

Meeting with a UK based Distributor and a UK based Processor re UK and Irish FIPs.

Attendees:

- Frank Fleming
- Mike Fitzpatrick
- Distributor
- Processor

### **Stock status and FIP scores**

The meeting particularly focused on Brown Crab with a discussion on the strength of the stocks. Both stocks in Area 6 and area 7 were discussed and the latest scientific advice for both.

The latest scores on Fishery Progress for the Irish Brown Crab FIP were discussed and initiatives that the FIP are involved in to maintain these scores.

### **Vessels Details Database**

The Irish FIP gave an overview of member management in the Irish FIPs. There is an online system for signing up to FIP plans and as new FIP requirements emerge these are sent out to members and their agreement sought to same if they wish to continue to be members of the FIP. An example would be where new FIP social policies were developed and these were circulated to all the members. These had to be accepted for the vessels to stay members of the relevant FIPs.

There is also a sanction policy in place with a range of sanctions if a vessel does something in contravention of the FIP rules. There is an appeals procedure for vessels if they take issue with something that has been decided. This system protects the FIPs themselves and also the FIP members.

### **Brown Crab Consultative Committee**

There has been a lack of management in the Irish Crab Fishery, something that the industry has been looking for action on for many years. In response to requests from the sector a Brown Crab Task Force was established. In the Autumn of 2025 two 3-day workshops were convened and this group put forward a set of recommendations to the Minister. One of the key recommendations was the establishment of the Brown Crab Management Consultative Committee. This group has now been formally set up, and participants from all the major representative groups have been appointed by the Minister. The Terms of Reference include a remit to develop management measures for the Fishery. The group is scheduled to meet late January or early February.

## **Social Risk Assessment**

The Irish FIP gave an overview of the work carried out on the Social Risk Assessment. This was carried out in Autumn 2024 and included interviews on vessels in the Brown Crab Fishery. The outcome of the assessment was that the Fishery is low risk in terms of social issues. However, the FIP Social Sub-group decided to implement a voluntary plan for 2025-26. This workplan includes carrying out an updated Social Risk Assessment. More vessel owners and crews will be interviewed and areas have been identified where new training will be carried out to support crew welfare.

## **The Southwest Sustainability Hub**

The UK participants gave an overview of the Southwest Sustainability Hub, which has just been set up in the UK. A person has been appointed under a 12-month contract and the sourcing funding to set up a number of FIPs is one of her responsibilities. Brown Crab will be one of the FIPs and the goal of the FIP will be to progress the Brown Crab Fishery to MSC in the coming years.

## **Sourcing**

There was a discussion around Crab being sourced from Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland and how this comes through the wholesalers and processors. Irish FIP Crab has strong sustainability credentials.