



Marine Management Organisation

Date: 02/07/2025 10:00-11:00

Location: MS Teams

Subject: Celtic Sea & Western Channel Demersal (CSWCD) Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) – Working Group (WG) Meeting 5

Chair: Mark Qureshi

Secretariat: Catriona New

Attendance

Isobel Johnston	MMO Head of Sustainable Fisheries
Anna MacLennan	MMO SW RFG
Edward Moseley	Defra Domestic Fisheries and Reform
Mat Mander	Devon and Severn IFCA
John Balls	North Devon Fisherman's Association
Judith Farrell	Humberside Fish Producers' Organisation
Jim Evans	Welsh Fishermen's Association
David Stevens	Fishing into the Future
Paul Dolder	Cefas
Adam Holland	Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation Fisheries Sustainability Officer
Juliette Hatchman	South West Fish Producers' Organisation
Matt Sayer	Welsh Government
Adam Ferguson	Anglo Scottish Fish Producers' Organisation
Edward Baker	Plymouth Fishing and Seafood Association, CEO
MMO FMP Development Team	

1. Introduction MMO and Defra welcomed WG members thanked them for their input to date.

- MMO acknowledged the request from the WG to include a policy that would introduce a 221 kW engine power restriction for all towed gear in the 6-12 nm limit of UK waters.
- In agreement with Defra, it was decided not to commit to this specific measure in its proposed form within the draft FMP at this stage.
- However, MMO and Defra have listened to the concerns raised by the stakeholders and recognise the need to address the growing pressures they face. As a result, we have incorporated a new policy into Goal 7. This policy is designed to be evidence-led and flexible, allowing us to assess the benefits and drawbacks of different approaches before any specific actions are proposed.
- Defra are developing a project to bring together a coordinated set of actions to support inshore fisheries – the FMP commitment will align with this. This work is intended to begin ahead of the FMP's publication and can begin early collaborative work with industry to focus on outcomes that can deliver more immediate benefits.

2. Draft policy goal 7 text and actions

3. Q&A

- WG member discussed that they had hoped to see the action include a commitment to supporting and protecting inshore fisheries and under 10m vessels. Raised concerns that the current wording sounds as though MMO are looking to create further management inshore.
 - MMO responded that they will look to revise the wording of the actions. Explained that while this action is broad, the proposal can be refined over time as evidence is collated. Reassured WG members that MMO will not wait for the FMP to be published before starting work on this.
- WG member discussed the disengagement of stakeholders with FMP work and the importance of acting on WG member advice. Believed that the 221 kW measure would not be discriminatory and asked for the proposal to be shared with the Fisheries Minister.
- MMO noted that efforts are being made to rebuild engagement with stakeholders. Defra highlighted that options will be put to the Fisheries Minister once developed and assessed for compliance with domestic and international legal requirements. The Minister will make the final decisions on FMPs.
- WG member noted that there are spatial restrictions for UK vessels in the EU 6-12 nm limit, queried why the same reciprocal access cannot be applied for EU vessels in UK waters.

- MMO highlighted that this agreement was agreed upon in past negotiations, and this agreed access was continued following Brexit and again following the UK-EU Summit this year. MMO asked if WG member could detail their concerns in writing so that a considered response from MMO could be shared following the meeting.

ACTION – MMO to follow up with WG once written concerns are received.

- WG member queried whether the limits of the policy. Noted that there is an example of more specific technical conservation measure adjustments in the text, asked if the kW restriction could be listed as something that will be specifically investigated. Highlighted that the WG would appreciate MMO sharing the rationale.
 - MMO noted that they will look to define the distance covered by the policy in the text. Highlighted that Policy Goal 7 applies to the whole FMP and FMP area and the action is included within this. Discussed the need for flexibility within this action to ensure a range of opportunities can be considered.
- WG member noted that there seems to be some disparity between different Defra-run groups. In some, it is believed that all opportunities have been encouraged and are thought can be consulted on while other groups are taking a different approach.
- WG members discussed concerns that industry feedback is not being taken forward. Unsure how concerns around this suggested measure fits with other FMPs. Requested that evidence is shared to explain why specific reference to 221 kW restrictions are not being included within this policy.
 - MMO highlighted they are looking to produce a 'You Said, We Did' document to highlight how WG member suggestions have been actioned.
 - Evidence will be gathered in support of the approach taken toward managing inshore fisheries.
- WG member discussed concerns that the outcome of the UK-EU Summit has changed the landscape for FMPs and that the process may undermine FMPs and their objectives under the Fisheries Act.
 - MMO noted they are working to their obligations under the Fisheries Act. Emphasised that they are not definitively ruling anything out now but keeping the actions more high-level and broad means there is space to include additional measures in the future.
- WG member noted that it could be interesting to investigate the discard rate of sole and what the most profitable landing size is. Discussed the difference 80-100mm mesh sizes can make to sole catch. Noted the desire for management to help improve plaice stocks.

The content included within this document is not Government policy

- MMO highlighted that mesh sizes are already included in Policy Goal 7 as an opportunity to explore. There are also references to flatfish and specific actions in other policies. Policy Goal 2 includes detail around exploring regulation of the sole fishery and investigating what can be done from a conservation perspective, accounting for discards. Regarding plaice, MMO noted that following previous WG recommendations, detail has been added related to exploring and evaluating spatial management of plaice nursery areas.
- WG member raised concerns around the economic impacts of using different mesh sizes due to differences in the size of fish landed.
 - MMO requested that any evidence related to this is shared as it could help to fill FMP evidence gaps on the benefits/drawbacks of a shift from 80-100mm mesh.
- MMO confirmed that the draft Policy Goal 7 document shared with the WG on 26 June is only one Policy Goal within the FMP. All other draft Policy Goals were shared with the WG for a month-long review on 16 May.

4. Next steps

- WG comments deadline on draft inshore policy – this Friday 1pm, 4 July.
- The draft FMP will be submitted to Defra within next few weeks for QA.
- MMO will then revise the FMP based on Defra QA.
- A WG meeting will be held to walk through changes around submission to Defra later this summer / early autumn. **ACTION** - MMO to clarify the approach to sharing the FMP with the WG following this meeting.
- Defra will take this to public consultation ahead of formally publishing the FMP.
- The FMP will be finalised considering stakeholders views submitted to the consultation and published by the end of 2026 in line with the statutory deadline in the JFS.