

Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species Fisheries Management Plan Working Group

Meeting Minutes 25th November 2022

Meeting Number 3

10:00-13:00 Microsoft Teams

1. Introductions, apologies, and actions (see annex)

All actions from the October meeting are now complete.

2. Recap of previous discussions and objectives of the meeting

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) gave an overview of the progress of the Channel demersal non-quota species (NQS) Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) to date:

- In September, MMO presented to the Working Group (WG) suggested [prioritisation of species](#) in the FMP.
- In October, MMO presented a [draft FMP template](#) including suggestions on WG involvement in the FMP. The WG concluded that MMO should draft elements of the FMP and bring to the WG to refine, creating a collaborative approach to drafting.

The objective of this meeting was to discuss and gather views on the FMP vision and goals.

3. Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs policy update

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) gave an update on the recent fly seining consultation and an overview of Defra policy linkages with FMPs, as the WG wanted to understand how this, and other FMPs fit with wider government objectives such as Multi Year Strategies (MYSts) and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

Fly seining consultation update:

- 45 responses to the public consultation were received in total.
- Defra have started to analyse the responses to inform next steps. A government response is required by 16 February 2023.
- Initial analysis found that the majority (78% of respondents) were in favour of introducing some form of measure to manage fly seine pressure or agree something should be done.
- Several respondents observed reduced catches of NQS in the 0-12nm, and note there is a serious risk of stocks being overfished, specifically red mullet, squid, cuttle fish and gurnards, with some stating these stocks have already been overexploited or decimated.
- Defra are working on understanding the different methods for implementing the proposed technical measures.
- Defra can provide the WG a further update in early 2023.

Policy update:

- The [Joint Fisheries Statement](#) (JFS) is now published.
- FMPs will be at the core of the JFS and will build on lessons learned from the Common Fisheries Policy.
- FMPs have been deliberately set up in different way so that we can learn from the different approaches taken by delivery leads for future FMPs.

- Measures and policies in the FMP will apply to all vessels operating in English/UK waters.
- There is opportunity in the TCA to develop MYSTs with the European Union (EU) which will focus on management of shared NQS. Defra want to make sure that this fits in well with domestic FMPs and that this system doesn't disadvantage fishermen in the UK.
- The precautionary approach is one of the fisheries objectives in the Fisheries Act (FA) and is a legal requirement. The JFS sets out the legal definition and further details how it could be implemented. The Precautionary approach is an important tool for fisheries management but the way we implement it in the UK can be quite nuanced.

WG comments:

- Defra stated the vision is to have a vibrant fishing industry. What does this look like and how do you define what a vibrant fishery is?
 - Defra responded that they haven't described this in the JFS. There are new ministers and Defra are in discussion with them about fisheries. FMPs can help describe what a vibrant fishery looks like for the fisheries within their remit. The JFS recognises a diverse fleet which is important for the resilience of coastal communities. Defra are committed to working with the inshore sector as they are struggling, but the offshore sector is also facing challenges.
- FMPs relationship with the TCA – Defra said this will apply to all vessels in English and Welsh waters but also said it will inform negotiating with EU. WG queried what would happen if the EU doesn't officially recognise the FMPs?
 - Defra stated the TCA gives the UK the right to implement measures on all vessels in our waters as long as they are not discriminatory. In terms of shared UK/EU stocks, collaboration with the EU is needed to ensure agreement.
- WG queried if the UK can unilaterally apply management measures to all vessels? How would this work with NQS? Stakeholders do not have a lot of confidence in the decision-making process.
 - Defra responded that they have been able to implement MPA byelaws in that way.

3. FMP vision

MMO presented the background and scope of the Channel NQS FMP vision and asked for comments (see paper published alongside these minutes). The WG was split up into breakout rooms for this agenda item.

Breakout room 1:

- The vision needs to be meaningful. How would the MMO describe it to people on the quayside and how would it affect them?
- The vision needs to reference mixed fisheries as we can't protect one species. Should refer to fisheries instead of stocks as we manage human activities and not the fish.
- Vision needs to meet the legal requirements set out in the JFS.
- Need to understand what needs management and why. Have to collect data first and then put management measures in place
- Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) - Is this the ultimate goal with Maximum Sustainable Yield used as an intermediary step? The FMP can include the ecosystem approach, but it is discretionary. How would this look in a mixed fishery?

Breakout room 2:

- Need to think about displacement and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). How do other marine users and uses affect fishing? There needs to be a holistic approach to management that considers unintended consequences.
- The FMP should state the case for the wider needs of the plan e.g. evidence and spatial needs.
- It is important to define how the precautionary approach will be applied and how that interacts with the sustainability objective. Need to understand the most important species to manage and the stock status of species in this FMP.
- MMO should utilise existing data and develop the necessary evidence base.
- The FMP needs to have fluidity and should be on a shorter review cycle looking at what is happening on the ground. Current 6-year review cycle is too long.
- How can technology support delivery of the FMP? Technology can transform the way we gather data and manage fisheries. WG want to see a link with Remote Electronic Monitoring. Could it be a long-term goal?

MMO shared a drafted FMP vision and also highlighted comments made by the EAG on the draft vision (see paper published alongside these minutes).

WG comments:

- Nothing in the draft vision about coastal communities. This FMP is about managing a fishing industry. What are the benefits to society? Need a holistic approach at sea and on land.
- First sentence - Change to fishery rather than stocks as manage the activities not stocks.
- Does the vision need to state how this FMP will interact with other FMPs? There are three species that also fall under the Southern North Sea flatfish FMP. If there are management measures on different stocks, this will have effects on the Channel fisheries.
- Need to understand how EU imposed management measures will affect the species within this FMP.
- If this FMP provides a means to collate more science on data poor stocks, this could influence EU negotiations. We need to be able to manage the stock as a whole.
- Language used by MMO/Defra is too complicated for fishermen to understand.

Action: MMO to amend the draft vision in line with WG and EAG comments. MMO will work with the WG to test language used in future.

4. FMP goals

MMO presented the background of the FMP goals and asked what goals the WG wanted in this FMP (see presentation published alongside these meeting minutes).

WG comments:

Evidence

- The plan should set out exactly what evidence is needed e.g. recreational and biological data on species and landings data.
- Fishermen hold a lot of data and there is often a duplication of effort. There is a need for a central database where data can be stored for different organisations to then extrapolate and use for their own purposes.
- Data rich industry but lacking for NQS. How much resource is there to collect data we need to fill the gaps and what do we need to do to fill them?

- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) have observer programmes that are costly, but also run an onshore observer programme which is less expensive. Remote Electronic Monitoring could increase the scope of projects.
- Cefas will be producing evidence summaries that identify what evidence is currently available and where the gaps are. However, there is not advice within the summaries on how to fill those gaps.
- The FMP needs a goal focused on fisheries.
- Need to be able to utilise funding opportunities for data collection. Can this be a goal or an action? Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP).
- Can there be a goal around EU effort data? WG need transparency on this.

Fisheries

- MMO has not defined specific fisheries e.g. if there is a goal around fly seining, what are we saying about the fisheries that we aren't putting in goals? Evidence needs to come before defining which fisheries we want management for.
 - MMO wants to discuss further whether a fly seining goal is needed or rather a goal to better understand how NQS are caught in mixed fisheries.
- Should we be considering management of certain species e.g. cuttlefish?

Social and economic goals

- Need to include social, environmental and economic goals as we are data poor on all aspects. Defra and MMO lack an understanding of how many fishermen, staff and processors are operating in the ports.
- The industry needs to be presented with a strategic view on what the government want from the fishing industry. There should be a goal to create direct benefits to coastal communities such as employment and fishing opportunities.
- Local knowledge and evidence are crucial. Fishermen on the ground need to be included in the development of the FMP.
 - The FMP could have a goal focused on producing methodology to incorporate qualitative data into the evidence base.
- Could also have a goal around consistent engagement and ability for stakeholders to feed into reviews of the FMP. Need to be in person and online.

The Precautionary approach

- There should be a goal that aims to seek and define what is meant by the precautionary approach. Fishermen need to understand what this means for them.

MMO presented the drafted long-term goals that were developed internally (see presentation published alongside these meeting minutes).

WG comments:

- Need an understanding of what funding is available to achieve these goals. The Angling Trust have been successful at getting grant funding for data collection and would be open to develop a bid for next round of FISP funding. FISP funding is short term so one of the goals of the FMP could be to get long-term funding. FISP funding could be used for a pilot study to suggest what the long-term monitoring plan could look like. What is Defra's involvement in ensuring there is funding for the goals? Will stakeholders have to keep bidding for funding for these goals?

- From a recreational perspective the fishery is not understood and varies culturally in different areas. Predominantly a catch and release sport but some people do catch it for consumption.

MMO asked how the WG want to be involved in the development of the goals e.g. bespoke sessions over December to draft goals.

WG comments:

- Bespoke sessions on goals are a good idea if everyone has the ability to commit time to it. Should start work on this as soon as possible.
- Use of a shared document for people to comment on in real time could be beneficial
- WG queried the deadline for the draft FMP submission and asked if it could be moved. Defra explained it is written in the JFS to publish by end of 2023 but understand it is ambitious.

Actions: Cefas to present evidence outputs and gaps to WG at next meeting. Defra to look into funding mechanisms for FMPs. MMO to set up sessions with WG in December and January for further development of goals.

5. Stakeholder engagement

MMO presented a series of proposed dates for in person and online engagement in February/ March 2023 (see presentation published alongside these meeting minutes).

WG comments:

- WG were mainly in agreement with the locations chosen for engagement.
- MMO need to ensure that there is sufficient time allocated to these engagement sessions. Need to include time for stakeholders to feedback from the sessions. Prepping people before the meetings would help reduce time wasted in the meetings.
- MMO need to be mindful of the words and terminology they use.
- Use all methods of engagement to spread the word about the engagement and use the WG as well. People need to understand why they need to turn up and why it's important to them.
 - FMP delivery bodies are looking at what resources can be sent out to stakeholders to raise awareness of the FMPs and what they mean for fishermen
- Need to manage expectations. Stakeholders are expecting management measures in the first iteration.
- Shoreham needs a group meeting in a venue.
- MMO should use the Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA) Officers who have good relationships with fishermen on the coast.

Action – MMO to refine 2023 engagement and share with the WG.

6. Evidence advisory group update

MMO gave the WG a brief overview of the discussions had at the first EAG. The EAG met for the first time on November 18th. See online for the published [EAG meeting minutes](#) and [presentation](#).

7. Summary and next steps

MMO gave an overview of the meeting and next steps. There were no comments from the WG.

8. AOB

WG members highlighted how well the WG is progressing so far.

9. Actions

Section	Action	Responsible
3. FMP Vision	Amend the draft vision in line with WG comments	MMO
3. FMP Vision	Work with the working group in future to test language used in engagement	MMO
4. FMP Goals	Bring WG information on funding mechanisms for FMPs	Defra
4. FMP Goals	Set up bespoke sessions to draft FMP Goals and themes	MMO
7. Summary and next steps	Present to the WG on the evidence outputs and gaps	Cefas

Annex

Attendees and apologies list

Name	Organisation
Jessica Duffill Telsnig	MMO (Chair)
Rachel Thirlwall	MMO (Secretariat)
Richard Hoskin	MMO Head of Sustainable Fisheries
Isobel Johnston	MMO Head of Fisheries Management Plan Team
Julian Roberts	MMO Head of Future Fisheries Team
Aubrey Banfield	West Bay Fishermen's Association and Lyme Bay Community Interest Company
Charlie Brock	Southeast Fishermen's Protection Association
Chloe North	Western Fish Producer Organisation (FPO)
Chris Ranford	Cornish FPO
Dave Saunders	Professional Boatmen's Association
Robbie Fisher	Defra FMP programme team
Hannah Rudd	The Angling Trust
Mat Mander	IFCA FMP lead
Joanna Messini	Defra non-quota species team
Rodney Anderson	Plymouth Community Interest Company
Ted Legg	Eastern Solent fishermen
Nick West	Mevagissey Fishermen's Association
Apologies	
Richard Stride	South Coast Fishermen's Council
Peter Eggleton	Weymouth Fishermen
Gwladys Lambert	Cefas
Louise Williams	Chapmans of Rye
Rui Vieira	Cefas