



# Future of Our Inshore Fisheries

Issues and Ideas Workshop Report, 5 June 2019

REPORT COLLATED BY SEAFISH

## **DISCLAIMER**

This report reflects the discussion at the Issues and Ideas Workshop held on the 5 June 2019, and the views gathered during subsequent interviews with workshop participants. This report is not a policy paper and it does not necessarily reflect the views of each individual workshop participant.

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# **Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Background</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Perceptions of the Current UK Inshore Fisheries Management Regime</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Defining Inshore Fishing</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Setting Fisheries Management Outcomes and Objectives</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Access, Allocation and Business Certainty</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Representation</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>



# Introduction

The **Future Of Our Inshore Fisheries** project is an ambitious, collaborative initiative bringing together the UK fishing industry, government and the research community to establish a blueprint for the future management of our iconic inshore fisheries.

At the heart of the project is the desire to establish an effective inshore fisheries management regime to enable a viable and profitable inshore fishing industry, which in turn can support flourishing coastal communities. Central to delivering on this ambition is establishing how best to provide for the use of fisheries resources (recognising the often unique issues facing coastal communities) while ensuring their long-term sustainability and sustainable management of the wider marine environment.

Fisheries cannot be considered in isolation, they are part of the wider suite of marine activities, including offshore renewables, shipping, ports and other non-fisheries-related recreational activities. The management of our inshore fisheries needs to reflect this broader context.

A key outcome of the project is to ensure that our fisheries management regime is truly sustainable – that it not only meets our environmental objectives but that it is also capable of meeting our social and economic needs at a national, regional and local level.

## Why now?

Inshore fisheries management in the UK has a reputation for being unnecessarily complex, lacking consistency in its approach and being ineffective in delivering on long-term sustainability goals. Inshore fisheries are frequently viewed as existing in isolation from larger scale commercial fishing activity. This misconception overlooks the clear interdependence that exists between inshore and offshore fishing, particularly in terms of delivering sustainable management outcomes, business infrastructure and the significant contribution that inshore fisheries make to regional economies.

The changing policy landscape as the UK exits from the EU provides an opportunity to revisit how the UK manages its fisheries resource (both through devolved administrations and centrally). Operating outside the regulatory confines of the Common Fisheries Policy will enable the UK to enact a genuinely bespoke approach to fisheries management which – for the first time – can include the inshore sector.

We have been handed a once-in-a-generation opportunity to implement a paradigm shift in how we manage this important resource.

## Who is involved?

Seafish, the UK-wide public body tasked with supporting the UK's £10bn seafood industry, is facilitating the project and providing analytical research support. The project is led by a Steering Group chaired by **Professor Michel Kaiser** of Heriot Watt University. Membership includes:

- |                                                                         |                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ▶ <b>Barrie Deas</b> , National Federation of Fishing Organisations     | ▶ <b>Stephen Bolt</b> , Association of IFCAs                                                   |
| ▶ <b>Jim Pettipher</b> , Coastal Producers Organisation                 | ▶ <b>Elaine Whyte</b> , Clyde Fishermen's Association                                          |
| ▶ <b>Anne Freeman</b> , Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs | ▶ <b>Mike Park</b> , Scottish White Fish Producers Association                                 |
| ▶ <b>Alan McCulla</b> , Anglo North Irish Fish Producers Organisation   | ▶ <b>Alison Freeman</b> , The Fishmongers' Company                                             |
| ▶ <b>Jerry Percy</b> , New Under Ten Fishermen's Association            | ▶ <b>Richard Hoskin</b> , Marine Management Organisation                                       |
| ▶ <b>Malcolm Morrison</b> , Scottish Fishermen's Federation             | ▶ <b>John Speers/Claire Vincent</b> , Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs |
| ▶ <b>Jim Evans</b> , Welsh Fishermen's Association                      | ▶ <b>Dr Carl O'Brien</b> , Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science             |
|                                                                         | ▶ <b>Aoife Martin</b> , Seafish                                                                |

## What's different this time around?

Previous initiatives have sought to 'get to grips' with UK inshore fisheries management. Many of these projects did excellent groundwork (particularly the 2010 Sustainable Access to Inshore Fisheries project) and produced eminently sensible policy suggestions. However, for a range of reasons (prevailing political climate, resource constraints, lack of buy-in from key stakeholders) they didn't fully succeed. So, what is different this time around, and why should this initiative succeed where others have failed?

From the outset, the project Steering Group has taken a long-term view; we fully understand that this is not a project of quick wins or time-bound strategies, it will take time. We also recognise that project success will depend on grassroots engagement, particularly as we consider and test new concepts and ideas. Fortunately, the excellent work that has been done previously provides a wealth of ideas to build upon.

The Steering Group acknowledges that 'success' is not a single fisheries management regime applied across the UK; there will be no 'one size fits all' outcome. While we envisage creating shared principles on setting catch limits, providing for access and establishing fisheries plans (to determine the objectives that will drive how a fishery is managed), the application of tools and management interventions will, inevitably, vary locally. Regional diversity is key, not just because local fisheries are a devolved issue, but because coastal communities across the UK have different needs.

## How will we achieve this?

Given the long-term nature of the project, the Steering Group has established a set of guiding principles to shape it. These are described below:

1. Inshore fisheries management is inherently complex; there is no pre-packaged 'off the shelf' model to draw from. While we can learn from other UK and overseas best practices, the UK's fisheries management system needs to reflect our unique circumstances. It should have equal relevance and applicability to fishing communities from Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England.
2. Inshore fisheries are an integral part of the wider fisheries management system and need to be managed as such. The Steering Group acknowledges that our coastal environment is a shared resource and that decisions taken in one part of the fisheries management system can have an impact on other parts. Central to the project's success is our ability to understand these interlinked dynamics and to ensure cohesive and responsive management across the entire system.
3. Understanding and accounting for fishing mortality is key to our management approach, regardless of where the fishing activity takes place; 10 miles or 100 miles from shore. However, successful inshore fisheries management recognises that the decisions taken to manage fishing mortality (within agreed sustainability parameters) may be different in an inshore context because of different social and economic objectives. Therefore, there needs to be flexibility to allow for this.

4. Inshore fisheries are a shared resource, to varying degrees, among commercial and recreational users. This reality is a key determining factor in understanding fishing mortality and providing for shared access.
5. Fisheries management is a shared responsibility and co-management is therefore essential in decision-making. By working together from the outset, we are laying the foundations for future collaborative management.

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## The 'Issues and Ideas' Workshop

This project is in its infancy, but success hinges on providing working fishermen with a voice in determining the future they want for their fisheries, alongside governments and the science community.

The workshop held on 5 June 2019 was the first opportunity for all parties to come together, from across the UK, to discuss the issues affecting inshore fisheries; to establish common ground, and to identify the problems that need to be addressed. Workshop participants were asked to:

- Identify the key challenges surrounding inshore fisheries management;
- Discuss possible solutions or approaches to future inshore fisheries management;
- Provide an overview of the proposed research topics commissioned by the project;
- Assist the Steering Group in setting the agenda for the upcoming conference.

The themes and issues shared and analysed at the workshop have shaped the agenda for the October 2019 Future of Our Inshore Fisheries conference.

The Steering Group fully understands the challenges that lie ahead. Success will mean that we have determined the optimal management settings for our inshore resources and have identified the tools that we will need to deploy to deliver a world-class inshore fisheries management system; one that is capable of ensuring our fisheries, our marine environment and our coastal communities are sustainable and thriving.

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## Methods

The Issues and Ideas Workshop was guided by a 'Topic Guide' outlining a range of questions to facilitate discussion between participants. The topics explored were:

- **Perceptions** of the current inshore fisheries management regime;
- The current and potential future **definition** of inshore fisheries;
- How to establish strategic and operational aims for setting fisheries management **outcomes and objectives**;
- Inshore fisheries **access, allocation and business certainty**;
- How to ensure effective **representation** and **co-management** in the future development of UK inshore fisheries.

For the full Topic Guide, see **Appendix 1**

The workshop was recorded by note-takers and summarised appropriately.

After the workshop, participants were given the opportunity to participate in a recorded, in-depth interview if they had further insights in response to these issues, and questions from the workshop were reiterated to guide these interviews.

To produce this report, the official record of workshop discussions was reviewed and summarised, together with interview transcripts. This report highlights 'key themes' concerning the future of inshore fisheries, which emerged from the detailed discussions summarised in this report.



# Background

The European Union (EU) Common Fisheries Policy currently applies to all commercial fisheries in the United Kingdom (UK). The UK has exclusive rights to fish within 6 nautical miles (NM) of its coastline. Fishing by non-UK vessels between 6 and 12 NM is currently restricted to countries with historic rights relating to specific fisheries.

Through devolution, the four UK home nations are responsible for the regulation of sea fishing around their coastline and within 12 NM of the coast. These governments have the ability to take non-discriminatory conservation measures, provided that the EU has not already legislated in this area.

In the absence of a consistent and overarching definition, 'inshore fisheries' are defined in different ways across the UK. Regional definitions often include distance from the shore, consideration of the type of gear used and the target species (predominantly shellfish). Access and allocation provisions differ for different sized vessels. For example, vessels under 10 metres long are not subject to individual quota allocations, and instead can fish within the shared tonnage limits provided for various species in the 'quota pool' which is allocated on a monthly basis by the relevant devolved fisheries administration.

to regulators. The Inshore Fisheries Management and Conservation group (IFMAC) complements the RIFG network as it represents national interests, and covers matters from 6 – 12 NM in Scottish waters.

The Welsh Government manages inshore fisheries in Wales. Three regional Inshore Fishery Groups take a stakeholder-led approach, representing the interests of fisheries in the 0 – 6 NM area of Welsh waters, to regulators.

The Inshore and Environment Branch at the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Department (DAERA) manage Northern Ireland's inshore fisheries. They have developed an inshore fisheries strategy for implementation.

## UK Vessels Under 10m, 2018 Statistics

	UK Vessels		
	All vessels	Under 10m vessels	Under 10m vessels as % of UK total
Number of Vessels	4,512	3,327	74%
FTEs	7,226	1,239	17%
Fishing Income (£'M)	978	101	10%

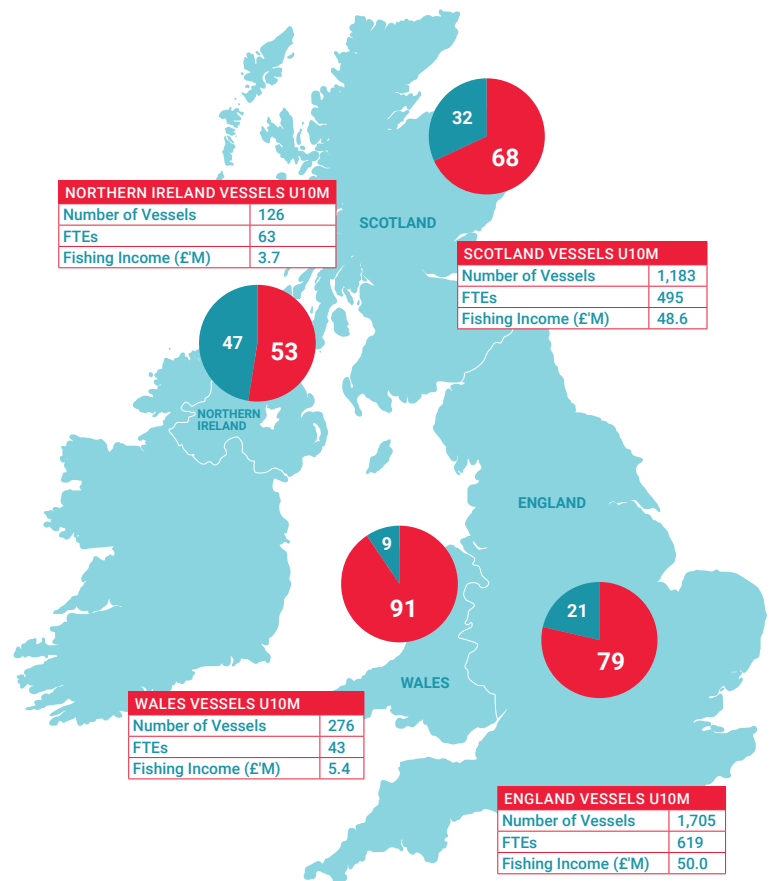
● % of Vessels Under 10m Long    ● % of Vessels Over 10m Long

## Inshore fishing in the UK

Given the diversity of inshore fishing across the UK, the policy and regulatory landscape for managing inshore fisheries is complex. To help encompass these complexities, regional stakeholder-led groups have been formed to have closer contact with devolved administrations who develop, implement and enforce fisheries management regulations across the UK.

In England, the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) work with community stakeholders to 'champion and manage the marine environment and inshore fisheries' to deliver 'healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.' IFCAs are governed by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) guidelines.

In Scotland, Marine Scotland manages inshore fisheries. Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups (RIFGs) are non-statutory bodies that consider issues raised by local fishermen and communities, aiming to improve the management of inshore fisheries in the 0 – 6 NM zone of Scottish waters by representing these views



\*NB: Figures include 1,522 low activity vessel (whose fishing is less than £10,000 per annum).

Source: Seafish, 2018

# 1) Perceptions of the Current UK Inshore Fisheries Management Regime

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What works and why?
2. What doesn't work and why?
3. What are the opportunities for change?
4. How could we deliver this change?
5. What would the benefits of change be?

## What works well with current inshore fisheries management

The group discussed the parts of inshore fisheries management that are working well in a UK context, and referenced examples of well-regarded management from elsewhere in the world as opportunities for changing the current system.

Discussion regarding managing authorities for UK inshore fisheries suggested that basic localised management structures are in place across the country. IFCAs in England were given as an example of this local management, albeit noted as imperfectly functioning in some instances. The IFCA structure was put forward as somewhat successful in terms of representation, objectives-based management and setting rules for recreational catches alongside commercial fisheries management. A particularly positive example of localised management was highlighted in the Wash, East Anglia, where the cockle stock was clearly defined, with allocations made for commercial harvest, seabird prey and conservation. This joint management approach with the Eastern IFCA and MMO lead to localised, well-understood and respected catch limits.

Minimum landing sizes for crab and lobster were cited as a simple, effective fisheries management tool, although some participants felt that the sizes used may need adjustment upwards. One delegate commented that shellfishermen are catching 'next year's crabs'.

The opportunity for inshore fishers to fish without relying on the quota pool was seen by some as positive, providing extra flexibility for fishers as species availability changed throughout the year.

*'Inshore fishing management should be directed towards the local sustainability of both the fishery and the community that it supports, so set down some kind of national principle, but then you have to then get the management as local as possible'*

## What doesn't work with current inshore fisheries management

The model of regional, local fisheries management was praised. However, communication between the industry and groups like IFCAs, was generally seen by participants as poor. Fishers need to feel as if they are being listened to, and their opinions heard.

It was noted that the UK currently lacks a sense of how high-level objectives feed into more localised fisheries management objectives. Often, poor communication and confusion around the reasons for these objectives leads to mistrust.

**Management is currently seen as rigid and slow to respond to challenges and to scientific advice.** Fishers are acutely aware of changes in the availability of species (for example needing to increase their catch per unit of effort) but there is no mechanism to feed this knowledge into management decisions, meaning the knowledge is lost.

*'What we find is the fishermen in many cases are actually ahead of the legislative authorities. So I will take an example ... [the fishermen] have developed their own protocol ... but it's only voluntary, and we will struggle to get it down to legislation for quite some time. Before it comes to legislation it has to go out to pre-consultation consultation, etc. But the majority of the guys are already doing it.'*

CASE STUDY

# Strangford Lough Access

Strangford Lough, a sea loch in County Down, Northern Ireland, was cited by a participant as an example of restricting access to inshore fishing without being overly protectionist. The Lough is voluntarily managed by the fishermen themselves, through a combination of zonal management and access rights:

- ▶ A limited number of licenses to access the fishery are supplied;
- ▶ These licenses are non-transferable;
- ▶ If a vessel leaves the fishery or gives up their license, this is returned to a license 'pool';
- ▶ The license is then allocated from the pool to an individual on the (substantial) waiting list for entry into the fishery;
- ▶ Anyone can apply for a license and join the waiting list.



Slow management in response to reduced stock productivity is seen to produce shifting baselines. When taking only a snapshot of a fishery's status, the true picture of a healthy fishery can shift to a 'new normal,' which actually represents reduced productivity and sustainability. Management should be proactive in driving fishery health back towards abundance, and more data on fish and shellfish stocks and fishing effort is needed to properly do so.

While **data collection** is understood to be important, fishers who collect data are rarely informed on its use. Fishers want to provide a strong evidence base – knowing that 'if you can't measure, you can't manage' – but feel disenfranchised when they don't hear about the results of studies that they have contributed to.

Participants felt that some fishers were not aware of the long term threats and consequences of allowing unrestricted access to fish stocks. This can lead to surprise and distrust – a sense of being disconnected from management and the underlying science. Better communication between scientists, fishers and regulators can reduce these instances of misunderstanding and promote the benefits of evidence-based management.

In some areas **fleet capacity is of real concern**. The scallop fishery was cited as an example in this regard: where increasingly capable vessels can target species without catch limits, this can quickly overexploit the stocks. A significant increase of fishing effort for whelks was also concerning participants, who suggested the fishery was at risk of a 'boom and bust' cycle, that could do reputational damage to the industry as a whole.

*'When you start talking to everyone together, people start to bounce off each other and you start to get different ideas and perhaps think of ways to better manage the stock and things that you didn't realise before. Like the berried hen lobster thing, I was dead against it but when you get hooked on the idea that you could only sell a berried lobster once, but [in doing so] you lose 20 future sells. But you haven't missed 20 sells you've only lost one.'*

Enforcement is seen as weak and not able to meet the challenge of effectively regulating inshore fishing. It is considered intrinsically difficult to enforce regulations given that 'what is not seen can't be effectively regulated,' since evidence is hard to come by with few people to see you on the coast or at sea. Additionally, a perceived lack of will of the enforcers presents challenges for regulations to be taken seriously by fishers. Some local organisations were thought to lack the financial resources to patrol and enforce regulations at the level required. These factors combined can result in some fishers being unwilling to provide intelligence on illegal activities. Several participants cited examples where no penalties were enforced for infringements, leading to a sense of impunity, or a mindset of 'why bother following the rules.'



A range of other individual concerns were voiced. For example, the **administrative burden** on fishers is often high, and any reduction in this would be welcomed. In many places **port infrastructure** is not up-to-scratch and requires significant re-development to better support the inshore industry. Importantly, local markets for inshore-caught seafood are seen as lacking, with consumers being unfamiliar with many species. Continuity of supply – linked to the variations in availability of inshore fishery products, is also an issue.

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### What are the opportunities for change and how will this be delivered?

Reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of current inshore fisheries management helped outline a vision for future management. Participants generally agreed that inshore fisheries management should have **simple, localised rules with a well-defined set of environmental, social and economic objectives**, and ideally, should be developed through collaborative working with the industry – through true co-management.

Participants noted that although some IFCAs and regional groups were functioning as intended, a more centralised, national or overarching approach with less variation in their delivery is sought.

Some participants advised that in parts of the UK, there was confusion regarding perceived overlap of remit between IFCAs and the MMO. In general, it was felt that greater clarity or distinction between management responsibilities of these bodies would be of benefit. This could contribute to the creation of a clear model for co-management, where engaging at the local level is a priority for regional organisations, who then take those ideas and concerns to the national regulators.

Significant opportunities exist in the realm of **inshore fisheries science**. Soon, inshore fishers will electronically record catches (of species subject to quotas and other restrictions) and there is a planned roll-out of inshore vessel monitoring systems (I-VMS): this will result in lots of useful data becoming available. However, raw data is expensive to analyse and for many species and individual fisheries no baseline data exists, so it may take years until data analysis can demonstrate anything tangible. In England and Wales, the MMO will collect this data via i-catch and I-VMS, in Scotland Marine Scotland will collect it using fish1 and Northern

Ireland will continue with their current data collection methods. Participants debated whether a national-level organisation should process the data, or whether devolved administrations could receive additional funding to complete the work locally.

Participants acknowledged that strong science produces the opportunity for good, evidence-based management and this was explored across a number of the day's discussion sessions. Here, Norway's science 'tax' on fishermen was raised as an example of inshore fisheries 'taxation with representation,' whereby fishermen help determine the scientific activity carried out using the levied funds.

Improving stock data can result in positive and negative changes, and this must be acknowledged. To incentivise fishers to participate, or to continue to participate in data collection, trust must be developed between the industry and regulators or academics: fishers should know that their data will be used, and how.

*'If you're in a fishery where you've got management using the precautionary approach, any information supplied by industry would improve your quota allocation, because it can't go down. You are at the lowest level if it is the precautionary approach is being used, so any information would result in an improvement in the level of quotas available.'*

To address gaps in basic biological information of species – maturity sizes, age etc. – it was suggested that national expert groups could be convened to inform regional and national management on a species-by-species basis to help address these gaps.

MSC certification was raised as a potential 'lever' to improve data collection for a stock. However, concerns were voiced around the reputational damage that occurs when an MSC certified stock loses its certification through external pressures, and the resulting loss of markets for a fishery. Establishing an independent 'gold standard' for UK seafood products was discussed, as fishermen consider it a possible alternative to MSC.

The opportunity exists to remove constructed 'inshore/offshore sector' definitions for fisheries and instead look at fishing activity in the round, bringing together voices from all sectors to critically evaluate barriers to best practice in management. A presentation given by Cefas had identified that many stocks sometimes treated as 'inshore species' are, in fact, 'straddling' – meaning that the differentiation between the two

## Perceptions of the Current UK Inshore Fisheries Management Regime

sectors may be more blurred than the terms 'inshore' and 'offshore' imply. Considering new structures for political representation of the inshore fleet was of interest, and was discussed in detail later in the day.

There was agreement that the greatest opportunity for change is to construct effective, bottom-up co-management approaches that **capitalise on the enthusiasm and knowledge of fishers**. Within such a system, fishers have to act to deliver strategic, long-term decisions that ensure sustainability into the future, avoiding short-term wins that reduce the health of stocks or the environment. Management decision-making by local fishers can be better tailored to local conditions, and can be more adaptive to local environmental changes.

Increased fisher participation in a management system may also lead to increased trust and better compliance, by creating a sense of 'ownership' over rule-making. Fishers want to help design systems where good behaviour is incentivised, in addition to bad behaviour being punished.

Through greater emphasis on biological and economic sustainability and a marked shift away from 'boom and bust' fishing, there is opportunity for the inshore sector to identify ways to attract high-quality new entrants to inshore fishing to secure the future of the profession into the future.

Participants thought that continuity of supply of different seafood species could be addressed through a cooperative system. In addition, the responsibility for driving the creation of markets for a wider variety of seafood species in the UK could be better promoted by member organisations.

Successful examples of inshore management offered by participants also drew on international case studies, with a strong focus on collaborative co-management: offering fishermen a greater voice and role in setting regulations for their local area. Co-management was considered best practice by participants who also suggested that local management bodies, like IFCAs, should have greater authority and resources to construct and deliver on co-management models, thereby improving shared accountability for decisions.

Simplicity of fisheries management rules was viewed by participants as key. The *Locale de Pêche* in France was cited as a good example, a participant noted that all area closures, gear restrictions and vessel size restrictions 'fit on one side of paper'. Participants agreed that simplicity makes management easy to understand and follow.





## KEY THEMES – SECTION 1

**1.1 Inshore fisheries management, regulation and enforcement need to be reviewed collaboratively and should be implemented at the regional level through true co-management.** Social, environmental and economic impacts and objectives vary across the UK, and developing and implementing local management objectives is important to account for this variation in the inshore fishing industry. Existing local authorities (such as IFCAs) could be equipped with more strategic oversight from national regulators to perform local engagement, fisheries management, enforcement or data collection.

**1.2 Current fisheries management is considered rigid and slow to respond to new evidence, including fishermen's concerns and advice.** There is desire for regulators to be more nimble and willing to respond with implementation of appropriate fisheries regulations when presented with new information about stocks. The system should make better use of technology to gather data that can help inform decisions quickly, and should also provide more opportunities for fishers to contribute their knowledge.

**1.3 Generally, there is currently poor communication between scientists, fishers and regulators, which can lead to mistrust and disenfranchisement.** Co-management in the design of fisheries management objectives and appropriate representation of fishers will improve lines of communication. Additionally, a better understanding of why rules are in place could help fishers adhere to fisheries management objectives.





## 2) Defining Inshore Fishing

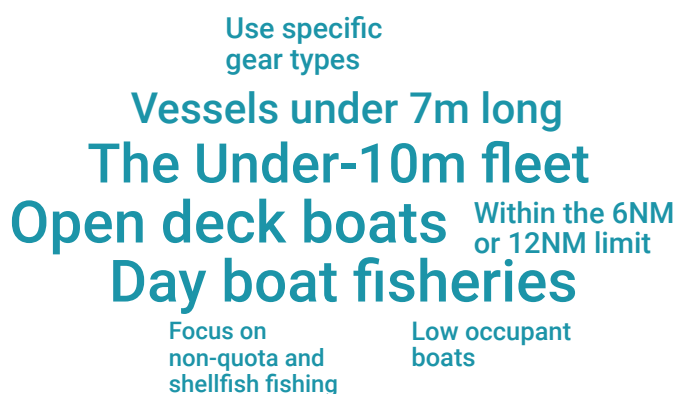
### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. When the term 'Inshore Fisheries' is used, what does this mean to you?
2. What characteristics/attributes do we currently use to define inshore fisheries?
3. What benefits does the current way of defining inshore fisheries bring?
4. What problems or issues are created by the way we currently define inshore fisheries?
5. How might we want to define 'Inshore Fisheries' in the future?

### How are 'inshore fisheries' currently defined? What are their attributes and characteristics?

It was quickly established that in the absence of a consistent and overarching definition, 'inshore fisheries' are interpreted and implemented in different ways across the UK.

#### 'How do you see Inshore Fishing?'



Participants provided a range of descriptions for how they define the inshore fleet. It was agreed that they could be characterised as: mostly using passive gears, fishing in day trips, and using local crew with strong links to their communities.

With technological developments, the traditional view of a low-powered under-10-metre (U10m) vessel has shifted. Several attendees also voiced that the fleet can't be defined by targeting certain species, re-asserting that many fish species targeted by day boats are 'straddling' stocks, also fished by offshore vessels.

*'I think 'inshore' gets used in lots of different ways and I think it's less about the definition and more about what we think we're trying to achieve. From our [regulatory] perspective it's about management of stocks that can be targeted within the district that we're responsible for'...the conversations [at the workshop] around using stock management units as a way of at least clarifying what we're trying to do [is useful] because ultimately that's what we're trying to do, really.'*

As well as having strong community links, described as 'catching local, landing local and spending local,' inshore boats are also seen as tied to a specific fishing area – by virtue of conducting shorter trips. Participants explained that although inshore fishers are often not 'nomadic,' if they are focussing on a specific species, they may travel extensively within a region and are capable of fishing outside of the 'inshore zone'.

### What benefit does the current way of defining inshore fisheries bring?

A number of participants again raised the idea that defining inshore and offshore fishing as separate is perhaps no longer necessary. Others, however, pointed to the potential marketing and reputational benefits of being able to define inshore fisheries as a 'brand' in their own right, recognisable as a more community-focused and low-impact type of fishery.

Defining inshore fishing using the length category 'Under-10m' was seen as an easy to understand, simple definition.

## What problems are created by the way we currently define inshore fisheries?

These days, as small, U10m boats can be more powerful than in the past, participants questioned whether using length alone as a criterion to define the inshore fisheries sector is appropriate. It was perceived that some fishers take advantage of loopholes by increasing the breadth and engine power of their vessel while remaining below the under 10m overall length. These vessels are sometimes referred to as 'rule-beaters' or 'Super-Under 10's' and have a much greater catching capacity than traditional U10m vessels. Participants described some concern with the increasing numbers of 'Super U10' boats fishing from the same 'quota pool' that traditional U10m inshore vessels also access.

The Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation (CFPO) was given as an example of an organisation where inshore and offshore operators work happily alongside each other, through cooperation and compromise. It was suggested that by creating stark definitions between segments of the fleet, barriers are created and conflict can arise. The common goal for both inshore and offshore fishers in the CFPO is sustainable fishing, so vessels of all sizes should work together to achieve this common objective.

Overall, a disconnect was perceived between what fishers generally consider to be an 'inshore vessel' and the technical, regulatory reality. This is widespread, and is perhaps a symptom of the lack of a consistent 'UK inshore fisheries' definition.

## KEY THEMES – SECTION 2

### 2.1 'UK inshore fisheries' need to be clearly defined.

Defining inshore fishing in the future could include one or more of the following criteria: distance from the shore, vessel type, gear type, species targeted or socio-economic factors. Regions are seeking greater strategic overview from national regulators. A cohesive UK definition will help local regulators, fishermen and enforcers have greater clarity over their access and allocation rights when they go fishing.

## How might we want to define 'inshore fisheries' in the future?

A range of suggestions were ventured for new ways to define inshore fishing. These included the following:

- It should be up to the local or regional fishery to define themselves as offshore or inshore. Rules would still need to be implemented by the local IFCA, or equivalent body.
- Inshore fishing is all activity conducted in open boats. This suggestion included further detail that boats of under 7m should be subject to absolute minimum management, due to the high number of vessels employing locals and so contributing to the social and economic values of local communities.
- Inshore fisheries could be defined in two tiers based on fishing location: out to 6NM and out to 12NM.
- The definition of inshore fisheries should go beyond physical characteristics of a vessel, and instead look at social, environmental and economic impacts.

Spanning the range of ideas in the room, several criteria were proposed for defining inshore fishing vessels including: length, engine power, gear type, target species, links to local communities and spatial reach.

Regional **definitions based purely on length were no longer seen as valid** due to improvements in vessel power and capacity, but alternative definitions often seemed to provide un-desired complexity. For example, using target species as part of definition criteria would present problems given that almost no stocks are 'inshore only,' but rather straddling. Allocation by gear type could also be complicated as some skippers operate different gears on the same vessel to catch different species.

Finally, there was a brief discussion as to whether **recreational fishers and charter boats** should come under the same management regime as commercial inshore fishing activity. Some participants felt that this would ensure a more holistic management of stocks.

# 3) Setting Fisheries Management Outcomes and Objectives

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What factors should be considered when setting fisheries outcomes for inshore fisheries?
2. What process should we follow to set management objectives for inshore fisheries?
3. Who should be involved in setting these objectives?
4. How can we prioritise competing demands?
5. How should we take account of other fishing interests and marine use interests when setting fisheries objectives?

**Fisheries Outcomes:** normally strategic in focus, and are typically set at a national level by Government, reflecting national interests.

**Fisheries Objectives:** focused on individual fisheries and help us to decide how we should manage our fisheries. Specifically, objectives-based fisheries management is about being clear on what we want to achieve with the management of inshore fisheries, and designing and implementing the management measures (including research and monitoring/surveillance measures) to meet those objectives efficiently.

by internationally accepted options e.g. fishing to the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) of a fish stock.

Social and economic outcomes were considered by participants to be more subjective but can also be included in fisheries management decisions. For example, management decisions can provide additional social and economic benefits by improving sectoral wide employment opportunities (social), or improving income and profitability across the spectrum of those employed (economic). As such, another positive socio-economic fisheries management outcome to consider could be that increasing the number of new entrants into fishing, which will promote the longevity of the profession whilst providing jobs.

*'You can take the simplistic view about making sure there's enough fish to fish...I do think we should give it some greater thought as to why we're [managing inshore fisheries] and who the beneficiaries should be, and how we maximise those benefits, not just to individual operators but the wider community. [How do we promote] a living for the many, rather than a fortune for the few?'*

## What factors should be considered when setting 'fisheries outcomes' for inshore fisheries?

There was broad agreement on the shape of desired overarching fisheries outcomes for the UK. **Sustainability is central to the national vision** for fisheries of all scales. This should be viewed in terms of the health of the environment and fish stocks, and in terms of social and economic health; securing a greater number of prosperous, long-term fishing careers within vibrant coastal communities.

Managing fisheries sustainability for biological or environmental outcomes was seen as the most straightforward fisheries outcome. This is because, when appropriate data is available, fishing to meet biological or environmental outcomes is pre-defined

## What process should we follow to set management objectives for inshore fisheries?

Once high-level fisheries outcomes are determined at the national level, clear, local fisheries objectives should underpin the delivery of the outcomes. There was discussion about what information is needed to arrive at specific management objectives, and how fishers' voices can be included in the process.



## Setting Fisheries Management Outcomes and Objectives

As with earlier discussions around co-management, the importance of bringing fishers' voices into the design of setting fisheries objectives was underscored. This process of 'co-design' is open to a range of interpretations. There was discussion as to whether both fisheries management outcomes and objectives should be co-designed with input from industry, or if the government should set the (strategic) outcomes and industry work with local fisheries management authorities to set (operational) objectives.

A FLAG model used in Denmark and Norway for local objective-setting was highlighted as a potentially valuable structure. Some FLAGs exist in the UK, but are comparatively lacking in responsibility and resource. This was seen as **a template structure that could facilitate matching locally appropriate tools to management objectives** to deliver on strategic, national outcomes.

### FLAGs

Across the UK and EU, Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) are partnerships between fisheries actors and other local private and public stakeholders. Together, they design and implement a local development strategy to address their area's social, economic and environmental needs. FLAGs interact with regulators and other representative bodies to promote the needs of their local communities.

IFCAs in England were also put forward as a model for collaboration between a range of stakeholders, although it was acknowledged that increased checks and balances may be required to ensure impartiality and appropriate fisher representation.

Participants agreed that a 'wider group' of voices could be used to determine the high-level strategic fisheries outcomes, but a smaller group mostly comprised of local industry and regulators should determine specific local fishery management objectives. Additionally, **local management tools to implement objectives should be determined through co-management**, and could include: types of gear permitted, size of vessel permitted, number of vessels permitted and minimum landing sizes for shellfish.

When setting local objectives for inshore fisheries management, appropriate enforcement should be considered. Fishers want to know why management objectives and tools are in place. By including fishers in the process of developing rules, they will have greater understanding of why the rules are in place and this may translate to a greater willingness to comply with the rules and perhaps also report those who don't.



*'I've been doing this job for 26 years you know – we're in a very different position from where we were 20, 25, 26 years ago. I think there's a lot more collaboration, there's a lot more listening that goes on from regulators.'*

## Setting Fisheries Management Outcomes and Objectives

True co-design and co-management in defining and delivering objectives would include: industry, regulators, community stakeholders, representative organisations (such as FLAGS), regional fisheries management organisations (such as IFCA's), and government organisations (such as the MMO), including those associated with devolved administrations. It was acknowledged that this would be a 'slow process,' and that the industry and regulators would need to be guided on how to achieve real co-management, but it was seen as an attainable goal. **Crucially, co-management needs to be formally defined.** Participants suggested the term is often used to refer to what is, in reality, 'consultative' management. There will be lessons to learn for regulators, too, in developing truly participatory approaches to managing fisheries in the UK.

*'It's a continuous problem-solving process that involves deliberation, negotiation and joint learning.'... 'So, the key components of co-management could be things like collaborative science, leadership education which builds trust and collaboration.'*

## How can we prioritise competing demands?

The co-management theme continued into a discussion around how to best prioritise competing demands between individual fishers, fishing representatives and other marine stakeholders. It was considered that setting co-designed objectives may be one way to manage and balance competing demands. This was counterbalanced by some participants who felt fishers are happier when receiving clear instructions, and may not wish to be involved, or may not have the means or time to be involved in any new decision-making structures.

*'I take the time to be involved in [representative organisations] because I realise the importance of it. But very few [fishers], even the members, have an interest in it and the non-members have absolutely no interest in it until something affects them.'*

Having clear information on fishing effort – i.e. **good catch data, including from recreational fishers** – could underpin decision-making in this context. For example, an extensive survey of recreational catches in New Zealand, meant that subsequent decisions for annually allocating quota could use this data to help allocate allowances to the recreational and 'traditional' (Maori) sectors. This example was discussed in the context of how data can be used to more fairly manage access between competing sectors.

'Hard' decisions for example limiting access to certain stocks or fishing grounds, were seen as inevitable for managing competing demands. Pressures on the environment have long term social and economic consequences, and whilst many agreed that effort should be made to map out 'wins' for as many fishers and marine users as possible, maintaining a balance between these three pillars of sustainability may lead to socio-economic challenges at times. This shouldn't be shielded away from, and the participants acknowledged these hard decisions helped in securing longer-term benefits to the fishing industry in preserving stocks for the future.

*'Some of the people around the table had children that they believed could actually enter the industry when they became of age and they want to maintain fish stocks for the future...I'm quite heavily involved in the sardine fishery in the South West, and you talk to fishermen in that fishery and in other fisheries, you know we've had the issue with haddock, and they're very keen in terms of learning more about the [sardine] stock to improve management.'*

**Professional mediation could be used** to explore competing interests in managing inshore fishing (and other marine and fishing interests) as a way to map out 'wins' and 'losses' and talk through different scenarios. For example, attracting tourism and spending to coastal communities were seen as clear social and economic 'wins' associated with recreational angling. However, the commercial fishing industry could experience social, economic and environmental 'losses' if fish mortality from the recreational sector is not appropriately accounted for in fisheries management.

Stocks shared with 'offshore' fisheries will also present a particular challenge, in these instances it is not possible to manage the inshore fleet in isolation. This created further discussion about whether a 'free for all' – equal access to shared stocks – is an appropriate solution, because different vessels and gear technologies mean inshore and offshore operators have vastly different catching capacity.

## How should we take account of other fishing interests and marine user interests?

There was agreement among participants that everyone accessing resources in the marine space should be regulated. Participants considered recreational anglers and environmental NGOs as the two main stakeholder groups for the marine environment, alongside fishers.

Again, it was suggested that all groups could be brought together to discuss the management of the inshore marine area, and that professional mediation would be an asset to diffuse and manage conflicts arising between these interest groups. Some participants thought environmental NGOs, in particular, have too much influence over what happens in marine areas and then discussed whether everyone who wants to contribute to the management of these areas should pay for that right.

*'I think resource rental is how the [fishing] industry legitimises itself above and beyond other voices that are there.'*

The opportunity for recreational and commercial fishers to collaborate on management was discussed. One participant felt there was no appetite for licensing within the angling community, and no resources within government to license these activities. However, another participant felt that the **environmental objectives of anglers align closely with those of inshore commercial fishers**, and, as a result, they may be interested in joining together in management design for stocks of common concern.

On working with environmental NGOs, it was commented that some are much more willing and equipped to work with the fishing industry than others. Given a globally recognised public push for increased environmental awareness, it is not surprising the public values NGO involvement in marine issues highly. As such, to bring the broader public along with fisheries management decisions, environmental NGOs are a key stakeholder for any management design process.

## KEY THEMES – SECTION 3

### 3.1 Environmental, economic and social sustainability should guide the development of all fisheries outcomes and objectives.

Fishermen take the issue of economic and social sustainability seriously. As users of the resources they understand the economic consequences of lower catches and take environmental sustainability seriously too; fewer fish of lower quality impacts the longevity of their business for future generations. Fishermen want management that helps achieve sustainability.

**3.2 Broader-reaching, strategic decisions for national fisheries outcomes should be set by UK Government bodies** (e.g. MMO, Defra, Marine Scotland). If fishers' interests are adequately represented in these fora, strategic outcomes should be made at a national level and then used to guide development of regional fisheries management objectives.

**3.3 Fishermen need to be included in the process for setting fisheries management objectives.** When local regulators or devolved administrations are setting fisheries management objectives, fishers' views and experiences need to be fully considered through a process of co-management.



# 4) Access, Allocation and Business Certainty

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current access and allocation regime?
2. How do we provide for future access to inshore fisheries so that we also deliver on our marine sustainability outcomes?
3. How do we provide for future access to inshore fisheries so that we can ensure fishermen have business certainty?
4. Should fishermen contribute to the cost of managing their fishery in return for certainty of access?

### What are the disadvantages of the current access and allocation scheme?

Overall, participants listed a greater number of disadvantages than advantages with regard to the current system of access and allocation for inshore fishing. Some core reputational and environmental sustainability risks to the sector were raised as disadvantages relating to a 'gold rush' mentality for some fisheries. 'Boom and bust' fisheries were termed as such in instances where non-quota species lacked sufficient management to 'truly restrict effort'.

A **lack of consistency in access to inshore fisheries** across the UK was noted as a disadvantage: for example, Scotland has restricted access to inshore fisheries whereas inshore fishing access in England is perceived as 'more open.'

Due to restrictive measures on some species, in particular those managed with quotas, displacement of fishing effort has occurred, increasing effort on non-quota species.

There was debate around the pros and cons of access and allocation for U10m vessels. While some thought the quota pool a useful system, others were concerned about the disparity in 'equal access' between 'traditional' U10m vessels and the so called 'Super Under 10s.' Super Under 10s were singled out in the access discussion because, particularly in England, these vessels have access to the same 'U10m quota pool' as the smaller, less technologically advanced vessels, but because of their greater catching capacity they are able to deploy more fishing gear and cover larger areas of ground and potentially catching more non-quota species as well.

Utilising technology to create a business advantage is seen as entrepreneurial and can be seen as 'something to work up to,' promoting career progression in the inshore fisheries sector. However, there were a range of concerns linked to access advantages of Super Under 10s including:

- Their improved efficiency puts more pressure on stocks;
- They reduce actual jobs in the sector if fewer boats are available to work on, particularly when people merge licenses to increase capacity for a Super U10;
- The management for U10m vessels was set up when technology was less advanced. Super Under 10s are operating in a management framework that was designed for traditional vessels with a lower catching capacity.

There was agreement that **the cost of starting a fishing business is prohibitive**. This can be a barrier for new entrants in the inshore sector, and could be a long-term disadvantage to the industry, affecting the ability to hire crew and ensure business certainty. However, some participants saw this as an advantage to those already operating who would have greater access to fishing opportunities.

*'Certainly, my priority would be to protect the people that have been fishing for the past 20 years and not necessarily the people that have jumped on the bandwagon in the past two.'*

Others felt that access to quota is not relevant for recruitment. Rather, a mix of factors including bycatch regulations, market access and shifting fish stocks affect the desirability of the sector. Additionally, **public perceptions of fishing were also of concern as a deterrent for new entrants to the profession.**

In brief, other disadvantages discussed include:

- Quota allocation doesn't always reflect the actual availability of the stock (e.g. Hake);
- EU vessel access to the UK's 6-12NM area is seen as a significant problem in some areas (e.g. in Cornwall);
- 'Flags of convenience' (i.e. where vessels fly the flag of a certain country to avoid financial charges or restrictive regulations) present an issue for socio-economic sustainability – the economic link condition should be strengthened.

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## What are the advantages of the current system?

The system of licensing was seen as effective at helping to stop overfishing – although it was agreed that further controls may be required to hold back capacity and restrict effort on some species.

Some advantages were identified within the current system. One concrete example provided was the IFCAs' capacity to introduce emergency byelaws for 12-18 months when required. This is a useful tool in protecting stocks and preventing overexploitation (although IFCAs must prove an issue was 'unforeseen' in order to institute these measures).

A specific example from Northern Ireland was also shared: where U10m fisheries are 'managed by goodwill.' Here, enough quota is available that it can be managed between fishers and without government oversight, via swapping in and out of a central pool of catching opportunities. This cooperative approach is seen as keeping the whole Northern Ireland fleet infrastructure sustainable, and is a similar model to how fish producer organisations (POs) operate regionally around the UK.

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## How do we provide for future access to inshore fisheries so that we also deliver on our marine sustainability outcomes, and create business security for inshore fishers?

Simply put, **access to fishing opportunities** were seen as the central tenets of 'security' and business certainty in inshore fishing.

The conversation also came back to a central dilemma. Overall, fishing effort needs to be better managed to ensure the long-term sustainability of fish and shellfish stocks, but fishing provides an important livelihood in coastal communities and fishing business owners therefore need to get a return on investment and profit to provide household income. Furthermore, there is also a need to attract high-quality new entrants to the sector to secure the future of businesses. Participants suggested the dilemma could be somewhat addressed through better communication from regulators about how managing stocks sustainably can improve profitability and business security for inshore fisheries. Perhaps this narrative would help current business owners see how this can help the future of their businesses, whilst also attracting new entrants to the sector.

*'Limiting access is absolutely fundamental and we should face up to that right at the beginning, even though it involves difficult choices...unless that decision is faced up to, what is the safe amount of fishing effort that is allowed into this fishery, then you don't get sustainable fishing.'*

Participants noted the importance of appropriate monitoring and enforcement to prevent illegal fishing which can reduce fishing opportunities for those who comply with the rules. A key element in managing business certainty in line with marine sustainability outcomes is enforcement: unsustainable or criminal activities should never be profitable, and participants stated that truly deterrent fines or fishing bans are required to stop those culpable. The New Zealand example was discussed, where those caught fishing illegally are automatically disqualified from fishing. Alongside this discussion, participants returned to the assertion that **effort must be effectively capped** – including in the context of 'effort creep' driven by technical improvements. Participants suggested that this may include limiting licenses or vessels, and tighter limits and restrictions placed on gear (for example, a pot limit per vessel for shellfish).

## Access, Allocation and Business Certainty

Participants discussed whether quota should be allocated based solely on environmental criteria. Whilst best practice in this regard is certainly to be incentivised, the example of large-scale offshore pelagic fishing off Northeast Scotland was pointed to as one of the 'most environmentally friendly fishing methods'. This larger scale fishing was not broadly considered to be best practice by participants as the amount (or proportion) of quota allocated doesn't appear to be proportional to the socio-economic benefits of these vessels. In contrast, a small, inshore boat could employ two people on a smaller proportion of quota, so it was questioned whether this should lead to preferential access to fishing opportunities for smaller vessels. However it was noted, the comparatively high profit margin and increased number of large pelagic vessels was also viewed as having positive socio-economic benefits, even though they have access to a larger share of quota.

The topic of access to UK waters by foreign boats sparked a range of opinions. Some felt the area up to 12NM should be kept predominantly for UK vessels, subject to specific agreements with EU Nations. Some suggested that gear and vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirements could also be applied to the 6-12NM area – for example only foreign vessels using VMS and passive gear should be allowed to fish here. Others saw the 12NM limit as a 'red line' and felt no EU vessels should be allowed to fish inside this area. It was also briefly noted that opportunities for access to UK waters by foreign vessels may change after Brexit.

Participants felt that **attracting new entrants into the industry is important for ensuring future business certainty**. It was suggested that, unused quota could be ring-fenced in regional pools and allocated to newcomers. An Alaskan example was also discussed, where loans are made available to support new entrants to fishing. However, some participants felt that making concessions for new fishers may mean that they don't value the opportunity, and that it could also reduce fishing opportunities for existing businesses.

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## Should fishermen contribute to the cost of managing their fishery in return for certainty of access?

A range of views were put forward on the subject of fishermen paying for management of their fishing activities. Options discussed can be defined in three broad ways:

1. Fishers should pay some form of levy towards management costs;
2. An 'offenders pay' regime, whereby penalties incurred for illegal activities are used to support management costs;
3. The current system should be sufficient and central Government should bear the cost: fishers already pay tax, some fishers that are members of POs also pay membership fees in return for representation in management discussions.





*'I think that really comes with what kind of system we have, if you have a system of fishing rights that provide security of tenure, I think it's inevitable at some point that along with the right will come an obligation to contribute to enforcement and science management of that fishery, but it probably has to be a stepwise approach.'*

The first option was most fully discussed. **If fishers were levied to pay for management, they would want to have more direct input into decision-making**, and therefore reap the benefits from this closer working relationship between fishers and regulators. Increased input into decision making legitimises the decisions made in the eyes of fishers. This can increase compliance, making the fishery more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

*'If we contribute towards the cost of managing the resource, then...we're forcing ourselves into situations whereby [fisheries managers] must take account of our interests'*

One participant suggested that a levy proportional to the value of catch landed could be applied, rather than as a fixed fee. This tailored approach would be more affordable for small scale operators. The participants thought this may help a new payment system appear more palatable by fishers, even when having a new fee to pay may be hard for some to accept at first.

Some participants felt that since fishers are accessing a public resource, they should be paying for the right to do so, following the principle of 'resource rental'.

*'And you know in an ideal world they would be paying a resource rent back to society for the benefit that they are getting from being able to prosecute a natural resource, you know, a public good.'*

Secondly, an 'offenders pay' regime was briefly mentioned. Some participants noted that the increased resources could be used to deliver management funds, but that these revenues might not outweigh the cost of increased monitoring, enforcement and prosecution. This could result in a net loss of income for management authorities and has the potential to create some dubious incentives for enforcement agencies to 'increase their prosecutions'.

The final option of maintaining the status quo was not seen as feasible by Defra representatives, who stated that 'the issue of cost recovery will not go away.'

Whether the current system is maintained – and those paying for representation can have a seat at the decision-making table, or whether this is levy part of a new co-management system in which all fishers pay and so can be somehow individually heard is extremely complicated. The issue of representation is discussed in the next section.

Overall, there was agreement that **good evidence-based management is underpinned by strong science**, fisheries monitoring and evaluation to support management decisions needs funding too. It was noted that the fishing industry wants to be involved in contributing to fisheries science, and participants discussed whether financial or participatory contributions were best. For smaller, inshore vessels, using VMS, electronic measurements of catch, or a simple camera system (currently being tested by Cefas) present participatory options.

As in previous discussions around co-management, the importance of trust and good communication were emphasised. It was highlighted that if fishers were more actively engaged in fisheries science if both the results and how they translate into regulations should be promptly and clearly communicated back to them. This is something that some scientific bodies currently struggle with, and should be addressed, especially in the instance of asking fishers to pay for 'fee for service' science and management.

*'I would say, on the whole, fishermen would be against paying towards management, but I recognise management has to be paid for from somewhere.'*

## KEY THEMES – SECTION 4

### 4.1 The current access and allocation scheme for inshore fisheries should be reviewed to ensure business certainty into the future.

Ensuring ongoing access to quota into the future is key for fishers, and this is inherently linked to the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the inshore fishing industry. Some participants viewed EU exit as an opportunity for the inshore fleet to have greater access to excess quota, which may also boost recruitment potential.

### 4.2 Future business certainty of the inshore sector relies on ongoing access to fish, but also on attracting new entrants.

Attracting new recruits to inshore fisheries is complicated and met with varied approval, suggestions of allocating excess opportunities to new entrants over existing fishers compounds that. Better communication of the fact that sustainable fishing leads to future business certainty was sought.

### 4.3 Participants acknowledged that there are costs to managing fisheries resources.

However, participants could not agree who should bear the cost of management and several options were discussed including: a levy on fishermen that is perhaps proportional to the value of their catch, an 'offender pays' approach where penalties for non-compliance fund management, or central Government should fund it as fishermen already pay tax.

### 4.4. If fishers are asked to financially contribute to fisheries management, participants agreed they should have a greater chance to participate in decision making.



# 5) Representation

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages with the current industry representation model?
2. How should regulatory agencies be structured to enable industry to engage in collaborative management?
3. How can we ensure effective representation to enable industry to work collaboratively or, increasingly, in partnership with government and regulators to sustainably manage our inshore fisheries?

## What are the advantages of the current industry representation model?

Many commercial fishers work long hours at sea and not all are able to attend meetings. Fishers see it as vital that trusted representatives can attend meetings or respond to consultations on their behalf. Professional representatives from fee-collecting organisations or trusted advocates like family members, often attend appropriate forums, take time to stay up-to-date on policy and political developments and advocate for fishing through consultations.

Some participants thought that current systems of representation were working reasonably well, as being a part of a fisherman's organisation (or the NFFO), or a PO means that fishers know a professional person is advocating on their behalf.

*'I think the NFFO is perhaps the best way to get through to industry if you like. They're trying to represent industry and trying to liaise between the two and obviously they've got the time because that's what they do.'*

Participants noted that professional fishing representatives require a diverse skill set, and these may differ depending on whether they are advocating at a local/regional level, or at the national/international level. It is important that these professionals carry real legitimacy in the eyes of the whole fishing industry. It was mentioned that representatives do not necessarily need to be fishers themselves, due to the specialised skillset needed to be a good representative.

Additionally, it was raised that industry organisations can have a better perspective of 'what's going on'

compared to individual, small-scale fishers who often 'keep their heads down and [do] not get the bigger picture of what's going on'. Having a single, informed voice was seen to sometimes help better advocate for local issues.

*'I think that one of the major challenges, when you start looking at detailed management, is the legitimacy of who is speaking for who and the confidence that skippers interests are, that someone can speak on their behalf.'*

## What are the disadvantages of the current industry representation model?

The varied opinions of the participants indicated that the current industry representation model has its disadvantages.

A key discussion point was related to problems that result from paying for representation. Some fishers are unable to represent themselves at meetings or consultations due to fear of 'losing a day at sea,' and often those fishers also cannot afford to pay for professional representation. There was agreement that paying for regional representation can get good outcomes, for example with respect to compensation for windfarm displacement. Participants were therefore concerned that if fishermen didn't or couldn't pay for representation, their voices would not be heard. It was noted that some representative organisations, for example the South Coast Fisheries Council, NUTFA and the Coastal PO, are trying to address this gap in representation of the small-scale sector.



The participants also reflected that because fisheries representatives are often not fishers themselves, both government and fisheries managers noted the difficulty in talking to fishers directly.

*'20-25 Years ago when we still had the port associations, the harbour associations, fishermen fed into the system a lot better...[but] because inshore fishing, whichever class of it, has declined, the number of vessels and fishermen has come down dramatically, the associations that fishermen have to represent them have all disappeared.'*

Another point of contention was whether the inshore fishing industry should be aiming to present one unified view on individual issues; as per the current 'professional industry representation'. While there was some support for having a single 'mouthpiece' (i.e. a representative organisation) for the inshore fishing industry, some participants thought that different regions, fleet segments, and fishery-types will have different priorities, and so it could be difficult for these organisations to adequately represent all the different priorities.

The NFFO shellfish committee was cited as an example of an internal structure, within a larger organisation, that helps to broker agreements between fleet segments. If there is an issue between shellfishermen and fishers targeting whitefish, it would be handled by this committee and a united voice presented, via the vehicle of the NFFO, to policy-makers.

## How can we assure effective representation to increase collaboration between the industry and regulators, and protect the sustainability of the industry?

Generally, it was agreed that there are issues to address to improve representation of small-scale fishing in the inshore sector. **More opportunities need to be created for small-scale voices to contribute** to discussions around science and management. Both positivity and proactiveness were encouraged from fishers, to increase collaboration within the industry and with regulators. If industry bodies could negotiate and converse between themselves, they could develop 'asks' to be presented to government, rather than 'problems.'

Not all fishers are members of the NFFO or other representative organisations. Participants noted that the goal of all representation should be to ensure that the challenges faced by the industry are communicated to managers in a streamlined and effective way. However, rather than having only one organisation to speak for all parts of the inshore sector, it was generally considered that there would be a range of groups advocating to regulators to reflect on the diverse range of fishers. One participant encapsulated this as: '[we] need one voice but not necessarily one position for each issue.'





Considering co-management in this context, participants linked representation back to the idea that inshore fisheries management should be more regional. If fisheries objectives are determined at a regional level, then it would be for the local co-management committee to engage with the local industry, feed issues directly into the overseeing regulatory body and then implement the locally tailored measures; perhaps via a re-imagined, form of IFCAs. Participants suggested these local structures could be part of a wider, national structure that all bodies 'bolt in to' – connecting fishers and representatives and then funnelling issues upwards towards government.

*'I think if regulators are genuinely intent on some level of co-management then they really have to ensure that there is equal representation of the various sub-sectors within catching and other sectors of the fishing business overall.'*

It was suggested that, in the short term, collaboration between fishers and industry regulators can be increased. Participants agreed that appropriate representation was important but also noted that fishers could also be better equipped to engage directly with policy-makers or regulators. Providing clear opportunities for engagement and improving communication lines could help encourage fishers to come to the decision-making table. Creating opportunities for fishers to present their views on a one-to-one basis, rather than in a large meeting, could increase engagement. Participants also highlighted that managers could schedule consultations and events at times more appropriate for inshore fishers' availability, so more fishers can attend without losing time at sea. Participants also suggested there could be financial support to enable fishers to attend meetings or contribute to consultation.

## KEY THEMES – SECTION 5

### 5.1 Trusted representation is essential to ensure all fishers are considered when making fisheries management decisions.

Professional representatives or trusted personal advocates were seen as valued representatives. Professional representatives from fee-collecting organisations, don't need to be fishers, but do need to be able to present a voice of the inshore fisheries industry that encompasses the diversity of the sector.

**5.2 More opportunities need to be created for small scale voices to contribute to discussions around inshore fisheries science and management.** Industry organisations deliver good results for their members, but ensuring all fishers are represented to decision-makers, even if fishers can't pay for a membership will produce more holistic fisheries management objectives. Regulators should consider how to empower fishers to feel confident or willing to directly with fisheries management decisions.

# Conclusions

In summarising the discussions from the Inshore Fisheries 'Issues and Ideas Workshop' and follow-up interviews, a number of key themes emerged. These key themes provide for five core conclusions: **management, science, business certainty, communications and trust, and representation.**

These concluding 'pillars' must each be considered when moving forward with The Future of Our Inshore Fisheries project, and in any government review into the management of inshore fisheries in the UK. Ultimately, these ideas should all contribute to improve the long term economic, social and environmental sustainability of the UK inshore fishing industry.

## Management

- ▶ To truly improve the future of inshore fisheries management in the UK, a collaborative, evidence-based inshore fisheries management framework is essential.
- ▶ Co-management for application in a UK context must be clearly defined, and would best be applied at a local or regional level.
- ▶ Existing structures should be leveraged to facilitate ease of implementation. These structures may need re-purposing or increased resources may be needed to meet the challenges of instituting co-management effectively.
- ▶ UK Inshore fisheries should be clearly defined, using a range of criteria.
- ▶ Where stocks are straddling, and targeted by both inshore and offshore fishing businesses, joint management is vital to ensure sustainability – managing total fishing mortality is key irrespective of whether a species is quota or non-quota.
- ▶ While fisheries management is fundamentally based in limiting fishing mortality, its scope is much broader. Fisheries management decisions should also consider the impacts of fishing on the marine environment, and the social and economic needs of fishers at a local, regional and national level.

## Science

- ▶ Science is integral to good co-management and evidence-based decision making.
- ▶ Fishers are willing to engage with data collection and adhere to the resultant evidence-based management.
- ▶ Fishers want the evidence behind regulations to be more clearly communicated to them.
- ▶ Regulators should develop an avenue for fishers to report observed changes to stocks, so that this information can also be incorporated into evidence-based management decisions.
- ▶ New data streams are becoming increasingly available due to VMS and camera trials. Regulators should formalise ways to analyse this data in a timely manner so it can guide evidence-based management decisions.
- ▶ In places, fishers are already communicating well with scientists – these open channels should be replicated or expanded upon, and used as templates.
- ▶ Fishers may be unwilling to contribute to the cost of monitoring and enforcement, but this could be made more palatable by tying payment to greater input in decision-making. Contributing via participatory means is more broadly supported by fishers and this could be leveraged by governments.

## Business Certainty

- Future access to stocks is key for inshore fisheries business certainty, and fishers want management objectives and tools that promote environmental, social and economic sustainability.
- Evidence-based fisheries management decisions will ensure access to stocks is sustainable into the future for improved business certainty.
- A review is needed of the current access and allocation system for inshore fisheries to ensure stock sustainability and business certainty.
- Recruiting high quality new entrants who are seeking long-term careers is seen as a challenge in ensuring future business certainty.
- Incentives could be designed to attract new entrants, but caution should be applied as allowing new entrants gifted or subsidised access to fishing stocks or quota could have negative impacts on the access rights of existing businesses.
- Repairing the damaged public perception of fishing as a career could be helped by promoting that fishing sustainably can be profitable and improves business certainty. This could improve recruitment and the longevity of businesses in the inshore sector.

## Communication & Trust

- Communication and trust are common themes across all areas and will be the bedrock to effective co-management, delivery of evidence-based decision making, and setting both effective strategic outcomes and local fisheries management objectives.
- Regulations designed in a collaborative setting and well-communicated to fishers in a trusting, professional context would be seen as more legitimate by fishers, and therefore may be easier to enforce.
- Communication and trust feed into effective representation – fishers respect those who have a clear understanding of, or connections to, fishing communities.
- Better communication linking how good fisheries management leads to improved stock sustainability and future profits or business certainty could improve the attractiveness of the profession to both new entrants and current businesses.

## Representation

- Inshore fishing is less-well represented, at a national level, than larger-scale fishing.
- More opportunities need to be created for small scale fishers to contribute to science and management for inshore fisheries.
- As not all fishers can afford to pay for professional representation, governments and regulators should consider ways to ensure their voices are heard and considered in the development of fisheries management objectives.
- Regulators will need to tailor their approach to enable effective engagement and representation from the inshore sector and to allow for the fragmented nature of the industry.
- Inshore representation will likely work more effectively at a local and regional level, although there will need to be a mechanism to ensure effective engagement occurs at a national level too.
- Effective and successful co-management will require a resourced and engaged inshore sector and there is an opportunity for the inshore industry to proactively look at how best to do this; there are successful examples from outside the UK which could provide useful models to adopt.



# Appendix 1

## Topic Guide: Future of Our Inshore Fisheries Issues and Ideas Workshop, 5 June 2019

We have a full agenda on Wednesday and time will be tight, so to help make best use of the 'Discussion Sessions' we would appreciate it if participants could take some time to think about the questions below before. If you would like to write down your answers and share them with the project team that would also be very valuable and will help make sure we successfully reflect all views in the workshop report. Your written comments should be anonymous. Finally, the questions below are simply to stimulate the discussion - if there are points not covered please do raise them, either on the form or during the meeting.

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### Discussion Session 1: Perceptions on the current Inshore Fisheries Management Regime

1. What works and why?
2. What doesn't work and why?
3. What are the opportunities for change?
4. How could we deliver this change?
5. What would the benefits of change be?

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### Discussion Session 2: Defining Inshore Fisheries

1. When the term 'Inshore Fisheries' is used, what does this mean to you?
2. What characteristics/attributes do we currently use to define inshore fisheries?
3. What benefits does the current way of defining inshore fisheries bring?
4. What problems or issues are created by the way we currently define inshore fisheries?
5. How might we want to define 'Inshore Fisheries' in the future?

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### Discussion Session 3: Setting fisheries management outcomes and objectives

*Fisheries Outcomes* are normally strategic in focus and are typically set at a national level by government reflecting national interests.

*Fisheries Objectives* are focused at individual fisheries and help us to decide how we should manage our fisheries. Specifically objectives-based fisheries management is about being clear on what we want to achieve with the management of our inshore fisheries, and designing and implementing the management measures (including research and monitoring/surveillance measures) to meet those objectives efficiently.

1. What factors should be considered when setting Fisheries Outcomes for inshore fisheries?
2. What process should we follow to set management objectives for inshore fisheries?
3. Who should be involved in setting these objectives?
4. How can we prioritise competing demands?
5. How should we take account of other fishing interests and marine use interests when setting fisheries objectives?

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### Discussion Session 4: Access, allocation and business certainty

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current access and allocation regime?
2. How do we provide for future access to inshore fisheries so that we also deliver on our marine sustainability outcomes?
3. How do we provide for future access to inshore fisheries so that we can ensure fishermen have business certainty?
4. Should fishermen contribute to the cost of managing their fishery in return for certainty of access?

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### Discussion Session 5: Representation

Effective coordination is a key component of collaborative fisheries management. From an industry representation perspective it can be challenging for government to engage effectively with multiple organisations which can have different expectations and mandates. For that reason some industry bodies choose to establish a bespoke industry organisation that is specifically equipped to support respective co-management arrangements and to work collaboratively with regulators.

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages with the current industry representation model?
2. How should regulatory agencies be structured to enable industry to engage in collaborative management?
3. How can we ensure effective representation to enable industry to work collaboratively or, increasingly, in partnership with government and regulators to sustainably manage our inshore fisheries?

# Notes

# #FutureOfOurInshoreFisheries

Report Authored by Mindfully Wired Communications

