

[Ireland Area 7 prawn - trawl]

Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) Workplan

Table 1: Workplan Overview

Workplan Version and Date	Version 2 Dec 2024
Start date (expected)	End date (anticipated month/year)
2020	December 2027
FIP Lead (organization/individual responsible for Action Plan)	Improvements recommended by (meeting/group that supported the development)
Mike Fitzpatrick, Verifact	FIP Coordinators & FIP participants
FIP Coordinator (organization/individual responsible for reporting on FisheryProgress)	Workplan developed by (consultant or person)
Mike Fitzpatrick, Verifact	Mike Fitzpatrick, Frank Fleming & Ciara Dower, Verifact in consultation with Irish Prawn FIP members

Unit of Assessment(s)

Fill in the following table, which will be considered the scope against which the fishery is assessed against the MSC Fisheries Standard.

Table 2. Unit(s) of Assessment (UoA)

UoA 1	Description
Target species (common and scientific name)	Dublin Bay Prawn (<i>Nephrop norvegicus</i>)
Stock	Stocks within Irish EEZ
Geographical area	Within Irish EEZ

Fishing method or gear type	Bottom trawl
Fishing fleet or group of vessels, or individuals fishing operators pursuing stock	Irish fishing fleet targeting Prawns using bottom trawls

A pre-assessment under the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing was conducted for the fishery in August 2018. The pre-assessment report concluded that at this stage it is not recommended to move forward with a full MSC assessment. The main issues that this conclusion was based on were variations in levels of fishing effort relative to Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) across the fishery and a mismatch between management and scientific assessment units.

This workplan covers the period from September 2020 until August 2025. The FIP is scheduled to run until 2025. In early 2023 the degree of progress in implementing the tasks outlined here will be clear and a further workplan aimed at tackling any outstanding issues will be developed for the period from mid-2023 to 2025.

Principle 1: Stock Management

The pre-assessment found that in the Irish Sea, the Porcupine and the Labadie areas fishing mortality was at levels close to MSY but that in other Functional Units (FUs) including the Aran Grounds and the Smalls that fishing mortality levels were too high. The availability of data to enable the setting of harvest reference points was insufficient in some areas.

At a meeting held in 2019 with Marine Institute staff working on the Nephrops stock in Irish waters one of the main issues identified regarding stock assessment was a need to improve the level of observer coverage and data provision in the fishery.

Principle 3 Management System:

The MSC pre-assessment report identified one of the key problems under Principle 3 as the spatial inconsistency between scientific assessment and management with the associated risk of overfishing of individual functional units. The FIP will explore management approaches which will help to protect stocks in functional units. Previous proposals such as the North Sea Nephrops Long Term Management Plan will form a starting point. Approaches will be consistent with the North Western Waters Multi-Annual Plan.

FIP Actions

Table 3. Performance Indicator Action Plan Table for Action 1. Improving Fisheries data

<p>Action Number and Name (One sentence description)</p>	<p>1. Improve fisheries management data</p>
<p>Action Goal (One sentence that describe the result of the action)</p>	<p>To improve the scientific data available on all Irish prawn stocks through improved observer coverage and industry data collection</p>
<p>Action Description (Brief summary of the steps involved in the action and importance of the action in achieving the FIP objectives)</p>	<p>Task 1.1 In 2020, in collaboration with Marine Institute scientists, identify the main challenges to achieving MSY in the fishery and data gaps where industry data provision could assist (October 2020 to December 2020).</p> <p>Task 1.2 Set up a formal communication channel between the FIP and scientists so that the FIP has access to up-to-date information regarding issues such as fishing mortality levels across all Irish prawn stocks or functional units (October 2020 to June 2021).</p> <p>Task 1.3 Facilitate the development, with the fishing industry and Marine Institute scientists, of a program to enhance observer coverage levels and industry self-sampling initiatives in order to improve the quality of the scientific assessment (January 2021 to December 2023).</p> <p>Task 1.4 Collect data on observer trips and from an industry self-sampling program facilitated by FIP member vessels. Data collection in FU 16 (Porcupine) will be particularly emphasized due to the need for additional information on stock status there (January 2021 to December 2025).</p> <p>Task 1.5 Use the additional data collected to inform protection of stocks within individual functional units. (January 2022 to December 2026).</p>
<p>Expected Completion Date</p>	<p>December 2026</p>
<p>Priority (Based on the implementers criteria: e.g., lowest scoring issues are high priority or actions that are necessary to complete before beginning other actions are high priority)</p>	<p>Medium</p>

Estimated Cost (An estimate of the budget needed to complete the action)	€6,000
Responsible Parties (List of participants)	Verifact, BIM, Marine Institute, Industry representatives.
MSC Performance Indicator(s) Addressed by the Action (The MSC performance indicator(s) that are directly impacted by the action. The completion of the action is likely to result in an improved score change for these performance indicators)	1.2.1- Harvest strategy 1.2.2- Harvest control rules and tools 1.2.3- Information and Monitoring 1.2.4- Assessment of stock status

Table 4. Performance Indicator Action Plan Table for Action 2 Environmental impact of the fishery

Action Number and Name (One sentence description)	2. Improve management of individual prawn stocks
Action Goal (One sentence that describe the result of the action)	To use that information to inform the implementation of the best potential management systems which could protect functional units within an area VII-based approach.
Action Description (Brief summary of the steps involved in the action and importance of the action in achieving the FIP objectives)	<p>Task 2.1 In collaboration with industry, scientists and managers conduct an assessment of potential approaches to protecting functional units within an area VII-based approach (November 2020 – December 2022).</p> <p>Task 2.2 Work with management entities nationally and regionally to encourage the adoption of a Functional Unit protection approach with the greatest agreed potential for success. (January 2022 – December 2026).</p> <p>Task 2.3 Monitor implementation progress of the Functional Unit protection approach with scientists examining aspects such as fishing mortality within individual Functional Units (January 2022 – December 2027)</p>
Expected Completion Date	December 2027

Priority (Based on the implementers criteria: e.g., lowest scoring issues are high priority or actions that are necessary to complete before beginning other actions are high priority)	Medium
Estimated Cost (An estimate of the budget needed to complete the action)	€6,000
Responsible Parties (List of participants)	Verifact, BIM, Marine Institute, Industry representatives, Poseidon.
MSC Performance Indicator(s) Addressed by the Action (The MSC performance indicator(s) that are directly impacted by the action. The completion of the action is likely to result in an improved score change for these performance indicators)	1.1.1- Stock status outcome 1.1.2- Stock rebuilding outcome 3.2.1- Fishery-specific objectives 3.2.2- Decision-making processes

Principle 2: Minimising Environmental Impact

The pre-assessment report identified the poor stock status and high levels of bycatch of both Whiting in the Irish Sea and Cod in the Celtic Sea as problems for the prawn fishery under Principle 2.

Table 5. Performance Indicator Action Plan Table for Action 3 Unwanted Catches

Action Number and Name (One sentence description)	3. Reduce bycatches of Whiting and Cod in the prawn fishery
Action Goal (One sentence that describe the result of the action)	To improve knowledge and develop a strategy to reduce bycatches of Irish Sea Whiting and Celtic Sea Cod in the prawn fishery.
Action Description (Brief summary of the steps involved in the action and importance of the action in achieving the FIP objectives)	Task 3.1 Develop a program with the Irish fisheries development board (BIM) and the Marine Institute to collect baseline data on bycatches of Whiting and Cod in the prawn fishery (November 2020 – December 2026).

	<p>Task 3.2 FIP member vessels will participate in gear trials with BIM and industry will be informed of trial results (November 2020 –December 2027).</p> <p>Task 3.3 Uptake of gears with favourable bycatch results will be encouraged and incentivized, where possible with assistance from BIM (July 2021 – December 2025).</p> <p>Task 3.4 Whiting and Cod bycatch monitoring programs will be updated annually to assess the impact of technical measures on bycatch reduction (January 2022 – December 2027).</p> <p>Task 3.5 Work with the UK Nephrops FIP on the Irish Sea fishery which is common to both FIPs (January 2022 – December 2027).</p>
Expected Completion Date	December 2027
Priority (Based on the implementers criteria: e.g., lowest scoring issues are high priority or actions that are necessary to complete before beginning other actions are high priority)	High
Estimated Cost (An estimate of the budget needed to complete the action)	€6,000
Responsible Parties (List of participants)	Verifact, BIM, Marine Institute, Poseidon, Industry representatives.
MSC Performance Indicator(s) Addressed by the Action (The MSC performance indicator(s) that are directly impacted by the action. The completion of the action is likely to result in an improved score change for these performance indicators)	2.1.1- Primary species outcome 2.1.2- Primary species management 2.1.3- Primary species information

Table 6. Performance Indicator Action Plan Table for Action 4 Habitat

Action Number and Name (One sentence description)	4 Habitat impact of the fishery
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<p>Action Goal (One sentence that describe the result of the action)</p>	<p>To assess and monitor fishery impacts on Nephrops habitats.</p>
<p>Action Description (Brief summary of the steps involved in the action and importance of the action in achieving the FIP objectives)</p>	<p>Previously we did not address habitat PI's as we felt that they were beyond the scope of the FIP. However, we now feel that there is capacity to follow up on work undertaken by the Marine Institute on VME impacts of Nephrops fisheries in Irish waters and also actions taken by the UK Nephrops FIP and the MSC certified SFSAG Northern Demersal fishery on habitat outcomes in Nephrops fisheries.</p> <p>Task 4.1 Reporting on findings from Marine Institute work on VMEs and Irish Nephrops fisheries (December 2023 – December 2024).</p> <p>Task 4.2 Potential for extending approach taken in UK Nephrops FIP and MSC certified Northern demersal fishery to Irish Nephrops fisheries. This initial exercise will examine the extent to which conclusions reached in the UK case are applicable to Irish fisheries, some of which are in the same Functional Units (December 2023 - December 2025).</p> <p>Task 4.3 Define the scope of additional work required in order to report on habitat impacts in Irish fisheries (December 2023 – June 2026).</p>
<p>Expected Completion Date</p>	<p>June 2026</p>
<p>Priority (Based on the implementers criteria: e.g., lowest scoring issues are high priority or actions that are necessary to complete before beginning other actions are high priority)</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Estimated Cost (An estimate of the budget needed to complete the action)</p>	<p>€3,000</p>
<p>Responsible Parties (List of participants)</p>	<p>Verifact, BIM, Marine Institute, Poseidon, Industry representatives.</p>

<p>MSC Performance Indicator(s) Addressed by the Action (The MSC performance indicator(s) that are directly impacted by the action. The completion of the action is likely to result in an improved score change for these performance indicators)</p>	<p>2.4.2 Habitat management 2.4.3 Habitat information</p>
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Table 7. Performance Indicator Action Plan Table for Action 5 Ghost Gear

<p>Action Number and Name (One sentence description)</p>	<p>5. Ghost gear monitoring and management</p>
<p>Action Goal (One sentence that describe the result of the action)</p>	<p>Develop and implement strategy to monitor and manage ghost gear issues within the Nephrops fishery.</p>
<p>Action Description (Brief summary of the steps involved in the action and importance of the action in achieving the FIP objectives)</p>	<p>In preparation for the transition to Version 3 of the MSC standard we are creating a new action to investigate how the FIP can contribute to a Ghost Gear Monitoring and Management strategy for the Irish prawn fishery.</p> <p>Task 5.1 Compile a report on assessment of the extent to which ghost gear is a problem in the Nephrops fishery (December 2023 – December 2025).</p> <p>Task 5.2 Develop a FIP strategy to minimise and monitor ghost gear issues within the fishery on an ongoing basis (December 2023 – December 2026).</p> <p>Task 5.3 Involvement in current and projected projects in Ireland aimed at preparing for implementation of ghost gear relevant EU policies such as the Extended Producers Responsibility regulation (December 2023 – December 2027).</p>
<p>Expected Completion Date</p>	<p>December 2027</p>
<p>Priority (Based on the implementers criteria: e.g., lowest scoring issues are high priority or actions that are necessary to complete before beginning other actions are high priority)</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Estimated Cost</p>	<p>€3,000</p>

(An estimate of the budget needed to complete the action)	
Responsible Parties (List of participants)	Verifact, BIM, Marine Institute, Poseidon, Industry representatives.
MSC Performance Indicator(s) Addressed by the Action (The MSC performance indicator(s) that are directly impacted by the action. The completion of the action is likely to result in an improved score change for these performance indicators)	2.1.2 Primary species management 2.2.2 Secondary species management 2.3.2 ETP species management

Additional Impacts

Some FIPs include objectives that go beyond the MSC PIs. Please provide additional detail below on additional impacts that FIP stakeholders are working to address.

Clean Oceans Initiative

Describe the problems, goals and actions that will be implemented to ensure FIP traceability.

Addition Impact Title	FIP members will be encouraged to participate in the BIM Fishing For Litter/Clean Oceans initiative.
Status Summary	In Development
Improvement Recommendation	To reduce the litter and other environmental impacts from fishing activities through participation in a recognised Clean Oceans Programme.