



Inshore Fisheries Forums
Fóraim Iascaigh Cois Cladaigh

Inshore Fisheries Forums

Terms of Reference

April 2025

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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.



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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 (RIFF) 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 (RIFFs) and will appoint its own chair.

Where appropriate, a RIFF 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 administered by BIM.

Regional

Each RIFF will comprise no more than 15 members with a minimum of 12 members. In appointing RIFF members, each RIFF must strive to make the membership representative of the RIFF's region's geographical coverage and the characteristics of the region's inshore fleet and fisheries.

Each RIFF will select its own chair and vice-chair triennial with the chair and one other member acting as delegates to the National Inshore Fisheries Forum.

Each RIFF 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 RIFFs will be administered by BIM.



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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.

Where there are up to 13 members in a RIFF a quorum will be reached when the Chair and three or more other participants are present. Where there are 14 or 15 members in a RIFF a quorum will be reached when the chair and 4 or more 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.

Membership

Members of a RIFF will be appointed 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 RIFF must strive to make the membership representative of the RIFF's region's geographical coverage and the characteristics of the region's inshore fleet and fisheries.

Where required the RIFFs will advertise publicly to invite expressions of interest for membership on the RIFFs.

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

The RIFFs will ensure that two-thirds of each RIFF's membership includes representatives of the inshore fisheries sector. The RIFFs also will ensure that each RIFF 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 aquaculture, marine tourism/leisure, community organisations (including islands) and seafood processing/sales.

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

RIFF members shall be appointed for a three year period and may serve as many consecutive three year terms as they wish once they have been re-nominated by their respective sector at each RIFF renewal.

All members will abide by the Code of Conduct approved by the NIFF.



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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.

Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine

National Seafood Centre, Clogheen,
Clonakilty, Co. Cork, P85 TX47

023 8859500

inshore@agriculture.gov.ie

www.agriculture.gov.ie

www.fishingnet.ie

Marine Agencies

BIM

Crofton Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, A96 E5A0

www.bim.ie

Marine Institute

Renville, Oranmore, Co. Galway, H91 R673

www.marine.ie

SFPA

Clogheen, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, P85 TX47

www.sfpa.ie



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