

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)

Purpose of this Paper

This paper sets out overarching information relating to the five draft Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) that are relevant to D&S IFCA's District.

Officers have reviewed the FMPs and their associated document and annexes. The purpose of this paper is to seek the Members views on the Officers' outline position and comments, and source any additional points on the proposed management measures within the FMPs. Any comments can be included in Officers' responses to the consultation on behalf of the Authority.

Overview of FMPs

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) are a requirement of the Fisheries Act 2020, the UK Joint Fisheries Statement and a commitment in the England Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. The [Fisheries Act 2020](#) provides the framework to manage fisheries as an independent coastal state outside of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. The act requires the UK fisheries policy authorities (Defra, and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) to publish fisheries management plans (FMPs) to help deliver Defra's ambition for sustainable fisheries.

The [Joint Fisheries Statement](#) lists [43 proposed FMPs](#). Some FMPs will be developed jointly by two or more national fisheries authorities, whilst others will be developed by a single authority for its own waters.

FMPs assess the status of stocks and must set out policies to restore stocks to, or maintain them at, sustainable levels. Each FMP will specify the stocks, type of fishing and the geographic area covered, as well as the authority or authorities responsible and indicators to be used for monitoring the effectiveness of the plan. Once published, FMPs will inform a wide range of relevant fisheries management actions. There will not be a 'one size fits all' approach to the FMPs – they will be designed according to the specific needs of their stocks, fisheries and location. Therefore, FMPs will vary in their content and format because fisheries range from stocks whose management is well understood, to complex mixed fisheries with many stocks in whole sea areas.

The FMPs will last for six years. It will set out both a longer-term vision and goals for the fishery (or fisheries), together with the policies and management interventions necessary to achieve these goals in the shorter term. As well as focussing on sustainable stocks, Defra intends to use FMPs to help tackle environmental, social, and economic issues associated with national fisheries, significantly enhancing its ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and securing the economic and cultural benefits we gain from fish and from fishing.

Six front runner FMPs has been prepared for the purpose of meeting the requirements set out in the Act. These frontrunners are piloting different ways of preparing plans in partnership with industry groups and other stakeholders. Lessons learnt from these projects will shape Defra's future FMP work. Each frontrunner FMP has a delivery partner who is working with Defra and stakeholders to draft plans that represent a wide range of views. Once published, FMPs will be implemented, monitored, reviewed and updated to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

For D&S IFCA, five of the six front runner FMPs are relevant to its District:

Crab and lobster FMP

The Crab and Lobster FMP will cover stocks in English waters only. The Sea Fish Industry Authority (Seafish) worked closely with the Crab and Lobster Management Group, an industry-led advisory group, to draft the FMP.

Whelk FMP

The Whelk FMP will cover stocks in English waters only. Seafish worked closely with the Whelk Management Group, an industry-led advisory group, to draft the FMP.

King Scallop FMP

The King Scallop FMP is a joint plan between Defra and the Welsh Government and will cover stocks in English and Welsh waters. The Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) working group collaborated with Seafish to draft the FMP. The SICG working group is a collaborative body comprised of UK industry representatives from the SICG and officials from all fisheries policy authorities.

Bass FMP

The Bass FMP is a joint plan between Defra and the Welsh Government and will cover stocks in English and Welsh waters. Policy Lab worked closely with stakeholders in 2022 to help develop recommendations for the bass FMP. Defra and the Welsh Government are taking these recommendations forward.

Policy Lab is part of the Department for Education and specialises in co-designing policy with stakeholders.

Channel demersal non-quota stocks (NQS)

The Channel Demersal NQS FMP covers International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) divisions 7d (eastern channel) and 7e (western channel). It will include 17 demersal (bottom living) species without agreed catch limits (quota).

The Channel Demersal NQS plan was developed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

Officers' Comment relating to the FMPs

The main consideration that Officers have recorded in their review of the FMPs is the amount of documentation included in the consultation. With all of the Tranche 1 FMP consultations, there is a multiple documents to review to be fully informed of the objectives of the plans, proposals for management and research requirements. Each FMP consultation consists of the FMP itself; multiple annexes detailing evidence analysed, communications undertaken, and research planned; a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a De-minimus Impact Assessment. Many of these documents are over 100 pages in length. Whilst the summaries are useful, in order to be informed of all the evidence used and research planned to inform the FMP consultation, review of all documents is necessary, and this takes a great deal of time and effort. Consulting on all six front runner FMPs at the same time is not satisfactory. It would have been more accommodating to stagger the consultations over time to allow stakeholders an opportunity to review each one rather than having to respond to six by the same date. Officers believe that the current process makes it difficult for many stakeholders to successfully engage in the FMP process.