

Decisions/action points from NIFF Meeting held on the 1st May 2020

1. Meeting with Minister Creed and other fishing representative organisations on the 29th April 2020

NIFF Chair gave a summary of the meeting she attended with Minister Creed and other fishing representatives on the 29th April 2020. She noted that it was as a very positive meeting and that all fisheries organisations were united in the need for a Scheme supporting the temporary cessation of fishing activity. There were positive and constructive discussions of all the issues and options and we hope to see this progress in the coming days.

Action Point: NIFF to discuss and amend as necessary West RIFF proposal on the temporary cessation of fishing activities and submit to the DAFM for consideration.

2. West RIFF proposal on a temporary cessation of fishing activities

All RIFFs were circulated the WRIFF proposal on temporary cessation of fishing activities before the NIFF meeting. This proposal is looking for the overheads of vessels to be covered while engaging in a temporary cessation of fishing activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NIFF chair clarified that this proposal could only work in conjunction with the €350 COVID-19 payment which is an essential lifeline for putting food on the table and in helping pay to run a household for fishing families. This payment in conjunction with the proposal is needed to keep fishing families and their vessels afloat. The NIFF went through the proposal in a step by step basis to gain consensus on each aspect of the proposal. The following areas were agreed and amended in the proposal as appropriate:

RIFFs overall support for the WRIFF proposal

The SW, NW, N and SERIFFs support the WRIFF proposal in principal with the NERIFF in support with conditions.

Voluntary or mandatory temporary cessation

The SW, SE, NW, W and NRIFFs all agreed that any temporary cessation should be voluntary. The NERIFF want a compulsory cessation for fishers fishing certain pot fisheries namely lobster, brown crab, velvet crab and whelk. **Action point:** NIFF decided that the proposal would go forward as a voluntary temporary cessation proposal.

Timeframe and start date of the proposal

The NW, N, NE and SERIFFs all agreed that the start date for the proposal should be 1st April 2020. The SWRIFF had not discussed setting a start date in the proposal but just wanted to get the best package for inshore fishers. The WRIFF was concerned that if you had been out fishing in April even for a day would the start date of the 1st April exclude you. **Action Point:** It was decided to change the start date to the 1st April for an initial 3-month period and that it is reviewed at the conclusion of the initial period and monthly thereafter.

Include/Omit Appendix 1 on Estimated cost breakdown of a possible temporary cessation scheme. After a long discussion and vote on including/omitting the estimated cost breakdown all RIFFs agreed that Appendix 1 should remain in the proposal with the

exception of the SWRIFF who felt it should be excluded. **Action point:** Appendix 1 to remain in the proposal.

Include/Omit 12-18m data line in table of Appendix 1

Action Point: It was decided that the data line for 12-18m vessels is removed from the table as the ToR of the Inshore Fisheries Forums only covers vessels up to 12m and that a sentence would be added clarify these costs. The last two sentences in appendix 1 under notes also to be removed.

Inclusion of a sentence in the introduction of the proposal on recognition of other marine sectors that sit on the RIFFs who are also struggling during the pandemic.

The NWRIFF proposed that a sentence acknowledging that other marine operators (processors, marine tourism operators) who sit on the RIFF in coastal communities have also been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. **Action Point:** It was agreed by the NIFF that a sentence acknowledging that other marine sectors in their coastal communities have been hit hard by the pandemic would be appropriate to add into the proposal in the introduction.

Overall Action Point: NIFF secretary to make amendments as agreed by the NIFF to the WRIFF proposal on the Temporary Cessation of Fishing Activities and submit to the DAFM by COB Friday 1st May 2020.

3. Lobster v-notching programme

The opening of the lobster v-notching programme was discussed. BIM stressed to the NIFF that the V-notching scheme is a conservation scheme not a market support scheme. It was noted that most of the vessels that have previously participated in the scheme are not out at sea yet however there is a lot of pressure around the coast to open the scheme. Prices quoted for lobster are very low at the present time. If the scheme was opened now the funding would be gone in 2-3 weeks. BIM have noted that they still intend to open the scheme at the appropriate time. **Action point:** It was recommended by the NIFF that the v-notching scheme should not be opened at the present time.

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