

Future of Our Inshore Fisheries: Summary Action Plan

1. This paper provides a summary of the proposed next steps for the **Future of Our Inshore Fisheries** (FOIF) project. It is based on the discussions and presentations at the 'Issues and Ideas' workshop held 5 June 2019 and the conference held 8-9 October 2019.
2. Five main themes emerged from the conference discussion and presentations:
 - **Theme 1: Co-management**
 - **Theme 2: Collaborative science**
 - **Theme 3: Credible fisheries management**
 - **Theme 4: Rights and access**
 - **Theme 5: Effective compliance**
3. The scale of change wanted and needed is significant. It will take time to develop and implement solutions. From the beginning we have recognised that this project will take a number of years. The project team has prioritised the following projects over the next 12–18 months. This work plan will be added to as the first round of actions are completed. A series of pilot studies will be used to test and refine the various initiatives. This will ensure that the experience and expertise of fishermen will directly inform the project, every step of the way.
4. The focus on this first phase of work is on establishing the framework that will enable better management of our inshore fisheries resources.

Theme 1: Co-management

5. **Why this is important:** Co-management ensures that fisheries management decisions are better informed by bringing industry knowledge and experience to the fore. Doing this should lead to a greater sense of collective ownership: management measures are more likely to be effective because they are supported and understood by the industry. Co-management runs as a constant theme through the FOIF work programme but also through the newly established Shellfish Industry Advisory Group (SIAG) and whelk/crab management groups.
6. **Priority tasks:**
 - Establish a set of co-management principles which describe the different stages of co-management and the roles and responsibilities of government and industry at each stage.
 - Pilot the application of these principles; the new SIAG, Whelk Management Group and Crab Management Group will provide obvious case studies.

Theme 2: Collaborative science

7. **Why this is important:** We need to ensure that the right data and evidence is collected, at the right time, to the right standard and in a form that can be used to inform the right management decisions. This is more likely to happen when fishermen are active participants in the science and research process and are able to use their expert knowledge to help design research projects and review the results.
8. **Priority tasks:**
 - Map our inshore fisheries by species, stock, management status etc. and establish a database where this information can be updated annually. Produce information guides for fishermen and fisheries managers on status of key stocks.
 - Develop and implement a research standard that establishes the protocols that will guide the collection and use of data, regardless of who undertakes it.
 - Establish a formal peer review process that enables scientists, industry and policy makers to collectively review the science that is used to inform management.

Theme 3: Credible fisheries management

9. **Why this is important:** Ensuring the sustainable use of our inshore fisheries resources (in line with the objectives in the Fisheries Bill) means that we need to look at balancing environmental, economic and social outcomes. Credible fisheries management means that decisions are made with a clear line of sight to all three objectives.
10. **Priority tasks:**
 - Define what fisheries will be managed as inshore fisheries:
 - Focused principally on which sector is responsible for the majority of fishing mortality (as per the CEFAS presentation at the FOIF conference);
 - Taking account of overlapping fishing activities and potential displacement effects.
 - Develop a Harvest Strategy Standard (HSS) that will guide how inshore fisheries will be managed. Typically a HSS means that each fishery has a management target in place that helps set fishing effort and a series of triggers that guide if management measures need to reduce fishing pressure.
 - Guide to Fisheries Plans – setting out how fisheries management plans (as per the Fisheries Bill) could be drafted and implemented, who should be involved and what they should include. The SIAG has

already agreed at its meeting on 3 March that it would develop a draft shellfish plan.

Theme 4: Rights and access

11. **Why this is important:** Open access fisheries are open to overexploitation and failure. The key to successful fisheries management is limiting fishing effort in line with stock sustainability. A fair and effective way to limit access to a fishery is therefore required. Alongside this, fishermen need to know that if they take the difficult management decisions, their access to the fishery is protected so that they can realise the benefits once a fishery improves.
12. **Priority tasks:**
 - Explore the feasibility of Community Quota Ownership schemes which will include establishing the principles that will guide how such a scheme will operate. Test the approach with a series of local pilots.
 - For each inshore fishery start a review of access measures to determine the optimal arrangements that prioritise:
 - The sustainability of the fishery;
 - The need to deal with latent capacity and technological development;
 - Delivering a fair and transparent means of allocating fishing opportunities.

Theme 5: Effective compliance

13. **Why this is important:** Successful fisheries management depends on fishermen having an opportunity to shape the rules that they work under. This ensures that the rules are clear understandable and increases the prospect that those subject to the rules will abide by them. There is an opportunity to establish a compliance system that delivers ‘policing by consent’ or earned recognition with a clear focus on actions to encourage compliance rather than traditional enforcement activity. Given the limited resources available to monitor fishing activity and to create an effective deterrent, fishermen also have a key role in encouraging community compliance.
14. No specific tasks are proposed on this issue over the next twelve months.

**Future of Our Inshore Fisheries Steering Group
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