**Meeting of the Irish Prawn FIP**

**On Wednesday the 2nd of June 2021 at 12pm**

**Virtual Meeting**

**Minutes**

Attendees:

Norah Parke, Killybegs Fishermen’s Organisation,

Patrick Murphy, Irish South and West Fish Producer’s Organisation,

John Ward, Irish Fish Producers Organisation,

John Lynch, Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation,

John Nolan, Castletownbere Fishermes Co-op,

Paul Boyd, Clogherhead Fishermens Co-op,

John O Kane, Foyle Fishermens Co-op,

Ronan Sheehy,

Michael Kirwan,

Barry Faulkner Jr.,

Giles Bartlett, Whitby Seafood

Janet O Donoghue, Errigal,

Leslie Bates, Sofrimar,

Karen O’ Hanlon, Morgans Fish,

Pat Lynch, Dundalk Bay Seafoods,

BIM: Ronan Cosgrove, Dominic Rihan, Catherine Barrett.

FIP Facilitators: Frank Fleming, Mike Fitzpatrick (Verifact)

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

Proposed by Giles Bartlett and seconded by John Nolan.

1. **Fishery Progress and Workplan Update** 
   * **FIP score**

Mike Fitzpatrick informed the meeting that the FIP had been registered towards the end of 2020 as the Irish Area 7 Prawn trawl FIP with Fishery Progress following a period as a prospective FIP. A workplan for 2020 to 2022 had been submitted and following this meeting the minutes will be submitted to Fishery Progress indicating that the FIP is in implementation stage. The Irish Prawn FIP is a basic FIP but is addressing 22 out of 28 indicators.

* + **Self-sampling programs**

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 FIP to improve self-sampling and observer coverage. Over the last 15 months the Marine Institute received a small number of samples and due to Covid there have been no observers at sea which creates a risk of the assessment for the fishery being downgraded. 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

* + **TCMs, bycatch**

As part of a discussion of the workplan actions under Principle 2 BIM’s Conservation Manager, Ronan Cosgrove, presented key areas of technical conservation work that the BIM fisheries scientists are doing in partnership with the catching sector. These gear trials include bycatch reduction efforts for Whiting and Cod which are key elements of the FIP workplan.

One successful element of the gear trial work was the exemption of Nephrops from the Landing Obligation as a result of high survivability (64%) demonstrated during BIM trials for trawl caught Nephrops.

Additional results presented:

The use of a **300mm Square Mesh Panel (SMP)** resulted in a reduction of 70% small haddock, 52% of small whiting , while increasing Nephrops catches by 14%.

**A Seltra 300mm SMP** resulted in the reduction of whiting by -24%, haddock by -51%, Flatfish by -55%, Dogfish by -74% while having an increase of 19% for Nephrops.

**Dual Cod End (inclined panels with upper cod end having a T90):** this gear resulted in a reduction of small haddock (-48%) and small whiting (-72%) . This gear was also effective in reducing catches of blue whiting on the Porcupine ground (FU 16).

Future work will include work with a **Box trawl** which it is hoped will increase carbon efficiency. Specifically with reference to the FIP workplan under Principle 2 BIM have conducted work on reducing whiting by catches in the Irish Sea where vessels are required to use a 300mm SMP since 2016. The MI have reported a positive effect in their annual advice as the SMP has reduced whiting bycatch by 20%. **REF????**

Ronan Cosgrove said he was available to discuss TCM results with FIP members in further detail if needed in order to promote uptake of more selective gears.

It was agreed that Mike Fitzpatrick, FIP administrator, Ronan Cosgrove of BIM and Macdara O Cuaig of the Marine Institute would meet shortly after the meeting to assess whether there are further opportunities for synergies due to working together on mutually beneficial elements of data collection and TCM implementation.

* + **Porcupine fishery and closure**

A review of the Porcupine fishery (FU 16) closure was suggested in order to minimise the impact on the spawning stock and maximise the value of the quota. Currently the closure is mainly national but it was felt that it should be the subject of an EU regulation in order to be more effective and to avoid fishing when high numbers of female prawns are present. The closure needs an EU regulation as the Porcupine ground are in EU waters.

It was agreed that the FIP could play a role by sending the Marine Institute assessment of the closure to the North Western Waters Regional Advisory Group.

* + **Port workshops and vessel engagement**

The FIP facilitators, MI and BIM will work on developing overall data requirements across the FIP workplans in accordance with MI self-sampling protocols and communicating these to fishers at port workshops.

1. **Porcupine MSC**

Mike Fitzpatrick reported on an indicative report and price required to progress an MSC application for the Porcupine fishery. A full MSC assessment would be required at an indicative cost of €38,000. This would not include the administration work afterwards to maintain the status. It was pointed out that currently there is only 1 Nephrops fishery MSC certified which is a Swedish and Danish fishery. It was agreed that further information on the MSC certified Nephrops fishery would be examined and that a cost benefit analysis of proceeding with an MSC application would be conducted.

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.