**Meeting of the Irish Haddock and Saithe FIPs**

**Thursday the 3rd of June 2021 at 2.30 pm**

**Virtual Meeting**

Attendees:

John Ward IFPO

John Lynch IS&EFPO

Patrick Murphy IS&WFPO

Norah Parke KFO

John D. O’ Kane Foyle Fishermen’s Co-Op

John Nolan Castletownbere Fishermen’s Co-Op

Paul Boyd Clogherhead Fishermen’s Co-Op

Sheila Murphy Good Fish,

Fiona O’ Rourke Keohanes

Michelle O’ Neill Kingfisher Fresh

Sean Gavin Irish Sea Spray

Karen O’ Hanlon Morgans Fine Fish

Brian McCullagh Morgans Fine Fish

Maurice Hickey Green Isle

Fergal O Mahony Green Isle

Kevin Clarke Green Isle

Joe Hannon Green Isle

Marine Institute: Macdara O’ Cuaig

BIM: Ronan Cosgrove, Dominic Rihan, Vincent Ryan, Mark Byrne, Catherine Barrett

Verifact FIP facilitators: Frank Fleming, Mike Fitzpatrick

**Minutes**

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by J. Hannon and seconded by M. Hickey.

1. **Workplan Updates**

Mike Fitzpatrick of Verifact provided an overview of the workplans and workplan progress for the Haddock and Saithe FIPs. Both FIPs are now registered with Fishery Progress and both have a progress rating of C indicating some recent progress.

Principle 1 Workplan Tasks include:

* Meeting with MI scientists to discuss stock and scientific data gaps.
* Identify issues and priorities with FIP members
* Develop a programme to enhance observer coverage levels and industry self-sampling initiatives

Under Principle 2, Minimising Environmental Impact, both workplans aim to promote the use of gears and approaches which reduce bycatch and discards.

Under Principle 3, Management Systems, both FIP workplans aim to improve awareness of the Landing Obligation and to explore new utilisation options for unwanted catches.

* + **Sampling-at-sea and data collection**

Mike Fitzpatrick gave an update on meetings held with the Marine Institute Fisheries Liaison Team Leader, Macdara O Cuaig, who has agreed to work with the FIPs to improve self-sampling and observer coverage. An example was given of the ongoing data collection programme for the Tuna FIP which is a collaborative initiative between the FIPs, BIM and the Marine Institute. Macdara O Cuaig gave a short presentation to the meeting on how the FIPs and the Marine Institute can work together to improve sampling at sea which will be critical in 2021 as MI observer coverage is still not reinstated due to covid.

The main objective of at sea sampling is to get samples of the bulk catch i.e. random unwanted catches. In 2020, there were 47 self-sampling trips completed. So far in 2021, there have been 22 trips completed. More observations are needed both at sea and at shore. In 2019, the MI only achieved 60% of their sampling targets, further highlighting the critical role that the FIPs and improving self-sampling rates can have.

Observer sampling at sea has more data points and is more comprehensive as it is the full time job of that observer while at sea. Self-sampling has less data points but by working to strict MI protocols it is still a valuable input for stock assessment purposes. The MI liaison works closely with the skipper and crew to ensure that self-sampling is correctly done and a detailed sampling pack given to the skipper.

It was agreed that once Covid restrictions ease the FIP will hold a series of port workshops with fishermen to stress the importance of industry provided data under both Principle 1 and 2 actions for the workplan. Macdara O Cuaig also provided his contact details and asked that they be circulated to FIP members along with a message stressing the importance of improving self-sampling activity.

* + **Technical Conservation Measures and Principle 2 issues**

Ronan Cosgrove of BIM presented key areas of technical conservation work that BIM fisheries scientists are doing in partnership with the catching sector. Slides from the presentation are included at the end of the minutes.

Highlights from the presentation relevant to the Haddock and Saithe FIPs included:

* A 67% reduction in below market size Whiting using an 80 mm T90 mesh.
* Use of a raised fishing line in the Celtic Sea which reduced catches of Cod, flats and skates while retaining market sized catches of Haddock and Whiting.
* Use of lights in trawls to reduce catches of undersize whitefish and to separate Haddock and Whiting catches. This is relevant to the Haddock FIP as quotas for Haddock are lower than they are for Whiting and effective separation will reduce discarding.
* Survivability trials for ray species were encouraging especially for Cuckoo Ray which as a result is exempted from the Landing Obligation.
* Future TCM work relevant to the FIP will include working on off-bottom trawling

There was also agreement that Mike Fitzpatrick, Macdara O Cuaig and Ronan Cosgrove of BIM would meet to discuss further whether there are further opportunities for synergies due to working together on mutually beneficial elements of data collection and TCM implementation.

1. **MSC Rockall Haddock**

There was a discussion of potential application for MSC for Rockall (Area 6b) Haddock. Mike Fitzpatrick informed the meeting that an indicative cost for a full MSC assessment would be approximately €38,000. The main issues with a successful application would likely be under Principle 2. A comparative assessment of the Scottish Rockall Haddock fishery (which is MSC certified) and the Irish fishery will be made by the FIP. The comparison will focus on catch composition.

There is also a complex political situation in Rockall which will have to be taken account of.

1. **Social Responsibility Assessment**

The meeting was informed that Fishery Progress launched their Human Rights and Social Responsibility Policy in May 2021 and that from Nov 2021 FIPs will be expected to begin reporting to Fishery Progress based on a social responsibility risk assessment.

Sample presentation Slides from BIM Conservation Team Leader, Ronan Cosgrove.

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Graphical user interface

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