

# National Fishermen's Development Group (NFDG) Terms of Reference

## *Scope*

The NFDG will focus on practical and operational issues that relate to fishermen.

The NFDG will not discuss management or structural issues such as quota management, fleet policy, licensing etc.

## *Purpose of the NFDG*

The NFDG will be a consultative forum at which members will be representative of 'the fishing industry', fishermen operating vessels of all sizes and from all sectors (i.e. polyvalent, pelagic and inshore) and provide feedback and information to the Producer Organisations, the NIFF/RIFF and the wider fishing industry.

The main objective of the NFDG is to provide a mechanism to allow dialogue between practising fishermen on a range of "grassroots" issues relating to fishing operations. Specifically, the NFDG aims to provide a platform to:

- Facilitate discussion between fishermen on technical, practical and business issues that impact on the day-to-day running of fishing vessels
- Facilitate the provision of expert advice on relevant issues including on new and existing rules and regulations
- Allow fishermen to share information and experiences with new technology and innovations that can improve fishing
- Promote a positive image of the Irish fishing industry.

## *Governance*

The NFDG will consist of two representatives from each of the 4 POs; two seats each from the NIFF and NIFA representing the inshore sector; and 4 seats for non-PO/non-NIFF/NIFA fishermen. All participants should be practising fishermen. Participation would be on rotational basis with a term of two years. The 4 non-PO/non-NIFF/NIFA representatives would be selected by the other members on the basis of expressions of interest received. The NFDG would appoint its own independent chair.

Where appropriate, alternates to represent particular sectoral issues/plans being discussed at a meeting or where the nominated representative from a PO or NIFF/NIFA was not available or would be allowed.

The NFDG will be facilitated by BIM.

The NFDG will work on an advisory basis, without statutory authority.

The NFDG may make recommendations on issues to the POs, NIFF/NIFA and to the wider industry through agreed communication channels.

The out-of-pocket travel and accommodation expenses of participants will be met by BIM on completion of a claim for expenses.

## *Reaching a Position*

When the NFDG is giving consideration to 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 NFDG. Alternatively, the NFDG 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.

## *Membership*

Members of the NFDG will be appointed by the corresponding POs, NIFF/RIFF and on the basis of expressions of interest from non-PO/NIFF/NIFA members.

In appointing participants, each PO and the NIFF/NIFA must strive to make the membership representative of the fishing industry both sectorally and regionally.

BIM will advertise publicly to invite expressions of interest for membership of the NFDG.

The NFDG will consider all expressions of interest from non-affiliated members and also may approach appropriate individuals to seek applicants in the event that the number of non-affiliated members is less than 4.

The NFDG will renew membership every two years in accordance with the terms above.

The NFDG will approve a Code of Conduct for members.

## *Communication*

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

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

NFDG 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 NFDG 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 NFDG.

## *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; and
- refrain from raising issues outside the scope of the NFDG.