

Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species Fisheries Management Plan Working Group

Meeting Minutes 31st October 2022

Meeting Number 2
10:00-13:00 Microsoft Teams

Meeting minutes

1. Introductions, apologies and housekeeping – see Annex for attendees list

2. Welcome and scene setting

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) outlined that the purpose of the working group (WG) is to co-design the Channel demersal non-quota species Fisheries Management Plan (NQS FMP). MMO is committed to taking on the group's feedback and showing them how we are considering it. One of the ways MMO are doing this is by producing the "You Said, We Did" documents that highlight WG feedback and the actions taken to address it.

MMO reiterated to the WG that the process to develop this FMP will take time and that the first iteration will be a "plan for a plan". MMO understand that it is important to manage everyone's expectations with what can be done in the first iteration of this FMP.

3. Introduction to FMP template and proposed working group input

WG were presented with a draft FMP template that highlighted proposed chapters with suggestions where the WG would help draft, be consulted on and review. This document will be made available online along with these meeting minutes.

The WG was split into two separate groups for this discussion to allow time for everyone to give their views. A summary of each group's discussion is outlined below.

Breakout group 1 comments:

- Highlighted the importance of getting the long-term goals correct and agreed at the beginning to set the direction of the whole process.
- Concerns raised about the immediate threat to NQS fisheries posed by the effort of EU vessels. Can the FMP cover EU effort too?
- Chapter 2 (Background Information / Overview of the fishery/stock) - can be reviewed by the WG as it is a description of the existing fishery, but the WG want to be able to comment on this at an early stage.
- There are often differences between scientific evidence and what fishermen observe on the ground. Fishermen need to be able to feed into evidence at an early stage rather than be consulted on at a later stage to avoid frustration at the formal consultation.
- Chapter 3 (Description of the available evidence) - requires more input from the WG. Need to get chapter 2 right before can properly contribute to chapter 3. Highlighted importance of cross-referencing fishermen when going for scientific evidence.
- Chapter 4 (Description of fishery management objectives) and Chapter 5 (Wider environmental and socio-economic objectives) - need to have transparency in this process.
- WG want to help draft but will need to do so via email with occasional in person workshops if required. Need to be transparent with the consulting and drafting process so that WG feel completely involved in the process.

Breakout group 2 comments:

- WG queried whether the current approach is truly co-design given the range of stakeholders involved with different priorities and issues that need considering. Should it be an engagement process rather than co-design? MMO needs to draft contents of chapters and then bring it back to the WG for feedback.
- It is fundamental that the WG understand what the Channel demersal NQS FMP will cover in the first iteration so that WG members can get optimum engagement from the fishermen that they represent in the process.
- Chapters 2 and 3 will need more collaborative working rather than just consulting/reviewing.
- Queried if social goals can be dealt with at a programme level rather than FMP level as it covers many different fisheries and stocks.
- MMO needs to be mindful that industry might not have the capacity to feed into the template as it currently stands. The template is very ambitious therefore can it be shortened?

MMO comments:

- Clear steer from the group that the process should be described as a partnership/collaboration rather than co-design.
- This is a very complex FMP and the purpose of the frontrunners is to trial new ways of working and learn as we go. MMO is trying to manage expectations of the group as we progress but understand the WG need to be clear on what the draft Channel demersal NQS FMP will look like in April.
- Concerns regarding EU activity are noted. See agenda item 8 (Flyseining Consultation update).

4. Channel demersal NQS FMP Timelines

MMO presented draft timelines for the development and publication of the Channel demersal NQS FMP. This presentation will be published alongside these meeting minutes. Note: these dates could be subject to change.

MMO presentation notes:

- Preparation stage runs from September 2022 to April 2023 and incorporates the main drafting stage for the first draft of the Channel demersal NQS FMP.
- MMO will hold engagement sessions in early 2023 along the south coast.
- In May 2023 to June 2023 the FMP will undergo quality assurance to ensure that the WG and Defra are content that the draft FMP has met the minimum legal requirements.
- From July 2023 to October 2023 Defra will lead a 12-week formal consultation on the Draft FMP.
- October 2023 to December 2023 Defra will be taking comments and feedback from the consultation and amending it for publication at the end of December 2023.

WG queries/comments:

- Once Defra has finished the consultation, will they bring back feedback to the WG? Defra will provide the WG with more clarity on this as they want the process to be consistent across all the FMPs.
- Queried the use of in person engagement only. Not everyone has been able to have access to previous south coast visits. South coast is a popular angling tourist destination, but many anglers do not live there and only visit in summer months. Therefore online engagement alongside in-person would be beneficial.

- Issues surrounding developing goals on species before the WG know what will be prioritised. There are conflicting deadlines with drafting goals and Cefas data being provided. The WG need this data before we can start defining goals of the FMP. Cefas said they are working on putting together basic information on the species and this should not stop discussions on goals and prioritising species. Aim to have the data to the WG by January 2023. MMO said they have an overview of data already to be able to start working on drafting the FMP.

Action – Defra and MMO to decide if the consultation comments will be brought back to the WG once it has closed

5. Introduction to Channel demersal NQS FMP goals

MMO presented to the WG on the goals of the FMP.

MMO comments:

- The WG will need to draft a series of long-term goals for the FMP, deciding what is the long-term vision of the FMP and what it will aim to achieve. Will need to start with the end in mind and work out what the short term priorities will be from there.
- MMO will hold an introductory discussion with the WG about the goals and then there will be a WG led approach to drafting.
- MMO/WG will then explore the goals in detail, broken down into ‘Fisheries goals, Social goals, economic goals and environmental goals’.
- The goals need to have a purpose and direction and be written in a clear and easy to follow format. They also need to fulfill the Fisheries Objectives laid out in the Fisheries Act (Precautionary and Sustainability).
- The goals must also be measurable and be attributed to data and indicators.
- MMO proposes that they draft some goals and bring these to the WG for review and amend.
- MMO and the WG will revisit the goals at appropriate intervals over the next few months to refine and ensure they are fit for purpose and in line with the evidence gathered and direction of the FMP.

WG queries/comments:

- WG need to understand where the FMP fits in with government goals as there is currently not a coherent picture. WG asked if there can be an introductory chapter within the FMP outlining what the government wants from the fishing industry.
- MMO should have something tangible to take to fishermen to engage them. Need a draft of the goals sooner rather than later so fishermen can see a direction and how they will benefit from the process.
- Precautionary approach could cause unintended consequences to the fishing industry.
- Goals should be clear and easy to follow but this does not mean they should be easy to manage for the MMO. FMPs should benefit the fishing industry and not the MMO.
- WG cannot be asked to draft the goals amongst themselves due to different views. MMO should guide the WG on the process and suggest goals.
- Queried the FMP post-publication review process. What will the triggers be for review? Displacement is affecting socioeconomics in the Channel.
- Questioned how MMO will reach a consensus if/when there are different views and how this will be made transparent to the WG?

Action – Defra to check whether there can be an introductory chapter within the FMP on how the FMP fits in with wider government goals.

6. Communication and Engagement Plan

MMO presented the WG with a brief overview of the Communication and Engagement Plan for this FMP. Future engagement will be steered by the WG and what they think will be beneficial at different stages of the process. MMO will make suggestions and ask the WG if their approach is correct. MMO need the WG's expertise to ensure that we are targeting our engagement at the right people and in the right way. MMO need to know what is working and what isn't.

WG discussion:

- WG highlighted that other FMPs have been very clear about the purpose of their engagement. MMO need to make it clear to stakeholders that they are wanting to be challenged on the drafted elements of the FMP.
- Queried the purpose of the next phase of stakeholder engagement. MMO said initial engagement was to raise awareness of the FMP and gather initial views. Further engagement will be taking what we have developed to industry for testing and challenge.
- In person engagement events need to be publicised with enough time for stakeholders to see and be able to attend.
- Anglers may need to be engaged with in a different way than the rest of the fishing industry due to geographic spread. The angling community are still not aware that they are able to contribute to the FMP process and need help understanding the legislation.
- January and December are not good months to engage with the fishing sector due to it being a very busy time period.
- IFCA can help disseminate the information to licence holders. MMO need to produce summaries of FMP progress so far and milestones then people can choose when/ if to engage.
- Policy Lab used a combination of online and in person events that seem to have gone down very well with stakeholders. WG suggested MMO talk to them for lessons learned.
- NQS is very much a mixed fishery and should be looked at as such. Need to engage with everyone who interacts with the fishery.

Action – MMO to discuss angling engagement with Angling Trust representative

Action – MMO to discuss engagement methods with Policy Lab

7. Evidence Plan

MMO presented the working group with a brief overview of the evidence plan for the Channel demersal NQS FMP.

MMO comments:

- MMO has been commissioned to produce an evidence plan for the Channel demersal NQS FMP.
- As a minimum, the evidence plan must set out:
 - Evidence requirements to enable MMO to assess the stock's maximum sustainable yield or appropriate proxy
 - What we already know about the stocks listed and commercial and recreational fisheries included within the plan. This includes the available data for each listed stock and species and the wider environmental impacts of the fisheries and any social and economic evidence.
 - Evidence gaps and what is required to meet the goals of the FMP in the first iteration and future iterations
 - Proposed steps to gather evidence needed to establish sustainable fisheries.

WG queries/ comments:

- Cefas are working on evidence gathering at the moment in collaboration with IFCAs and intend to have this delivered by January 2023, rather than the intended delivery date of December 2022. MMO noted that delays to provision of evidence will have impacts on the prioritisation and development of goals. Upon request from the group, Cefas committed to investigate possibility to provide evidence summaries to Defra in stages so some can be made available to the group before the deadline of January 2023. They suggested it may be possible that some cephalopod species be submitted before Christmas.

8. Flyseining Consultation

Defra gave an update to the group on the flyseining consultation that is running until the 16th of November.

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/non-quota-species-team/technical-measures/>

- Intention behind the consultation is to provide a discussion on potential management measures in response to the increase in effort by flyseiners and to gather evidence from stakeholders.
- Defra are aware of the concerns being raised by industry and do understand. There are still evidence gaps, but the available data shows flyseiners are targeting mullet, gurnards, squids and other NQS.
- Flyseining users have broadly doubled since 2019.
- There is a large amount of crossover of the flyseining consultation with the Channel demersal NQS FMP.
- At this stage, how flyseining will be managed outside of this FMP is still to be determined. Defra works closely with MMOs FMP team, and the consultation should provide useful stakeholder insight into this area. There will be a government response at the end of the 12-week consultation period.

WG queries/ comments:

- WG would like an update from Defra within the WG meetings once the consultation has closed.
- How will previous loopholes in management measures be addressed?

Action - Defra to provide the WG with more information how loopholes with current management measures will be addressed

Action – MMO to send the WG the consultation link so that they can provide their views

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Actions from previous meetings: All actions now closed (See Annex)

9.2 Evidence Advisory Group

MMO have recently started contacting people to sit on the proposed Evidence Advisory Group (EAG). The EAG will run alongside the main WG to provide support to the WG on their decision-making functions. MMO has identified technical experts from various organisations such as Cefas, IFCA, NE, JNCC and Blue Marine Foundation who specialise in species biology as well as gear types. The group will meet ahead of WG session and be given a briefing on what the WG meeting will require in terms of evidence. One person from the EAG will then attend the WG meetings and feedback the relevant information to the group.

WG queries/ comments:

- Are the MMO going to invite social and economic experts to the EAG. MMO will be inviting social and economic evidence specialists to join the EAG and a list of group members will be provided to the WG for comment.
- Suggestions from the group to invite individuals from Seafish and recreational evidence specialists from Cefas. MMO will invite these individuals to sit on the EAG.
- WG suggested that the MMO invite species experts from the fishing industry to sit on the EAG. MMO will be inviting industry experts to sit on the EAG based on WG suggestions.

9.3 Evidence on species

MMO provided the group with more detail on the original species scoping paper that was presented to stakeholders during initial engagement in summer 2022. There is 10 years' worth of UK landings and 5 years' worth of EU data for Channel UK waters. The data drills down as far as we can in terms of fleet structure and what is caught with what gears and how they interact with quota stocks. The data is presented as a time series of key landings for non-quota stocks up to 2020. This data will feed into the evidence plan for the Channel demersal NQS FMP and highlight how the data will need to be examined further to identify any evidence gaps.

MMO is working on publishing the evidence paper online.

9.4 Working Group Representation

MMO asked the group to feedback on the representation of the WG as it stands and to suggest where there might not be appropriate representation.

Working group comments:

- Questioned the number of small-scale fishermen on the working group

9.5 Final WG comments

- Concerns raised over the precautionary approach being used in the Channel demersal NQS FMP as it can stop fishing activities. The precautionary approach is applied when there is a lack of data and this should therefore generate a duty to conduct research to fill data gaps.
- Concerns raised over future of fishermen in the Eastern Channel. Quota allocations have increased which is detrimental to NQS as they are caught as by-catch due to everyone catching the maximum amount they are allowed. MMO highlights that we have early suggestions for management measures but that we may need to identify separate mechanisms to address more immediate issues.

Action - MMO to contact WG member who raised these issues to discuss outside of the WG

Actions

Section	Action	Responsible
4. FMP Timelines	Provide the WG with clarification on whether the consultation comments will be brought back to the WG to review once it has closed.	Defra and MMO
5. Introduction to FMP goals	Defra to check whether there can be an introductory chapter within the FMP on how the FMP fits in with wider government goals.	Defra
6. Communication and Engagement	Set up a meeting with the Angling Trust representative to discuss how to better engage with	MMO

Plan	recreational fishing sector	
6. Communication and Engagement Plan	Contact Policy Lab to discuss lessons learned from engagement on the Bass FMP	MMO
8. Flyseining consultation	Provide the WG with more information on how loopholes with current management measures for flyseining will be addressed	Defra
8. Flyseining consultation	Circulate the flyseining consultation link with the WG so they can provide their views	MMO
9.5 Final WG comments	Contact WG member who raised issued around the future of fisheries in the Channel	MMO

Annex

Table 1: October working group attendee list

Name	Organisation/ Representation
Jessica Duffill-Telsnig	Principal Fisheries Manager from the Marine management Organisation (MMO) (Chair)
Rachel Thirlwall	MMO Fisheries Manager (Secretariat)
Isobel Johnston	Head of MMO Fisheries Management Plan Team
Richard Hoskin	MMO Head of Fisheries and Conservation
Nicholas French	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager
Rebecca Korda	MMO Evidence Specialist
Katie McNally	Policy Advisor from the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Non-quota Species Team
Joanna Messini	Policy Advisory from Defra's Non-quota Species Team
Mat Mander	FMP lead for Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA)
Pete Eggleton	Weymouth Fishermen's association
Andrew Pillar	Interfish Producer Organisation (PO)
Aubrey Banfield	West Bay Fishermen's' Association and Lyme Bay CIC
Charlie Brock	South East fishermen's protection association
Chloe North	Western Fish PO
Chris Ranford	Cornish Fish PO
Gwladys Lambert	Cefas evidence lead NQS lead
Hannah Rudd	Angling Trust
Juliette Hatchman	South Western Fish PO
Neil Witney	Newhaven Fishermen
Ricard Stride	South Coast Fishermen's Council
Rodney Anderson	Plymouth CIC
Simon Wilson	Independent Facilitator
Apologies	
Jason Berry	Plymouth CIC

Louise Williams	Chapmans - Sussex and Kent
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Table 2: September working group actions

Section	Action	Responsible
3. Terms of reference	Incorporate reference of evidence statement; make clear the purpose of the group and role of industry in the development of FMP; outline subgroups will hold advisory role only.	MMO
4. Code of conduct	Review terminology used around “advice” and “evidence”	MMO
5. Species prioritisation	Send MMO scallop FMP visual representation as a template	SWFPO
6. WG evidence subgroup	Set up evidence subgroup and circulate draft ToR and suggested membership	MMO
7. Future WG meetings	Share communications and engagement strategy with WG. Set up monthly WG meetings online.	MMO
8. AOB	Review purpose of face-to-face engagement and if required at this stage.	MMO