

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Question 1: Capacity Penalties

Do you agree that capacity penalties on licence aggregations bring unnecessary costs to industry and should therefore be removed?

Comments: *No comment*

Question 2: Licence categories

A) In light of the forthcoming landing obligation, do you agree that there is a need to change the current licensing structure?

B) Do you agree with a proposal to have only one 10m & Under Licence and one Over 10m Licence?

C) Do you agree that the lowest common denominator (see section 3.2.3) should apply when transferring or aggregating a licence within Scotland?

Comments: *No comment*

Question 3: Mismatches

A) Do you agree to the removal of the mis-match provisions on transactions involving the use of dis-aggregated entitlements?

B) Do you agree to the proposed change in the way mis-match provisions will be recorded on the licence?

Comments: *No comment*

Question 4: The validity period for unattached licence entitlements (shelf life)

Do you believe the entitlement validity period should be extended to a 10 year period?

Comments: *No comment*

Question 5: Scallop and Shellfish Entitlements

Do you agree with the Scottish Government's proposal for the removal of scallop entitlements that have not been used within the last seven years i.e. entitlements that have not been placed on board a vessel that is rigged and operational within the fishery?

Comments: *No comment*

Question 6: New Entrants

Do you agree with the concept of licensing incentives to support and promote a new entrants scheme to the Scottish fishing industry?

Comments: *No comment*

Question 7: Days at Sea/Effort Eligibility

A) Do you agree with the removal of CRZ eligibility completely?

B) Do you agree that CRZ eligibility should be kept, with an updated reference period that will roll forward annually?

Comments: *No comment*

Other Comments:

Vessel licensing is the single most important factor which decides the shape of the Scottish fleet and manages the fishing industry to get a good return in terms of employment, the environment and finance for the Scottish people. Marine Scotland has a trust in the Scottish fishery to make sure that happens. The North West Responsible Fishing Association recognises that Marine Scotland must consult industry to make sure it enacts effective regulation. However this consultation has raised significant concerns for two main reasons:

(1) The Review Working Group is strongly biased in favour of mobile fishing interests and therefore its recommendations need to be balanced to reflect the views and needs of other fishing interests. The sense is that the creel fishermen who make up the majority of fishermen in Scotland have not been polled adequately on their needs and desires for a revamped licensing system.

(2) The proposals are not outcomes focussed. There would not appear to be any shape to these reforms. We (and we think the Scottish people though they need to be asked) want to see a fleet which maximises the return in terms of decent jobs and profitable businesses which exploit the fishery. Virtually none of the reforms are drafted with a sense that the licence reforms will meet these objectives. Instead there is a sense that these reforms will continue the concentration of the industry into fewer and fewer hands. This contradicts the aspiration of encouraging new entrants, but that is the only section which has no specific licence conditions to support it.

Our sense is that before any major reforms to the licensing system the Scottish Government must decide what it wants from its public fishery, it would then be a simple matter of deciding which licence conditions best further those goals. Our view is that the Government needs to be very careful before passing regulation which concentrates the fishery into fewer hands and it needs to assess carefully the impact of the proposals properly on the ground before pressing ahead with these 'reforms'. There has been little rationale offered to support these proposals.

We believed that we would be given the opportunity to discuss this at IFG level and that a collective response would be submitted. The timing of the consultation (or the IFG meetings) was such that it fell between these meetings. The chairs draft response was issued the night before the NWIFG meeting on Frid 14th. At the meeting one rep said he had an objection to part of the response thus vetoing its being sent anyway. We got consensus that an extension be asked for so that associations could form individual responses, this was denied by MS. Yet again our association is left wondering why we are wasting very valuable resource on attending IFG meetings.

We strongly believe that a Nephrops entitlement/permit should be introduced. If for instance SCFF had been at the table, we think the creel men and the group would

have been better informed of the needs of this sector.