



The three factors identified by the NIFF and NIFA/NIFO joint submission (JS) have highlighted the lack of resilience in the inshore sector. This further reinforces the objectives of the Irish Inshore Fisheries Sector Strategy 2019-2023. To help as many inshore businesses as possible to survive economically the challenges of the next few months we need to look to a suite of measures that will brace the sector over the short and medium term while building the resilience of the sector in the longer term.

Below the potential mechanisms are explored and what the preferred outcomes from these are including some of the synergies that need to happen to maximise their benefits and avoid sticking plaster solutions.

Temporary Cessation of Fishing Activities EMFF Article 33

Despite very limited viable markets for lobster and brown crab members report that many operators are fishing at low or negative levels of profitability. It is likely that this is an effort to keep business operational in the short term while watching how things develop. Prices as low as €6/kg and €0.50/kg for lobster and crab respectively have been offered and reports suggest product is being stored in the anticipation of market recovery, by both fishers (live product) and processors/exporters. Without some form of action, it is likely this practise will become more common place while an increase in excess stored product is likely to further depress markets on re-emergence. A lack of organisation, management and financial action prevents this issue being addressed. Referring to the JS, lack of management was cited as a key issue for building resilience in the inshore sector to deal with future similar issues. Increasing debt in the sector as people can't meet their repayments is not an aim. Ideally a temporary cessation of fishing would allow the sector to regroup and work towards sustainable management structures.

Mutual funds for adverse climatic events and environmental incidents EMFF Article 35

Article 35 of Reg 508 of 2014 EMFF allows for the establishment of Mutual Funds. On a number of occasions there has been reference to this and still there has been no take up. There is now an appetite to investigate this and explore starting a fund on a scale appropriate to the inshore sector. This also provides an opportunity to protect the diversity the inshore sector affords to primary food production in coastal communities and is a unique opportunity to set up this fund and increase the resilience of fishermen for the future.

Innovation EMFF Article 26

UP 1, Article 26 Innovation, “new management and organisation systems” could allow for an incentivised participation in management dialogue. The sector has recognised that management is a key issue and the current crises in markets shifts the focus from fishing to how the resources is used most effectively. To promote strong collective structures support could be administered with a higher rate to recognised groups that work on management initiatives under conditions that would include reduction or cessation of fishing until market recovery tying in with Art33 or 35.

To inform management, data collection needs to be expanded and enhanced. Data collection would be carried out through limited fishing operations by trained fishers carrying out tagging/stock data collection specified by the Marine Institute.

Engagement with future capacity building in the sector is of importance at this time also and will lay the foundation for the resilience of the sector. Social distancing currently creates a barrier to this but may also require us to come up with solutions that may compliment outreach learning programmes which would stand to the sector in the long run.

Storage Aid EMFF Article 67

The challenge face by the inshore sector is that the vast amount of shellfish product, on which the sector is highly dependent is exported live to premium markets. While there is a limited capacity to use Storage aid for brown crab, shrimp (season closed until August) and perhaps some bivalve species depending on market demand as well as the lower value line caught whitefish and pelagic species there is also the reservation around further depressing the chances of regaining the markets as we transition back to full trade. If storage intervention is to be used for a limited selection of seafood products it needs to be orchestrated in tandem with a marketing initiative which act to mitigate the potential for a dampening effect of stockpiled seafood product on a re-emerging market. Storage intervention is likely to be of limited value to shellfish markets including lobster, spider crab, crayfish, velvet crab, prime fish or day caught small volumes of white fish or pelagic which might serve better to enable continued supply to local food chains at this time. In order to maintain the vital roles played in terms of supporting coastal communities, including National food production and food security we need help to target a national domestic market. In the short term this could be primed by donating seafood on a regular basis to the general public combined with a product awareness campaign but would also be a genuine effort to feed the population during a time of an unprecedented health and economic crisis.

Protection and restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems and compensation regimes in the framework of sustainable fishing activities EMFF Article 40

The engagement of the inshore sector with changing behaviours around marine litter and makes them well place to mobilise for waste collection on shores and beaches at appropriate social distancing. It is recognised that while social distancing is critical currently

social good projects are important for community spirit even if executed at an individual level.