian beam trawl fleet in 7.hjk because of exhaustion of the sole quota. There is a long way to go and serious challenges ahead. To address this NWWAC has developed a choke mitigation tool to see how far the choke risk can be mitigated. The tool has three components: to define stock and gear; identify the choke category at regional and biological level; and to explore mitigating actions in terms of avoidance, selectivity and quota. This tool has been trialed on the 13 key stocks in the Celtic Sea. The tool classified the stocks into 'choke risk' categories as high, moderate or low. There are other issues where solutions are clearly needed namely: demersal by-catches in pelagic fisheries; whiting in the Celtic Sea herring fishery; hake in the mackerel fishery; pelagic by-catches in demersal fisheries; horse mackerel and mackerel in mixed demersal fisheries; boarfish in mixed demersal fisheries; zero TAC and zero quota stocks. The choke mitigation tool has helped to identify those Member States who are facing the biggest choke risks in particular fisheries. The aim is to repeat the Celtic Sea work to cover the West of Scotland, Irish Sea and Channel areas.

Discussion

- There was some discussion around *Nephrops* and the choke risk. The tool used a species-based approach and the risk is that the *Nephrops* fleet will choke on other bycatch species.
- **Question.** There was mention that one fishery choked in 2016 because of exhaustion of the sole quota which has not happened in 2017. Where did that fleet go? **Answer.** There is a very small sole quota and last year a targeted fishery was over populated. This year more control has been exercised over different campaigns to stop this happening again. The displacement has gone all over the place with local avoidance to avoid the hot spots.
- **Q.** Is displacement an unintended consequence of the system? **A.** This has been considered however most fleets at the moment are only subject to the LO for one or two species, when subject to the LO for all this is very difficult to predict. There is no evidence of vessels moving from heavily fished areas to more sparsely fished areas.

10. What could a Landing Obligation post-Brexit look like? Barrie Deas, NFFO.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702616/daq_july2017_viewsonbrexit_nffo.pdf

The most immediate issue is how to address the issue of choke species and the potential for displacement which is most severe in a mixed fishery. There is currently a misbalance/disconnect between the LOO, TAC setting and the Technical Conservation Regulation and whilst a toolbox approach may help with the primary target species it is unlikely to help with the secondary species. Brexit opens up some new possibilities for the UK – the UK will become an independent coastal state; some elements of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) will be transferred into UK law but important parts won't (such as TAC setting, access arrangements and quota – this will become part of a bilateral agreement. UK ministers want to retain the principle of a discard ban but the UK needs a workable UK discard ban. The central purpose must be to create an incentive to minimise unwanted catch and minimise unwanted mortality, and take into account the mixed fisheries choke issue. A UK landing obligation could adopt a two-stage approach with a LO that applies to primary stocks and one that applies to secondary stocks. This

would apply individual TACs only where there is a conservation rationale to maintain its conservation status and progressively extend the LO to secondary stocks as knowledge allows and implementation issues are dealt with.

Discussion

- **Question.** What is the role of Fully Documented Fisheries (FDF) going forward?
Answer. FDF is highly desirable as we need readily available information. A successful LO hinges on the mindset of the industry – industry has to be confident that what has been done is in the interests of the industry.
- **Q.** Should North Sea hake be a special case? **A.** Something has to be done about NS hake.
- **Q.** There was mention of the administrative scope to suspend the LO when a choke is imminent this sounds like a very worrying concept in light of trying to fish within sustainable levels? **A.** The idea is to manage the principle stocks and not tying up a fleet due to a choke situation. This would change a political problem into an administrative one.

11. Current Fisheries Innovation Scotland (FIS) projects on the Landing Obligation. Richard Slaski, FIS.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702619/dag_july2017_fisdiscardreduction.pdf

Richard highlighted projects commissioned before 23 June 2016 which address the LO. He talked specifically about FIS011A Innovation in selectivity, FIS011B SMARTFISH Selective retention, FIS012A International quota management and FIS015 Survival of post-catch *Nephrops*. New projects are due to be announced shortly.

He also mentioned an informal consultation on the Seafood 2040 strategy and its strategic priorities to grow seafood consumption, maximise sustainable wild catch opportunities, grow a sustainable aquaculture sector and enable business growth. The 2040 group is appointed by the Minister and members have been chosen to represent their sectors. This is the first time the entire supply chain has sat down at one table to plan for a shared, thriving future. The 2040 group would welcome feedback from those in the room on the draft strategy document. This is not a consultation – it's a friendly checking-in with industry colleagues for constructive comments.

Actions:

11.1 Circulate links to details on FIS projects.

11.2 Send the draft Seafood 2040 strategy to those attending the DAG meeting for comment.

Innovative selectivity methods

12. Discard reduction by acoustic selectivity. Christophe Corbières, iXblue S.A.S.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702622/dag_july2017_discardreduction_acousticselectivity_ixblue.pdf

This covered: how to discriminate species before catch; acoustic selectivity and new technology for relevant information and possible methodologic changes in fishing; and the benefits of selectivity before catch with examples of new practices for pelagic and bottom trawl and sustainability and profitability impacts. Acoustic Selectivity has been demonstrated to prove that it is realistic and targeting to reduce discards is possible.

Discussion

- **Question.** Have there been any trials on demersal vessels in the UK? **Answer.** Yes Lunar operate with this system.

- **Q.** In a mixed fishery can this differentiate between different species? **A.** Yes it can show a mix of species and with an experience skipper can be quite reactive.

13. How to estimate the economic implications of new gear when conducting gear trials - will we make any money with this gear? Arina Motova, Seafish.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702625/dag_july2017_gearbestpractice_seafish.pdf

it is recognised there is an Increasing need to adapt gear which is being driven by LO policy and a need for a standardised approach to assess and report on the financial effectiveness of experimental gear. A Seafish workshop was held on 4f May 2017 to agree the best methods and practices for assessing and comparing the economic implications of experimental fishing gear. The aim was to agree the data requirements and feasibility for assessing and comparing economic implications of experimental fishing gear, agree the layout and content of an Excel tool and agree the structure and content of the report. Subsequently there was the need to disseminate and promote Best Practice Guidance to improve the quality of business assessment of trialed fishing gear and to enable users to share their trial results online, complementing the existing Seafish fishing gear database. Two audiences for this information, with slightly different requirements, were identified, namely vessel operators and scientific observers and policy makers. The scientific Best Practice Guidance for assessing the financial effectiveness of experimental fishing gear, the vessel operator guide to the assessment of financial effectiveness, the Excel tool for aiding the assessment of financial effectiveness and the business assessment template document for reporting of trial results will all be published by the end of August. It is intended that the excel tool will develop and be modified over time through trial and error

Action: Circulate links when available.

14. GITAG II active projects. Kenny Coull, Scottish Fishermen's Federation and skippers from the SWFPA.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702628/dag_july2017_gitagphase2.pdf

GITAG is an industry based project established in August 2015 to foster flexible working partnerships between active fishers, industry and public bodies, gear technologists and science. It aims to invite industry to submit ideas, and to trial innovations and associated data collection and appropriate scientific analysis. Phase I outputs were detailed and Phase II is now underway. Phase II is focusing on selectivity using different sized cod ends. There has been significant input from the owner and skipper to develop the gear and continue to trial on a commercial basis. This is a blueprint for how to take forward a project ensuring that not only does it meet the selectivity objectives but it is also commercially viable. Development work to date has been positive with the project working towards a full commercial trial in July/August 2017. Specific projects were outlined. It was noted that 90% of the current trials using discard devices do not meet the current requirements of the Technical Conservation Regulations (Tech Con) so all trials require a derogation in order to go ahead.

Action: Circulate links to reports.

Discussion

- We are now operating in a different environment. The focus now is on selectivity rather than exclusively maximizing the catch. It has taken 40 years to perfect our nets to catch the fish now we have a new problem – we need to avoid certain fish.
- We are seeing improvements in the quality of the fish that is being landed, processing has speeded up and the industry is addressing the issues being raised by the LO but this is a changing industry and the next generation will have

to pick up the new ideas. The Fishing into the Future workshop gave a real insight into how that younger generation is feeling. They need to understand the business of fishing.

- There are concerns that with all these gear trials you are not currently legally allowed to actually use this gear. The fact that the Tech Con does not have the inbuilt flexibility to enable this is a big hindrance.
- **Question.** It is great to hear about all this work that is being done by the industry and the potential solutions being developed and we applaud you all for leading the way but how can we take this forward and ensure this is deployed commercially. How do we get Government to listen and take notice? **Answer.** In Scotland Marine Scotland has been proactive and very supportive in securing the derogations necessary to allow these trials to take place. These trial results need to be communicated to industry. We need to have a dossier of documentary evidence and some of the vessels are ready to put observers onboard. Once we have this evidence we can go to industry.

15. Gearing Up, a new project funded by Funding Fish to animate a Cefas gear innovations database for fishermen. Katrina Ryan, Mindfully Wired Communications.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1702631/dag_july2017_gearingup.pdf

The aim is to develop an interactive tool that will host a coherent and easily accessible list of gear modification trials, that will be intuitive to interpret and navigate, and directly relevant to the fishing industry. To achieve this, a series of targeted workshops, focus groups and interviews are being held designed to capture the requirements and preferences of the fishing industry, and determine the essential information fishermen need to know about gear modification trials. The database contains data from Seafish, Discardless and Cefas, with trials dating back to 2012. The database currently contains over 500 trials (some replicates), 40 trials will be added in the next few months and from then 10 trials every quarter. The trials are both industry and science led and range throughout Northern Europe – spanning from the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, to the Bay of Biscay and the Celtic Sea. The Tool (due to be launched in December) will be an interactive online platform that will host up-to-date and frequently refreshed information on recent relevant gear selectivity trials in Northern European fisheries, including industry-led trials. The tool will act as a one-stop-shop delivering practical guidance on selectivity trials and the Landing Obligation in an intuitive and applicable manner. The brochure website (to be launched in August 2017) will be launched ahead of the tool and will start to lay the groundwork for the brand by building an online following. The site will also be a useful resource providing information on; funding for gear innovation, legislation of technical measures and applying for dispensation, as well as links to other relevant projects. Once the tool has been launched in 2018 the tool will be tested and feedback gathered.

To build a useful on-line tool Gearing Up needs detailed input from the fishing industry. A survey has been developed to determine the essential information fishermen need to know about gear modification trials to apply this to the development of this unique online tool service.

Action: Circulate link to survey.

16. Date of next meeting

The date for the next DAG meeting has not been set but is likely to be in February 2018 in London.