

## REGIONAL INSHORE FISHERIES GROUPS

### OUTLINE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

#### Outline

1. The Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups (RIFG)s are an area-specific network established by Marine Scotland as a body to work with fishers and Marine Scotland to improve the sustainable management of inshore fisheries.
2. RIFGs are non-statutory advisory bodies designed to give fishers (who operate within 12 nautical miles of the coast) a strong voice in inshore fisheries management and wider marine planning matters, and a forum to outline and develop plans for fisheries improvement.
3. Scotland has six Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups where fishers and their representatives can come together to explore fisheries management challenges. The regions are:
  - 1) Outer Hebrides
  - 2) Orkney
  - 3) Shetland
  - 4) North and East Coast
  - 5) North West Coast
  - 6) South West Coast
4. A Chairperson for each of these six regions will be appointed for an initial period of January 2023 to June 2024 to act as a fair, impartial and credible representative for inshore fishing businesses of all sizes within each region, and to work proactively to expand and promote the network. As set out in our 2020-2030 Fisheries Management Strategy delivery plan, we intend to undertake a review of the network in 2024.
5. In addition, each Chair will be expected to represent their region and the overall network at the relevant Fisheries Management and Conservation (FMAC) Working Groups and other national forums as appropriate.
6. Though autonomous, the RIFG network will be expected to orientate its activities in a manner that reflects the national endeavours of the Scottish Government / Marine Scotland as set out by our [2020-2030 Fisheries Management Strategy](#), its [delivery plan](#) and [Our Blue Economy Vision](#).
7. We recognise that there are some situations in which separate administrative systems have been developed (such as the [Shetland Islands Regulating Order](#)) but we expect the overarching aims to remain the same for all areas, and for the RIFGs to complement existing forums.
8. **Organisational Structure**

The Chairs will be retained on the basis of their engagement with RIFG operations and working with the inshore fishing industry. Quarterly meetings will be held between each Chair and a representative of Marine Scotland in order to review objectives. The intention of this is to offer support, ensure alignment with strategic objectives and to ensure value

from public money.

9. Meetings with the RIFG Management Committee and relevant invitees from any Partner Organisations are at the Chair's discretion, and a meeting once per quarter is considered a suitable frequency. The Chair will provide reasonable notice and an agenda for any meeting, conduct all meetings and provide administrative support to minute and facilitate each.
10. RIFG Management Committee' refers to the regional Chair and any key stakeholders (fishers, processors and representatives of fishing businesses) who have identified themselves and the nature of their business.
11. 'Partner Organisations' refers to organisations formally connected to governance of the marine and coastal area, including but not limited to:
  - 1) Seafood Scotland
  - 2) Nature Scot
  - 3) Local authorities
  - 4) Food Standards Scotland
  - 5) Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
12. The Chair is expected to deliver updates to Marine Scotland and the other five national Chairs at virtual meets once every 2-3 months. Similarly, there will be a meeting with the Minister at least once a year.
13. The Chair should maintain a standing invite to a representative within Science, Compliance and Policy arms of Marine Scotland.
14. Where deemed necessary and without causing conflict of interest, the Chair may appoint a Secretary with whom to conduct RIFG functions.
15. Working Groups can be formed under the Chair covering limited geographic scope or targeted towards a specific fisheries management issue and may be time limited or ongoing. Where a Working Group seeks to bring forward specific proposals, discussion and agreement must also occur within the wider RIFG Committee.

### **Operational Remit**

16. In line with provisions of Scotland's National Marine Plan, FFM Delivery Plan, and Blue Economy Vision, the RIFG Chair, with input from the Management Committee will be responsible for developing a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) detailing, agreed actions, forward planning and areas of operational / economic significance. An annual substantive review will be expected to ensure its alignment with Scottish Government strategies.
17. The FMP may be geographically sub-divided according to the nature of overlapping fisheries, distinct sectors of the fleet or boundaries imposed by other initiatives (Marine Planning Partnership, Fishery Office district, geographical boundary, etc).
18. It should be noted that this FMP is regional, non-statutory and distinct to the current UK-wide development of species-specific FMPs.
19. An annual budget will be made available for development of short-term RIFG-led

projects. These will be considered via a set application process and will prioritise work that aligns with the national endeavours set out in Scottish Government strategic documents.

20. The Chair should be engaged in pursuing alternative sources of funding with delivery partners to progress relevant project opportunities, such as Marine Fund Scotland, Fisheries Innovation Scotland and UK Seafood Fund.
21. The Chair will be expected to engage in active efforts to reach and engage with fishers and fishing businesses throughout their area. If assistance with this is required Marine Scotland will facilitate Officers within Compliance to help with outreach and networking.

### **Strategic Vision**

22. Scottish Government recognises the role of the Scottish inshore fishing industry and the place it occupies as a key stakeholder within the [National Marine Plan](#) (NMP).
23. Our Fisheries Management Strategy acknowledges the intent to continue working with our stakeholders using established groups such as the RIFG to contribute to the successful delivery of this strategy at local, regional and national levels.
24. Marine Scotland recognises that not all sectors of the fishing industry or all individuals within a region will wish to contribute to an RIFG. This position is accepted but the principle of open access for licensed fishers to be on a RIFG will be maintained and all fisheries related matters are expected to have been actively considered by it before they will be progressed by Marine Scotland.
25. Marine Scotland considers that in the first instance voluntary co-management approaches are the most appropriate in resolving many fisheries issues and can be used as an indicator of workability.
26. In circumstances where a strong rationale can be established and subject to consultation, Marine Scotland will implement statutory provisions in order to support the attainment of sustainably managed fisheries.
27. Marine Scotland expect discussion on fisheries issues, to be predominantly driven by the active fishers who rely on these resources. Their representation within this process is voluntary, and there is no right of veto or votes cast at the Management Committee. Such discussions will be supported by Government, Partner Organisations and where appropriate, academia.
28. In situations where scientific evidence to underpin a management approach is insufficient RIFGs may wish to consider working with academic institutions and potentially commissioning private sector research could be agreed.