

# SCOTTISH REGIONAL INSHORE FISHERIES GROUPS

## OUTLINE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

### Introduction

1. Development of a network of Inshore Fisheries Groups in Scotland has resulted in a regional structure being established by Marine Scotland. Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups (RIFGs) will be the main route for engagement between commercial fishermen and Marine Planning Partnerships and encompass elements of industry-instigated management initiatives in the Shetland, Orkney and Outer Hebrides, together with the West Coast and North & East Coast of the mainland.

2. National management initiatives will continue to be discussed with industry through the Inshore Fisheries Management and Conservation Group (IFMAC). It should be recognised that any new legislative provisions or alterations to existing fisheries management legislation or processes in Scotland will continue to be subject to guidance and full public consultation by Marine Scotland.

3. The introduction of RIFGs links with the 2015 Scottish Government Inshore Fisheries Strategy which encompasses some broader aspects of the development of sustainable inshore fisheries:

[www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/InshoreFisheriesStrategy](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/InshoreFisheriesStrategy).

4. The Marine Scotland “Vision” for inshore management and working with the fishing industry is outlined in Annex A. The objective and aims for the development of inshore fisheries are identified in Annex B and all activities and management initiatives are expected to be guided by these in conjunction with the 2015 Inshore Strategy. It should be noted that in Shetland and Orkney different administrative systems have developed, however the overarching Marine Scotland aims and objective for inshore fisheries remain the same for all Scottish areas.

### Regional IFG Operational Structure

5. The Chairs and Outreach Officers will be retained on the basis of their engagement with RIFG operations and working with the inshore fishing industry.

6. RIFG management committee meetings will be held on an approximately quarterly basis at a chosen location agreed by the Chair and the committee. The structure of the RIFG network, its operation and remit are further outlined in Annex C.

7. The RIFG management committee with administrative support will be responsible for bringing forward, maintaining and approving a regional Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) detailing the agreed actions which the RIFG will seek to achieve and describing the activities, operational areas and economic significance of local fisheries. The regional Fisheries Management Plan may be geographically sub-

divided to recognise the Scottish Marine Regions (SMRs) and associated Marine Planning Partnerships (MPPs) operating within the RIFG boundaries.

8. The Chair of the RIFG will have the responsibility of relaying and promoting the contents and management provisions of the management committee approved regional Fisheries Management Plan within the MPP process at local or national levels and within other venues such as the Inshore Fisheries Management and Conservation Group (IFMAC).

9. In order to ensure engagement with the local fishing industry throughout the RIFG area the Chair will be encouraged to hold local meetings with active fishermen and to facilitate the implementation of initiatives and partnership working with relevant agencies.

### **Subcommittees and Work Groups Formation**

10. Where RIFG Management Committee members agree that a geographic Subcommittee may be formed for the purpose of allowing local fisheries interests to inform the RIFG on specific area measures or developments to improve or manage the fishery including the Fisheries Management Plan the Chair may establish and facilitate such Subcommittees. Subcommittee areas may also coincide with marine planning partnership areas or other area related forums relevant to the RIFG. Any measure or proposal raised by a Subcommittee will be discussed and reviewed by the RIFG Management Committee.

11. Where the RIFG or any Subcommittee thereof wishes to form a Work Group for the purpose of discussing or implementing specific fisheries measures aimed at improving the fishery either on a geographic or species specific basis the Chair will have the ability to convene a Work Group. Membership of Work Groups will be at the discretion of the Chair. They may be time limited based on the issues being addressed and outcomes will not be taken in isolation but will require to be considered for adoption by the Management Committee within the RIFG Fisheries Management Plan. The Chair will be responsible for ensuring the RIFG Management Committee is kept advised of all Work Group meetings and discussions, thereby ensuring that no member's views are excluded, even if they are not selected to participate in the Work Group itself. Where a Work Group may wish to seek RIFG project funds to develop any of the work streams which it is engaged with the request would be discussed and if agreed made through the RIFG Management Committee.

## ANNEX A

### Marine Scotland Inshore Fisheries Management “Vision” for RIFGs

1. Scottish Government through the adoption of the National Marine Plan (NMP) has set out a framework to ensure all stakeholders in the marine environment are recognised and activities managed for the benefit of the Nation.
2. Scottish Government recognises the role of the Scottish inshore fishing industry and the place it occupies as a key stakeholder within the NMP and Scottish Marine Region (SMR) marine planning process. To enable the Scottish inshore fishing industry to fulfil the potential identified within the NMP, Marine Scotland will ensure support structures are in place to allow all licensed fishermen to have an input into the marine planning process while encouraging sustainable fisheries and the maintenance of associated dependant coastal communities.
3. In seeking to engage inshore fishermen in this process Marine Scotland will continue to develop partnerships with the fishing industry and all key stakeholders to consider and act upon evidence allowing sustainable exploitation of fish stocks while maintaining the integrity of the marine environment. Such engagement will occur at the most appropriate geographic scale either local, regional or national to recognise the characteristics of the fishing industry prosecuting the fishery and the nature of the fish stocks concerned. The provisions made within the Scottish Government 2015 Inshore Fisheries Strategy will guide this process:  
[www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/InshoreFisheriesStrategy](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/InshoreFisheriesStrategy).
4. Marine Scotland considers that in the first instance in all cases a voluntary partnership approach is the most appropriate to help resolve fishery management issues. Scottish inshore fishermen are recognised as a key component bringing forward practical evidence of conditions encountered within any fishery. In conjunction with this scientific assessments may be required to allow sufficient evidence for management decisions to be made. Such assessments would be considered to be guided by and undertaken in partnership with the commercial fishing industry likely to be impacted. Where necessary Marine Scotland will bring forward statutory provisions in order to support the attainment of sustainably managed fisheries.
5. The support structure developed by Marine Scotland is focused on the engagement with the local fishing industry through a network of RIFGs. Where other local initiatives (either statutory or voluntary) have been implemented Marine Scotland will seek to ensure that they meet their Key Objective and Aims for the management of Scottish inshore fisheries (Annex B) and are viewed as part of the Scottish network for managing inshore fisheries.
6. The inshore fisheries groupings in the management network are expected to be open for engagement by all commercial fishermen either independent or represented by Fishermen’s Associations. Representation within this process is voluntary and the agenda will be set by fishermen who have a stake in the fishery or

fishing activity under consideration. Such discussions will be supported by expert advice from government bodies and agencies with NGOs and other stakeholders also expected to contribute where appropriate.

7. RIFGs will be resourced to enable a regional Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) to be developed for their respective area. Industry will be expected to contribute their views to such plans as a way of establishing the importance of local fisheries to the dependent coastal community and to put forward views to sustain the fishery and associated natural environment. The plan will be a living document which will represent fisheries interests within the Marine Planning Partnership (MPP) for the area. The plan will be expected to inform other stakeholder sectors of the importance of marine fisheries within a region.

8. Marine Scotland recognises that not all sectors of the fishing industry or all individuals within a region will wish to contribute to the work of a RIFG. Such a position is accepted but the principle of open access for licensed fishermen to a RIFG (or other local management decision bodies within the inshore network such as a regulated fishery or voluntary management agreement) will be maintained and all fisheries related matters are expected to have been actively considered by a RIFG (or within the RIFG network) before they will be progressed by Marine Scotland or through possible wider public consultation. Equally Marine Scotland may bring forward fisheries management provisions either voluntary or statutory which may impact the fisheries within a RIFG area also acknowledging any considerations of the national industry co-management body IFMAC. It is recognised by Marine Scotland that not all RIFGs will have the potential to develop at the same rate due to local circumstances. The maturity of a group within the inshore management network will not disadvantage it in terms of support offered by Marine Scotland where the Key Objective and Aims of Marine Scotland are sought to be achieved at a local level by active engagement of licensed fishermen.

9. In the short term support for RIFGs will include the provision by Marine Scotland of a Chairperson. Under such guidance it is anticipated that where local fisheries management issues are raised by industry they will be discussed and where agreed by the RIFG management committee, will be identified within a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for the RIFG area. The FMP will be the primary basis upon which the fisheries interests within the area to which it relates will be represented to the respective Scottish Marine Region (SMR) Marine Planning Partnership (MPP).

10. Marine Scotland would wish to see the RIFGs and the inshore management network progressively develop with time. The requirement for an evidence base to be established and to be used to inform fisheries management decisions is linked to both local and national priorities. Collection of information by industry as part of day to day activities is seen as fundamental to maintaining a relevant resource for use by industry and government. Marine Scotland will facilitate the collation and storage of such information within the inshore fisheries management network and such information will be used for public benefit.

11. RIFGs in the short to medium term should be in a position to identify where strategic support is required to progress actions within their fisheries management plans. Marine Scotland will seek to support the implementation of the management measures through initiatives in partnership with the RIFGs and local funding partners. In-house resources will be deployed to facilitate the delivery of targeted interventions such as stock assessments, fisheries monitoring, technical advice, and the compilation of fisheries data to support management decisions etc. The RIFGs depending on state of maturity would also be encouraged to bring forward joint working proposals with others within the RIFG network.

12. In the medium term some RIFGs may wish to consider an internal governance structure which would permit joint partnership working with other bodies out with of Marine Scotland. Formal engagement with local academic institutions and potentially commissioning private sector research could be agreed within the RIFG and endorsed by Marine Scotland with the RIFG seeking co-funding agreements through other stakeholders. There are a range of opportunities for co-funding research and development proposals through structural funding programmes such as EMFF and also linking to local groupings such as FLAG / LEADER, Local Government initiatives and the private sector.

13. The Marine Scotland longer term vision for the governance of RIFGs recognises that industry engagement with the inshore fisheries management process is based on the delivery of outputs which improve the sustainability of individual fishing activities with resultant benefits for dependent communities. The fundamental principle of devolved management is that access to the marine resource should remain unrestricted where possible, subject to the sustainability of stocks and the supporting natural environment. As a general principle, RIFGs should not seek to constrain access to local fisheries but facilitate the maximum number of individuals to participate in the economic activity of commercial fishing. It is recognised however that for the management of stock, environmental reasons, and to help mitigate conflict, some restrictions may be necessary in local areas from time to time. For RIFGs in partnership with Scottish Government to achieve delivery of sustainable fisheries management there will need to be clear ownership of the process by those actually prosecuting the fisheries as their prime fishery. Such "ownership" can be achieved at a range of levels. With respect to the governance of the RIFG itself in order to ensure public accountability decision making must be transparent. Equally those taking decisions need to be accountable and responsible. There are a range of mechanisms which may be able to deliver such an approach one being the formation of a Community Enterprise Company, other examples already in operation are the Orkney Sustainable Fisheries model with a board of directors drawn from members, or the more formal Regulated Fishery Order

approach used by Shetland and subject to Ministerial approval and scrutiny. With developing maturity of individual RIFGs Marine Scotland would wish for coastal communities to explore the full range of options available.

## **ANNEX B**

### **Marine Scotland Key Objective and Aims for Inshore Fisheries Management**

#### **Key Objective**

To deliver sustainable use of the natural resource recognising national and international obligations, and safeguarding fish stocks while optimising the economic return for inshore fisheries and dependent communities.

#### **Aims**

- I. To encourage fishermen to take an active interest in the management of fish stocks and fisheries through their commercial activities.
- II. To encourage fishermen to identify issues impacting their local fisheries and bring forward workable management solutions, including identifying any development opportunities.
- III. To encourage fishermen to work with Marine Scotland in seeking to develop workable management solutions where necessary through legislative provisions.
- IV. To encourage fishermen to participate and utilise the support structure available through the RIFG network.
- V. To encourage fishermen to contribute to the compilation of a localised evidence base to support stock management, fisheries management decision making and for marine planning purposes.
- VI. To encourage individual fishermen to participate in evidence gathering trials aimed at improving local or national understanding of Scottish inshore fisheries or fish stocks.
- VII. To encourage fishermen to bring forward and view local fisheries issues as part of a wider network of management through Marine Planning Partnerships and national bodies such as IFMAC.
- VIII. To encourage fishermen to recognise the ecosystem approach to fisheries management and the protection of the natural environment.

## ANNEX C

### Regional IFG Structure

1. The RIFGs will comprise (1a):

- Outer Hebrides
- West Coast
- North & East Coast and;

The associated network groups undertaking inshore management functions in (1b):

- Orkney
- Shetland

These RIFGs will be expected to operate local management initiatives which meet the Key Objective and Aims of Marine Scotland (Annex B). In the context of (1b) specific fisheries interest groups Marine Scotland will determine arrangements for the coverage of all commercial fish stocks encompassed in their operational region.

2. In terms of the provisions of the National Marine Plan (NMP) these 5 regional groupings will be expected to maintain a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for their respective region both to inform the Scottish Marine Region (SMR) Marine Planning Partnership (MPP) process and be informed by the NMP.

3. Marine Scotland will appoint a Chair for each of the (1a) RIFG groups and support the functioning of the lead official of the (1b) groups in terms of their engaging with the inshore fisheries management network. Support for the groups will facilitate their effective functioning for both fisheries management and marine planning partnership purposes.

### Regional IFG Management Committee

4. The (1a) RIFGs will each have a Management Committee (MC) which will meet around 4 times per year. The Chair will provide reasonable notice and an agenda for any MC meeting, conduct all MC meetings and have access to administrative support to minute and facilitate each meeting. Outcomes of RIFG management committee meetings will be subject to a minute and recorded on the RIFG website hosted by Marine Scotland.

5. The following representatives will be invited to attend all MC meetings:

#### Fishing industry members

These will be seen as the key stakeholders for the development of fisheries management provisions. Other parties will have the opportunity to advise discussions.



- All fishing industry representatives (Fishermen's Associations; Independent Fishermen; commercial hand gatherers; seafood processors and distributors having commercial activities linked to the fisheries under consideration).

#### Marine stakeholders

- Relevant stakeholders by invitation of Chair and ad hoc; Sea Angling Federation; District Salmon Fisheries Board and Fisheries Trusts; salmon netting interests; Scottish Wildlife LINK; whale and dolphin conservation interests etc.

#### Project delivery partners

- Seafish / Seafood Scotland
- Local Government officials
- Coastal Fora and Coastal Partnership officers
- Development Agencies and training providers
- FLAG / LEADER project officers
- Regional Marine Planning Partnership

#### Government and agency sponsored representatives

- Regional Outreach Officers
- MS Policy, Science and Compliance officials (as appropriate)
- SNH representatives (plus ad hoc. SEPA, FSS)

### **Possible Regional IFG Executive Board**

6. Dependent on the maturity of the RIFG and the desire to improve governance arrangements regarding financial management or the delivery of projects the management committee may wish to establish an Executive Board. The Executive Board would be overseen by the RIFG Chair and structured to meet the needs of the individual RIFG. The decision to establish an Executive Board would rest with the management committee of the RIFG.

7. Where projects are to be delivered by a RIFG this will either be reliant on an individual or joint funding partner undertaking the necessary financial and liability controls, or the Executive Board constituting itself to be able to provide such cover and public accountability. It is not envisaged that the RIFG will establish a liability for fixed assets but in delivering projects would wish to guard against liabilities to those engaged on the Executive Board.

8. Marine Scotland will provide advice to the RIFG and approve the formation of any appropriate Executive Board structure, formally constituted and based on an outline of:

- Limited number of meetings per year
- RIFG Chair to conduct meetings
- Provision of administrative support for Minute and correspondence
- Appropriate public accountability
- MS Sea Fisheries representatives as standing members

### **Regional IFG Management Committee Subcommittees and Work Groups**

9. The Regional Management Committee can opt to operate a geographic Subcommittee structure for the purpose of engaging with local members but also for other area based purposes such as marine planning partnerships. It is likely that the Subcommittees will comprise members who may be members of the Management Committee but will also include other participants. Any Subcommittee will inform the Management Committee of issues and measures including in relation to the development and delivery of the Fisheries Management Plan.

10. Work Groups can be established either by the Management Committee or by a Subcommittee for the purpose of dealing with an issue that requires greater input and investigation than might reasonably be resolved by a Management Committee or Subcommittee meeting. Work Groups may comprise Management Committee members, Subcommittee Members or locally based fishermen and others dependent upon the issue being reviewed. The Chair will have discretion in determining Work Group membership and in defining the specific remit of the Work Group in consultation with the Management Committee/Subcommittee. The Chair will report at Management Committee or Subcommittee meetings on the considerations and progress of Work Groups, ensuring those members not selected for Work Groups have the opportunity to consider its findings. Together with local fishing industry representation the Chair will have the ability to invite relevant advisory members, outreach officers and Marine Scotland or other agency officials to support discussions.

11. A Work Group may be used as a route to ensure issues relating to a local fishery will be given substantive consideration by the RIFG and through consideration by the Management Committee recognised within the RIFG Fisheries Management Plan. Where any Work Group proposals or management interventions warrant action the option will exist for the Management Committee to identify the proposals within the RIFG Fisheries Management Plan. Proposals from any Work Group will not be taken independently of the Management Committee or the agreed Fisheries Management Plan. Should the Work Group wish to make recommendations regarding any matter pertaining to visiting (nomadic) vessels, the Chair should take reasonable steps to ensure those affected vessels and/or their association representative are informed as soon as feasible and they are represented at the Management Committee or Subcommittee considering the Work Group proposal. Where a Work Group may wish to seek RIFG project funds to develop any of the work streams which it is engaged with the request would be discussed and if agreed made through the RIFG Management Committee.

## Regional IFG Operational Remits

12. RIFGs will have regard to the Scottish National Marine Plan and the process of regional marine management introduced within Scottish Marine Regions, through the formation of Marine Planning Partnerships. Where a RIFG has a responsibility to inform a SMR Marine Planning Partnership the offshore boundary of the RIFG will be co-terminus with the SMR boundary (12 nm) for fisheries information purposes. If no MPP exists within a SMR the RIFG boundary within the SMR will be retained at 6 nm.

13. RIFGs are noted to be a constituent element of the Scottish Government Inshore Fisheries Strategy 2015 and RIFGs are expected to work in partnership with Marine Scotland to contribute to the successful delivery of this strategy at local, regional and national levels.

14. The remit of a RIFG specifically relates to:

- The development and implementation of regional plans and initiatives concerning the management and conservation of fish stocks and associated inshore fisheries together with the natural environment upon which they depend.
- The maintenance of economically viable fishing opportunities within a region and recognising the wider Scottish perspective of supporting sustainable fishing communities.
- The formulation and implementation of initiatives to conserve and sustainably exploit stocks of shellfish and finfish within regional waters taking account of wider stock conservation requirements and natural resource pressures.
- The recognition that resident and non-resident fishermen who rely on access to fishing areas and those down-stream of fisheries landings (processors and distributors) together with other interested parties have a role to play in the management process.
- The engagement with other bodies and organisations having an interest in the development of inshore fisheries and the monitoring and conservation of the natural environment upon which they depend.
- The development of improved economic returns from fisheries landings through optimisation of catch quantity/quality and identification of market opportunities.
- The generation of fishing activity based evidence and participation within formal “science based” programmes of fisheries monitoring, stock and environmental assessments.
- The engagement with the regional marine planning process and defining the social and economic importance of fisheries within the region together with key natural and infrastructure resources required to sustain fishing activities.

- The support of national management measures for inshore fisheries through engagement with Marine Scotland and the co-management IFMAC group.

15. The primary Objective will be for each RIFG to formulate an agreed Fisheries Management Plan for their region. The plan will be the basis upon which the representation of fishing activities and interests within a region are made publicly available. Such a document will serve to identify and formalise the distribution and conservation status of fish stocks, together with areas of importance for fisheries, fisheries related development opportunities and any requirements for management. The target will be for all RIFGs to have an initial regional Fisheries Management Plan lodged with Marine Scotland by early 2017. Updates to each plan would be accepted on an on-going basis with plans and supporting documents linked and lodged on the RIFG website maintained by Marine Scotland.

16. Operation of a RIFG will be through the appointed Chair who will determine the frequency of meetings based on industry requests and conduct meetings on the following lines:

#### Management Committee Meetings

- The Chair will circulate agenda notification and any papers to all fishermen or their representatives sufficiently in advance to permit discussion of any issues by fishermen before attending a meeting. Inclusion of agenda items will be at the discretion of the Chair and will be requested from all fishing industry members. Marine Scotland will have the ability to submit specific agenda items. All fishermen and their representatives who wish to be involved with the RIFG should lodge their contact details with the RIFG administration.
- The Chair will seek to ensure that all inshore fishermen from all sectors have the chance to engage with the RIFG regardless of the size of Association or lack of one. It will be the decision of the Chair in the context of ensuring delivery of a meeting whether individual fishermen are invited to attend as observers or participate in discussions.
- The Chair will maintain a standing invitation to representative bodies and officials (Marine Scotland and agencies). Marine stakeholder groups will be invited to attend at the discretion of the Chair and engaged as observers or participants as deemed appropriate by the Chair. The Chair will also have discretion to invite any other parties to make representations to the Management Committee.
- Marine Scotland will retain the right to determine any appeals relating to exclusion of individuals or organisations and observer or participant status granted by the Chair.
- The Chair may ask the MC members to nominate a suitable Deputy Chair for a defined period for the purpose of representing the RIFG Fisheries Management Plan proposals to other interested parties including any MPP, or to engage with a RIFG Work Group.

- The Chair may determine to convene time-limited subject or area specific Work Groups selecting relevant stakeholders and project delivery partners as appropriate.
- The Chair will seek to reach decisions through consensus but objections and the identity of those objecting will be recorded in the meeting Minute on request.
- The Chair will have discretion to determine if all interested parties are sufficiently represented at a MC meeting to allow a decision impacting the fisheries management plan to be implemented or if it should be referred to a subsequent MC meeting.
- Approved minutes of MC meetings and all papers will be made available on the RIFG website along with the current Fisheries Management Plan for the region.

#### Executive Board Meetings

- The Chair will convene an Executive Board meeting where the RIFG Management Committee propose a project or wish to undertake work which may result in a governance or personal liability issue. The structure of the Executive Board will be dependent on the will of the MC to form such a Board and/or the willingness of project funding partners to directly account for any liabilities associated with the funding and delivery of projects for the benefit of the RIFG.
- The fishing industry should be represented on the Executive Board with members appointed from the MC membership and responsible to the MC.
- The functioning of the Executive Board will be dependent on the governance structure selected by funding partners. The Chair will ensure appropriate transparency and public accountability in line with the wider remit of the functioning of a RIFG.