



# Inshore Fisheries Forums Terms of Reference

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## *Scope*

Forums will focus on the management of inshore fisheries within 6 nautical miles.

Forums will not spend time on issues that do not have significant impact on inshore fisheries (for example, management of many offshore fisheries, social protection policy, etc).

## *Purpose of the Forums*

The Inshore Fisheries Forums will be consultative forums at which members will be representative of ‘the inshore sector’, fishermen using fishing boats of less than 12m overall length.

The National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF) provides a national platform on which each of the regional forums can interact with each other and with the Department and the marine agencies.

The Regional Inshore Fisheries Forums (RIF) provide formal engagement opportunities between inshore fishermen and other marine stakeholders.

The forum engagements are aimed at providing the inshore sector with effective opportunities to:

- develop and facilitate implementation of policies and initiatives relating to the sustainable management of inshore fisheries within six nautical miles, consistent with national and EU policies concerning fisheries management, sustainable development and protection of the marine environment;
- develop and facilitate implementation of measures designed to enable local fishermen, other fishermen who rely on local waters for their livelihood, and other persons with an interest to contribute to inshore fisheries management policies; and
- provide input to the development of national policies or positions which concern or affect inshore fisheries management.

## *Governance*

### **National**

The National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF) will consist of 2 delegates representing each of the Regional Inshore Forums (RIFs) and will appoint its own chair.

Where appropriate, a RIF may allow for alternates to represent particular inshore fisheries sectoral issues/plans being discussed at a meeting of the NIFF so long as this does not increase the number of delegates attending on behalf of the RIF.

The NIFF will be facilitated by the statutory bodies responsible for marine fisheries in Ireland, namely DAFM, BIM, SFPA and MI.

The NIFF will be an advisory forum, without statutory authority.

The NIFF may make recommendations on regional or national inshore fisheries management to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in accordance with the terms set out for Reaching a Position.

Delegates will ensure their regional forums are kept up to date on relevant activities and issues under discussion at the NIFF.

The out-of-pocket travel and accommodation expenses of delegates will be met by BIM.

### **Regional**

Each Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) will establish a Regional Inshore Forum (RIF) for its region as a sub group of the FLAG.

Each RIF will comprise no more than 12 members of which there will be at least one fisheries representative from the corresponding FLAG and at least one environmental representative.

Each RIF will select its own chair and vice-chair, both of whom will also act as delegates to the National Inshore Fisheries Forum.

Each RIF may make recommendations on inshore fisheries management to the NIFF in accordance with the terms set out for Reaching a Position.

BIM will provide administrative support to forums, including: organise meetings, prepare meeting agendas, draft meeting minutes and manage forum documents.

BIM will provide information and other resources where necessary to ensure that forum members are able to effectively participate and contribute to the functions of the forums.

The out-of-pocket travel and accommodation expenses of members of the RIFs will be met by BIM.

## Reaching a Position

When the forum is giving consideration to inshore fisheries management issues, the aim of the forum is to reach an agreed position. Where agreement cannot be reached, alternative options can be put forward at the initiative of the forum. Alternatively, the forum can choose to not make a recommendation in that instance.

A quorum will be reached when the Chair and three or more other participants are present. In the absence of a quorum, the Chair may decide to proceed as a sub-group, with outcomes circulated by email to absent members for their input or taken forward to the next meeting at which a quorum is formed.

Forums are not substitutes for statutory consultation. Forums, organisations represented on forums, and individual forum members can make submissions to statutory consultation processes.

The Marine Agencies are responsible for providing advice to the Minister on inshore fisheries management consistent with their functions.

The responsibility for making statutory fisheries management decisions remains with the Minister.

### Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

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inshore@agriculture.gov.ie  
www.agriculture.gov.ie

www.fishingnet.ie

### Marine Agencies

#### BIM

www.bim.ie

#### Marine Institute

www.marine.ie

#### SFPA

www.sfpa.ie

## Membership

Members of a RIF will be appointed by the corresponding FLAG for that region on the basis of:

- their ability to represent the views of the inshore sector,
- their knowledge of inshore fisheries, fish stocks, and fishing methods,
- their knowledge of relevant environmental legislation and
- their capacity to engage on fisheries and environmental management issues.

In appointing fisheries RIFF members, each FLAG must strive to make the membership representative of the FLAG region's geographical coverage and the characteristics of the region's inshore fleet and fisheries.

The FLAGs will advertise publicly to invite expressions of interest for membership on the RIFs.

The FLAGs will consider all applications for membership on the RIFs and also may approach appropriate individuals or organisations to seek applicants.

The FLAGs will ensure that two-thirds of each RIF's membership includes representatives of the inshore fisheries sector (this may include representatives of Producer Organisations). The FLAGs also will ensure that each RIF includes at least one member that represents environmental interests. The balance of the membership should include stakeholders from marine sectors other than fisheries, such as seafood processing/sales, marine leisure, marine tourism, environmental NGOs and community organisations.

Applicants must demonstrate support within their respective sector for their nomination to a forum.

The FLAGs will renew the Forum membership every three years in accordance with the terms above.

The NIFF will approve a Code of Conduct for Forum members.

## *Communication*

Meeting agendas, minutes and other relevant documents will be circulated to forum members via email.

Adopted minutes from a Forum meeting may be made publically available through prior agreement (majority consensus) of the forum.

Forum members and facilitators commit to maintaining confidentiality of discussions and deliberations to ensure the open and effective exchange of views (unless otherwise agreed in advance, and subject to the constraints of relevant legislation, including Freedom of Information Act and Access to Information on the Environment Regulations).

Communication by the forum in print media or online will be through prior agreement (majority consensus) of the forum. This does not prevent forum members making statements on their own behalf or on behalf of other organisations they represent so long as these statements are not attributed to the Forum.

## *Commitment to Participation*

Forum members and facilitators undertake a commitment to:

- respect the views of others;
- engage constructively;
- follow-up on agreements and complete tasks;
- acknowledge the statutory responsibilities of the Minister and the marine agencies;
- be willing to build consensus in order to achieve long-term sustainable inshore fisheries and good environmental status of the marine environment.