Report of the

Working Group on Safety, Training & Employment in the Irish Fishing Industry

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Chairman's Statement

The Working Group on Safety, Training and Employment in the Irish Fishing Industry was established by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine in July 2013. The members of the Working Group included representatives from Government Departments, State Agencies and seafood industry representative organisations, which are listed on page XX. Submissions to the Working Group were invited through advertisements placed in the marine newspapers and related websites.

In my previous career as a naval officer on Sea Fishery Protection duties and as the officer in charge of the Naval Diving Section, I was exposed to a number of search and rescue operations and fishing tragedies. These memories have stayed with me to this day. I feel very privileged to be given an opportunity to chair this Working Group to further decrease the number of drownings and injuries in the commercial fishing industry. Being a fisherman around our coast takes a very tough, committed and dedicated person who has to work in one of the most hazardous environments that any of us could envisage. They deserve great commendation for their contribution to our island nation and economy. We now want them to put safety on to a higher platform with renewed vigour and create a culture which will not allow foreseeable incidents occur which end in injury and drowning. We are mindful that some of the changes recommended in this report will challenge owners and fishermen alike. We believe that in the long term it will improve safety, reduce injuries, improve the health and welfare of our fishermen, whilst making it a more attractive career in the medium to long term.

The Working Group was charged with recommending proposals to improve safety standards on vessels and compliance with safety regulations, to make the fishing industry more attractive for new entrants and to advocate a careers structure for individuals working in the fishing industry.

The Working Group focused on the smaller vessels on the register which amounts to 90% of the fleet and where the greatest number of injuries and fatalities occur. It is essential that these fishermen wear Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) at all times when they are working, as well as complying with the relevant legislation for their size of vessel. The advent of the grant aid scheme to buy Personal Flotation Devices and personal locator beacons will help further reduce drowning, but only if they are worn, maintained, fitted correctly and checked regularly by the user. What is essential is an improved attitude towards safety generally by our fishermen so as to enhance safety behaviour and generate a stronger safety culture in the industry. If further training is provided for them, then this will happen over a period of time. When compared to other industries and livelihoods the level of training is too low and we hope that the recommendations within this report will address this deficit in time. Throughout the proceedings of the meetings it became apparent that the owners, skippers and deckhands need to improve their attitude towards safety and embrace their personal responsibility to effect the change that will save lives and reduce injuries.

The Working Group considered improving the attractiveness of the fishing industry for new entrants and developing a careers structure for individuals working in the industry so as to ensure the viability of the industry for the future. The Working Group considered the introduction of training incentives, including training allowances, tax reliefs, changes to VAT restrictions on buying equipment and vessel repairs. We also considered the development of a range of career structures to help attract and retain individuals in the industry. Decommissioning of some of the demersal sector needs to be considered in view of the quotas, where some fishermen are struggling to make a viable business from it. The Government, in partnership with the fishing industry, is well placed to manage the inshore fleet as it is not controlled by EU quotas and so we recommend

a new collaborative approach in managing this sector to develop its potential and ensure its sustainability and success for these fishermen.

I wish to acknowledge and thank the members of the Working Group for their efforts in this project, they brought a broad range of knowledge, experience, commitment and dedication to the table to finalise this report. I wish to thank in particular our ever efficient Secretary who ensured our meetings were arranged and ran smoothly and for the assistance she provided to me and to the members of the Working Group. I wish to thank the following Departments and agencies for the use of their meeting rooms: the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, the Office of Emergency Planning and Bord Iascaigh Mhara.

Finally, I wish to thank the following organisations for briefing the Working Group, to get a fuller picture of their role within the industry: Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Commissioners of Irish Lights, Health & Safety Authority, Marine Casualty Investigation Board, National Maritime College of Ireland, Naval Service, Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Sea Fisheries Protection Agency and to other organisations for their submissions to the Working Group listed on page XX.

To achieve the goals and objectives as listed in this report then further resourcing will be required in the relevant Government agencies.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
Nelson Mandela

John F M Leech
Chairman

April 2015

Executive Summary

In addressing its broad terms of reference, the Working Group examined a range of important and relevant issues for Ireland's fishing industry, for example, safety standards and training on board vessels, compliance with current regulation, recent technical innovations and the urgent need for culture change within the fishing sector. In its parallel work, the Working Group also considered options for making the fishing industry safer and more attractive as a career option for potential new entrants, bringing forward recommendations for improving career structures and the provision of opportunities for lifelong learning. The Working Group also heard a number of detailed submissions from interested stakeholders (listed on page xxx of this report). These submissions resulted in a range of diverse and challenging perspectives, ultimately informing the group's deliberations and final recommendations.

After a series of meetings, the Working Group brought forward a number of detailed recommendations in relation to all aspects of its terms of reference (see full list of recommendations below). Central to the recommendation on improving safety in the industry, was the need for significant culture change, to ensure that the concept of safety at sea, and on the water generally, becomes as commonplace and habitual as safety on our roads. In this regard, the Working Group focused particularly on the crucial role of vessel operators and skippers in ensuring the safety of vessels and personnel.

Equally important in the Working Group's view, was the need to underline the parallel and vital responsibility of crew members (fishermen) themselves, in prioritising their own safety. Wearing Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) at all working times is critical, as is promoting the policy and the practice of constant vigilance, regarding the challenges and dangers inherent in working at sea and on island waterways. The Working Group also emphasised the need for existing maritime regulations to be fully observed and that extant safety-training be augmented to include mandatory certificates of Competence, for both operators and crew/deckhands on all vessels; appropriate safety-training in stability, work-related safety, survival, fire and first aid being key aspects. This training should be targeted initially at operators of vessels less than 24 metres in length.

In terms of improving the attractiveness of the fishing industry as a career option for young Irish men and women, the Working Group has brought forward a number of recommendations, aimed at improving the training incentives and career structures within the industry. In one of its principal recommendations in this area, the Working Group highlights the urgent need for radical overhaul of the PRSI code for fishermen. This would ensure equality of treatment in the social-protection system for those working in the fishing industry. Inadequate social-protection provision was seen as one of the single, biggest, negative factors in retaining qualified and experienced personnel in the fishing industry. Other important recommendations in this area focused on the need for lifelong learning and the development of career diversification paths, to reflect the complex demands of the modern industry.

The group recognises that these recommendations have significant resourcing implications for the various Departments and Agencies charged with their delivery. In bringing forward its report, the Working Group underlined that delivery on the recommendations by the relevant State Agencies and Government Departments are dependent on their being suitably resourced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 1: SAFETY STANDARDS

1. DTTAS should develop specified, safe manning levels for all fishing vessels, relating to deck and engineering competencies and to be determined according to the size, type and operating parameters of the vessel.

2. DTTAS should develop a user-friendly crew logbook for smaller fishing vessels.

3. Ireland should ratify the STCW-F Convention and continue to develop the certification and training regime for fishermen.

4. In relation to occupational health and safety:

a) fishing enterprises should prepare a safety statement in accordance with the requirements of the SHWW Act 2005

b) to avoid confusion there should only be one, mandatory Code of Practice relating to small fishing vessels, and this should be the DTTAS Code of Practice (for the Design, Construction, Equipment and Operation of Small Fishing Vessels)

c) there should be a single, safety-inspection regime for these vessels, or at least a co-ordinated one which recognises the remit of both inspectorates ; DTTAS already carries out such inspections for maritime safety and the appointment of DTTAS surveyors under SHWW Act section 62 should be considered for the purposes of the SHWW Act requirements

d) DTTAS and the HSA should continue to work to complete an MOU to facilitate the co-ordination referred to above.

5. DTTAS should explore the scope for new stability standards for smaller fishing vessels less than 15m.

6. DTTAS should consider including a requirement in its Code of Practice for Small Fishing Vessels that existing fishing vessels between 12 and 15m long should have a stability book

7. Ireland should consider ratification of the Cape Town Agreement on the Safety of Fishing vessels and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention in due course.

8. DTTAS should explore additional enforcement approaches such as Fixed Payment Notices (FPNs) for appropriate offences, in relation to the wearing of Personal Flotation Devices.

CHAPTER 2: SAFETY TRAINING

9. Mandatory Certificates of Competency (Deck and Engine) should be introduced by DTTAS for the operators of all vessels with appropriate safety-training in stability and work-related safety.

10. Certificates of Proficiency (Deck and Engine) should be introduced by DTTAS for deckhands with appropriate safety training in stability and work-related safety.

11. DTTAS should introduce requirements and certification in relation to crew qualifications for fishing vessels less than 17m in length and with power of less than 750kW

12. BIM should provide stability awareness and training for operators and crew of vessels less than 24 metres, with an immediate focus on vessels < 15 metres within 12-36 months.

13. The development of appropriate induction training for new entrants to the industry.

CHAPTER 3: TECHNICAL INNOVATION IN SAFETY PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT

14. BIM will continue to work both with research, development and innovation groups and industry stakeholders, to ensure that the latest developments in technical innovation, without prejudice to the regulations, are channelled for marine-type approval and included on a list of safety items, as appropriate, eligible for grant-aid targeted at small fishing vessels less than 15 metres in length.

CHAPTER 4: MAKING THE FISHING INDUSTRY MORE ATTRACTIVE FOR NEW ENTRANTS

15. Training Incentives/Career Structure: appropriate Training Incentives and Career Structures should be put in place for those working in the fishing industry.

16. Seafarers' Allowance: that the requirements to allow individuals qualify for Seafarers' Allowance be amended to remove the current exclusion of "fishing vessels" from the definition of seagoing ships.

17. Social Protection: the group recommends the introduction of a more tailored, and appropriate, social-protection system that would include share fishermen. This new system would take account of the specific needs of the fishing industry, along the lines of the Family Income Supplement (FIS) and Farm Assist Schemes.

18. Economic Viability: that in order to enhance economic viability for current workers and boost attractiveness to new entrants, the group recommends the introduction of a targeted decommissioning scheme. The Group also recommends that revised quota and fleet management arrangements should be considered in parallel. A targeted decommissioning scheme should take account of the interests of vessel owners and non-vessel owners (fishermen working on decommissioned vessels).

19. VAT: that the current restriction of the VAT rebate system, that excludes vessels under 15GT, be removed.

20. Inshore Management: The group recommends that industry and state partners work together, to bring forward the necessary structures and measures, to facilitate the sustainable management of high-value inshore stocks, consistent with conservation requirements and give those involved in the sector, and considering entering it, confidence in its future.

CHAPTER 5: CAREERS STRUCTURE AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

21. That BIM develop a career-development programme for aspiring deck and engineer officers in the fishing industry.

22. That BIM, in conjunction with the MSO provide courses leading to certificates of proficiency for deck hands in the fishing industry (for example *Efficient Deck Hand or Able Bodied Seaman*).

23. That BIM, on a phased basis, and in conjunction with the MSO, provide further conversion courses for fishermen, who wish also to operate part-time in the commercial shipping sector.

Introduction

1. Fishing Industry Safety Initiative

Recent tragic incidents in the Irish fishing industry, resulting in significant loss of life, have raised public and community awareness of the issue of safety at sea. In a speech delivered in July 2013, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney stated that *'The concept of safety at sea and on our network of rivers and lakes must become as commonplace as safety on our roads, we need to create a culture of safety first for those travelling on our waters for either commercial or recreational reasons'.* Also speaking in July 2013, the then Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Leo Varadkar commented *"I do not see a compelling reason why fatalities should not, one day, be zero. The laws and regulations we have already reflect international best practice. We need a change in attitude, culture and practice across the sector."*

With a view to improving safety in our fishing fleet, both Ministers launched a comprehensive package of initiatives on safety in the industry in July 2013. With its range of measures to effect a change in the current culture, the package combines more extensive use of modern technology with a raised awareness of safety at sea, or on the water generally. Enhanced safety-training and a culture of continuous learning in safety techniques will be central to delivery of the initiative's objectives. The cross-departmental initiative is evidence of a new approach to what has been, historically, a significant and stubborn problem. It aims to learn from past tragedies, and save lives in the future, through a range of practical and complementary measures, each of them designed to improve the safety-culture in the Irish fishing industry.

A further objective is to help engrain a culture of "safety first" on the water, in particular, by incentivising safety-equipment on board vessels and improving safety-training. The launch of BIM's enhanced safety-training scheme, changes to the Code of Practice for Small Fishing Vessels of the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, and a continued commitment to compliance with standards and regulation, are aimed at improving safety at sea and reducing fatalities. In the context of a continuously-challenging exchequer environment, the Government has aimed the initiative, primarily, at operators of smaller vessels, providing just under €1m to fund the scheme.

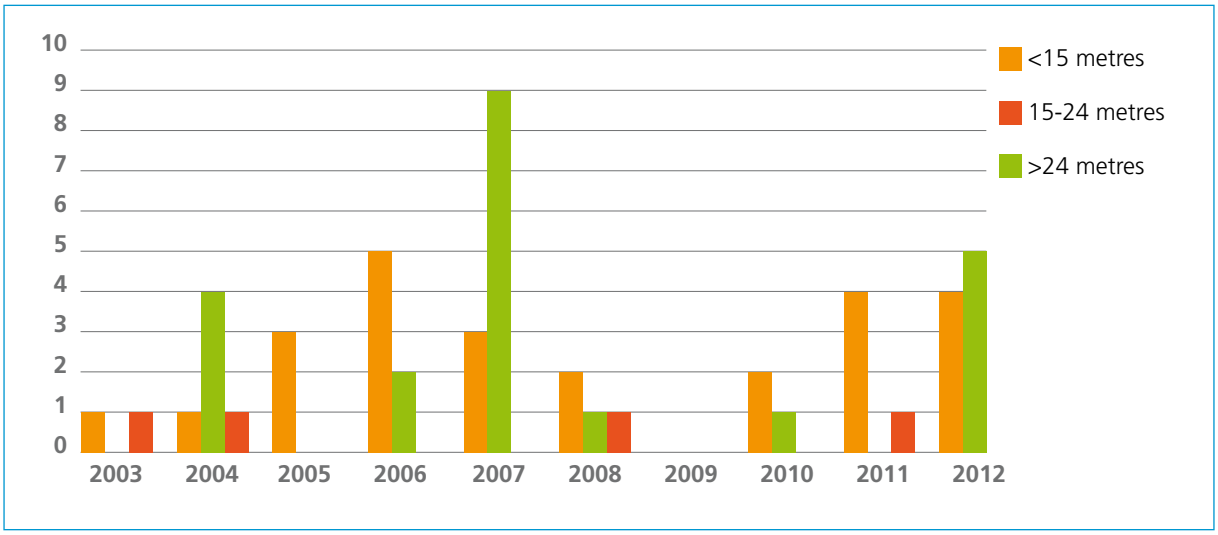
The terms of reference and membership of the group are in Appendices 1 & 2. In summary, the group was asked to look at the following, paying particular to the needs of small vessels:

- Safety standards on vessels, and the quayside and ways to improve compliance and to change culture and attitudes to safety (ToR No. 1)
- Safety Training (ToR No. 2)
- Technical innovation in safety procedures and equipment (ToR No. 3)
- Making the fishing industry more attractive to new entrants (ToR No. 4)
- Career Structures and opportunities for lifelong learning in the fishing sector (ToR No. 5)

The Group considered the recommendations made in the Fishing Vessel Safety Review Group (FVSRG) published in 1996 and the Report of the Task Force on Training & Employment in the Irish Seafood Industry (TFTEISI) published in 2001. The relevant recommendations in these Reports have already been addressed. The Group also considered the presentations and submissions provided by the bodies listed in the Appendix X.

There have been some advances in recent years in terms of embedding a safety-culture, particularly for larger vessels, but the risks associated with smaller vessels remain an area of concern. Recent statistics provided by the **Marine Casualty Investigation Board** have shown that incidents involving smaller vessels of less than 15 metres, which result in death or serious injury, remain consistently high. Incidents in the 15-24 metre category are also a cause for concern. As the table below shows, larger vessels have an improving safety record.

TABLE 1: FISHING VESSEL FATALITIES



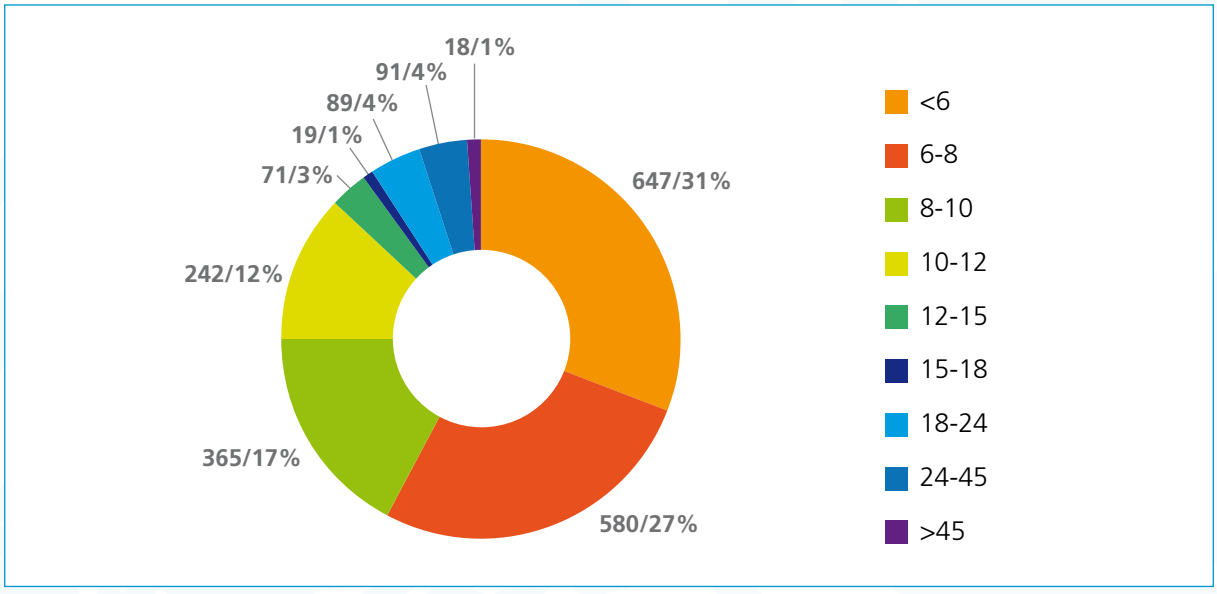
1. Analysis of the Irish Fishing Fleet

The table below and corresponding average capacity for each range of vessels, illustrates the very small number of larger vessels currently operating in the Irish fishing fleet. In fact, 86% of vessels are in the under-12 metre category.

TABLE 2: FLEET STATISTICS 01 JANUARY 2015

SIZE CATEGORY	NUMBER OF VESSELS	% OF FLEET	AVERAGE CAPACITY		
			GT	kW	HP
<6	647	30	1	9	12
6-8	580	28	2	20	27
8-10	365	17	5	53	71
10-12	242	11	11	79	106
12-15	71	4	24	118	158
15-18	19	1	70	219	294
18-24	89	4	134	377	505
24-45	91	4	241	526	705
>45	18	1	1,117	2,251	3,017
Total Number of Vessels	**2,122**	-	-	-	-

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF VESSELS AS A PERCENTAGE OF SIZE CATEGORY



Chapter 1: Safety Standards

The Irish fishing fleet is made up of a wide range of fishing vessels, which for the application of safety-regimes, is sub-divided into three main categories:

1. Greater than 24m
2. 15m to 24m
3. Under 15m

Fishing vessels greater than 24m have been part of a safety regime since 2003, those less than 15m since 2004 and those 15-24m since 2010. While the introduction of these regimes has been challenging, the industry has benefitted. There is now a substantial body of existing safety legislation, including that for manning levels and hours of work and rest. The group recognised that Ireland's regulations already reflect international best-practice and are driven by our international and European obligations. The safety standards set for Irish fishing vessels are generally seen as appropriate.

The group was pleased at the updated publication of the updated *Code of Practice for the Design, Construction, Equipment and Operation of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall* (known as the Code of Practice for Small Fishing Vessels) by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS). In particular, the group welcomed the new requirements that fishing vessels less than 12m must now carry automatic float-free EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons). This will provide for enhanced safety of fishermen generally, particularly, those who work alone.

The group is of the view that the DTTAS crew logbook, recently developed for fishing vessels over 25 gross tonnes, has been well received by the industry, bringing together many of the statutory requirements. The group considered that a suitably-adapted version of this logbook would be useful for smaller fishing vessels.

The group is also of the view that safety could be enhanced by further developing stability standards (particularly for smaller fishing vessels), manning levels, as well as training and certification.

A number of international conventions relate to safety standards and working conditions on fishing vessels, and the Group supported the objective of DTTAS to ratify them in due course.

The International Maritime Organisation's Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessels (known as the STCW-F Convention) came into force on the 29th of September 2012 and will have implications for Ireland.

Other relevant Conventions are the Cape Town Agreement of 2012 which amends the 1977 Torremolinos Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels and its associated Protocol, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention, which deals with work and living requirements for fishermen on board vessels. Neither Convention is yet in force internationally.

The group notes the role of the Health and Safety Authority under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Acts 2005 in relation to the fishing industry and the requirement for a safety statement for fishing enterprises.

There is a provision for the development, under the 2005 Act, of a 'Code of Practice', different from the mandatory DTTAS Code of Practice for the Design, Equipment and Operation of Fishing Vessels. The group believes that two codes would be an unnecessary burden on the fishing industry.

Changing Culture

Changing the safety culture in the fishing sector is not something that can be achieved with a small number of actions. It will happen if individuals change their own behaviour, take responsibility, and think "safety first" whenever they are on the sea, in relation to themselves, their crews, and their vessels.

Every fatality and accident affects not just the individuals involved but also has a wider and long-lasting impact on families, friends and communities. These groups and individuals can also have a significant influence on the attitudes to safety of their families, friends and neighbours.

Another group of influencers is the variety of agencies and organisations that have an involvement in the fishing sector, including government bodies and agencies, fisheries representative organisations, sport/recreation/tourism organisations, community groups and voluntary bodies. They are in a position to influence various groups and interests, and also to act together in co-ordinated or joint activities.

The Group concluded that it was not in a position to put forward a suite of comprehensive recommendations on changing culture. Influences on safety behaviour are many and varied, as are the ways that the safety message can be conveyed, and kept relevant and refreshed. The group's key conclusion is that a "safety first" attitude and taking personal responsibility for safety would make the significant contribution to maritime safety.

As mentioned above, the Group is not putting forward a suite of comprehensive recommendations on changing culture, but gives some simple examples to illustrate the kinds of behaviour and actions that could make a difference. The list is not exhaustive:

- Taking weather and sea conditions into account
- Having a safe vessel, safe equipment and safe operations (including loading stability)
- Keeping in touch, and letting someone on shore know where you are going and when you will be back, and what to do if you fail to return
- Recognising the safety implications of fatigue, alcohol and drugs
- Wearing suitable PFDs (lifejackets and buoyancy aids) and suitable clothing
- Making sure you carry the right emergency communications, that they work and that you use them properly
- Utilising new technologies that may assist the crew

Families and friends can

- Remind individuals about safety issues(e.g. weather, wearing PFDs, information on their journey and emergency contacts)
- Discourage them from going to sea if they are not safe
- Contact the emergency services if a fisherman or vessel is overdue

Agencies, organisation and representative bodies can:

- Incorporate the safety message in training, information and other activities
- Consider where the safety message needs to be targeted, and how they can do this in their own activities, including using new technologies
- Work on joint initiatives and on co-ordinating their safety messages, including in media campaigns, providing safety information, workshops and coming together regularly to pool their expertise and resources

The group is supportive of the DTTAS development of a Maritime Safety Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Safety Standards and Improving Compliance:

1.1 DTTAS should develop specified, safe manning levels for all fishing vessels, relating to deck and engineering competencies and to be determined according to the size, type and operating parameters of the vessel.

1.2 DTTAS should develop a user-friendly crew logbook for smaller fishing vessels.

1.3 Ireland should ratify the STCW-F Convention and continue to develop the certification and training regime for fishermen.

1.4 In relation to occupational health and safety:

a) fishing enterprises should prepare a safety statement in accordance with the requirements of the SHWW Act 2005

b) to avoid confusion there should only be one, mandatory Code of Practice relating to small fishing vessels, and this should be the DTTAS Code of Practice (for the Design, Construction, Equipment and Operation of Small Fishing Vessels)

c) there should be a single, safety-inspection regime for these vessels, or at least a co-ordinated one which recognises the remit of both inspectorates ; DTTAS already carries out such inspections for maritime safety and the appointment of DTTAS surveyors under SHWW Act section 62 should be considered for the purposes of the SHWW Act requirements

d) DTTAS and the HSA should continue to work to complete an MOU to facilitate the co-ordination referred to above.

1.5 DTTAS should explore the scope for new stability standards for smaller fishing vessels less than 15m.

1.6 DTTAS should consider including a requirement in its Code of Practice for Small Fishing Vessels that existing fishing vessels between 12 and 15m long should have a stability book.

1.7 Ireland should consider ratification of the Cape Town Agreement on the Safety of Fishing vessels and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention in due course.

1.8 DTTAS should explore additional enforcement approaches such as Fixed Payment Notices (FPNs) for appropriate offences, in relation to the wearing of Personal Flotation Devices.

Chapter 2: Safety Training

At sea, as in life, we can never predict the unpredictable. But with the correct preparation, with the right training, held at regular intervals, we can certainly reduce its impact when it arrives.

Since 2002, crew members of all fishing vessels are required to undergo instruction in essential safety-skills prior to going to sea. Bord Iascaigh Mhara's (BIM) *Basic Safety Training* (BST) course is a three-day module, teaching fishermen *Personal Survival Techniques* (STCW-95 Certificate), *Elementary First Aid* (STCW-95 Certificate) and Fire Prevention and Safety Awareness. To date, 6,000 fishermen have taken this course, at numerous locations around the coast. On successful completion, participants are issued with a Safety Training Card which provides evidence of their training. This card remains valid for the duration of their career at sea. Prior to the introduction of the one-day *Enhanced Safety Training Scheme* in 2014, the only other mandatory training required of Irish fishermen applied to those presenting for Certificates of Competency.

The group is of the view that the current mandatory 3 day safety training for new entrants is insufficient. Germany requires a two-week and Denmark a three-week course before stepping on board a fishing boat. Looking beyond the basic training of survival, fire and first aid, Spain requires new entrants to undertake a four-week *'Competent Seaman'* certificate while France requires an 8-week *'National Initiation Certificate'*. While BIM does provide a 26-week QQI Certificate in Commercial Fishing the group noted that, while this course provides an ideal platform for those who see a long-term career in fishing, and set their sights on achieving a Certificate of Competency, it is too long to provide the basis for mandatory 'induction' training. The group recommends the development of appropriate induction training for new entrants to the industry.

The group also recognise that formal training-courses are not the only way to refresh knowledge successfully; self-instruction, including drills and musters, has played a central role for many years in marine training. It is a matter of concern that on a number of fishing vessels, these drills and musters are not being conducted often enough, if at all. Changing this culture is vital. Other forms of on-board training might also be explored including *'instructor-on-board'* visits and greater use of smart phone, tablet and computer based e-learning and social media.

Finally, the group recognised that safety training should not be limited solely to those areas currently identified as essential (survival, fire and first aid). Rather, in developing its recommendations, the group considered the accident and safety record of the fleet, based on the reports of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board. The group recognised the higher risk attached to vessels < 15 metres.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Mandatory Certificates of Competency (Deck and Engine) should be introduced by DTTAS for the operators of all vessels with appropriate safety-training in stability and work-related safety.

2.2 Certificates of Proficiency (Deck and Engine) should be introduced by DTTAS for deckhands with appropriate safety training in stability and work related safety.

2.3 DTTAS should introduce requirements and certification in relation to crew qualifications for fishing vessels less than 17m in length and with power of less than 750kW.

2.4 BIM should provide stability awareness and training for operators and crew of vessels less than 24 metres, with an immediate focus on vessels < 15 metres within 12-36 months.

2.5 The development of appropriate induction training for new entrants to the industry.

Chapter 3: Technical Innovation in Safety Procedures and Equipment

Technical innovation is taken to mean innovation in the development of standards, including the development of safety-management systems. Irish fishing vessels are currently required to carry a wide range of safety equipment. Obviously, the equipment carried must be fit for purpose, comply with international standards and have been developed for use in the marine environment. While it is tempting to specify a requirement for additional equipment, caution needs to be exercised. It is more important that safety be embedded in attitude, policy and practice than 'outsourced' to technology.

In view of this, and since technology is a rapidly-evolving sector, the group believes it should not make recommendations in relation to specific equipment or procedures. It is vital that safety requirements and regulations continue to reflect international best practice, and that fishermen and fishing-vessel operators be aware of existing and emerging technology that could enhance their own safety and that of their vessel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 BIM will continue to work both with research, development and innovation groups and industry stakeholders, to ensure that the latest developments in technical innovation, without prejudice to the regulations, are channelled for marine-type approval and included on a list of safety items, as appropriate, eligible for grant-aid targeted at small fishing vessels less than 15 metres in length.

Chapter 4: Making the Fishing Industry More Attractive for New Entrants

There is growing concern about the economic viability of the fishing industry. The average age of those who work in it continues to rise and there are difficulties in, and barriers to, attracting new entrants. These barriers include a lack of career progression, uncertainty in relation to economic viability, the absence of a tailored social protection scheme, the attendant tough and often-hazardous working environments and a complex regulatory system.

Training Incentives/Career Structure

Training Incentives should be put in place to allow those interested in fishing as a career to undertake the necessary training. For other industries, the State training agency SOLAS provides courses and those who attend them receive training allowances. For the Fishing Industry, BIM provides the majority of the training courses, often offered on a reduced-cost basis. However, those attending the courses do not receive any allowance, something that discourages and excludes interested parties from the industry. Incentives need to be put in place, for example, training allowances and/or tax reliefs that would also allow fishermen to develop their qualifications. The qualifications obtained should also be reassessed, to allow, where appropriate, those who have completed the necessary training and undertaken the requisite examinations, to obtain Diploma, Degree and Masters Qualifications. This would greatly alter perceptions and present the fishing industry as a career with progression opportunities, one that is encouraging of, and anxious to attract, new entrants.

Marine Taxation Review

The group welcomes the announcement in the 2014 Budget of a comprehensive review of taxation measure for the marine sector, in particular the prioritisation of the seafood sector in the first phase of the review. Some of the issues identified below will be relevant to this.

Seafarers' Allowance

A significant disincentive to new entrants joining the fishing industry, is the frequent lengthy absence from home and the relatively low pay. The extension of the Seafarers' Allowance to all fishing crew members would be a positive step towards tackling these issues. The Seafarers' Allowance is available to "seafarers" who are either at sea, on a voyage to or from, a foreign port, or those on vessels servicing drilling rigs for at least 161 days in the tax year. For 2015 the relief available is the sum of €6,350 at the highest rate of tax. While the majority of fishermen would be able to satisfy these requirements, unfortunately at present, the definition of a seagoing ship explicitly excludes fishing vessels, although for all other purposes, fishing vessels are considered "ships" and must adhere to the same regulations.

The implementation of the extension of the scheme would be relatively straightforward, as the EU Fishing Vessel logbook, whether electronic (for the majority of vessels over 12 metres) or paper (for vessels under 12m) could be used to verify the number of days spent at sea and the cost to the Exchequer would be nominal.

Access to Social Welfare

Today, a majority of those who go to sea in the fishing industry, do so on a self-employed basis (share fishermen), something that greatly restricts their access to Social Welfare. Having a tailored, social-protection system, would make the industry more attractive for new entrants and help retain the experienced and skilled crews that are already in, and vital to, the industry. It would also provide a much-needed safety net at times of particular need.

At present, the sole access for self-employed fishermen to social welfare is the "Fish Assist" scheme. The strict means-testing and long processing-time associated with the scheme, is seen as a major concern and barrier. The group is of the view that any revised scheme needs to reflect the specific realities of the fishing sector, where periods of short-term low activity, or even no-activity at all, are not unusual. The scheme could be built along similar lines to the FIS (Family Income Supplement) scheme. Means-testing could be set up in a way similar to the Farm Assist scheme, taking account of the specifics of the fishing sector.

In general, the introduction of a voluntary PRSI contribution, equivalent to the current self-employed "P" class, could underpin the above measures, giving fishermen access to enhanced and adequate social welfare payments as circumstances require.

Working Group members from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine advised that any potential changes in relation to social protection will require the approval of the Minister/Department of Social Protection and depending on the measure proposed may also require the consent of the European Commission.

Inshore Management

There are 2,122 vessels on the Irish Register of Fishing Boats of which approximately 1,800 are inshore vessels. For new entrants and those within the industry who want to own their own vessel, an inshore vessel is likely to be their first investment. Inshore vessels require considerably less capital investment and given the current economic climate it is extremely difficult for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to obtain financing regardless of the industry they are in.

The majority of species fished by inshore vessels are not subject to quota restrictions at this time but are subject to a range controls including technical conservation measures, food safety traceability and environmental protection of certain habitats and species under the Birds and Habitats Directives. Sustainability is therefore the key tenet on which inshore management must be built. The Group acknowledges the call from industry for a comprehensive management framework for the inshore sector and notes that this was also recommended in Food Harvest 2020. In this regard the Group welcomes the recent announcement by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine of the introduction of a National Inshore Fisheries Forum, to bring forward recommendations for the future management of inshore fisheries in Ireland.

VAT

Under current Revenue VAT guidelines the purchase, intra-Community acquisition, importation, hire, maintenance and repair of sea-fishing vessels of a gross tonne of not more than 15 tonnes are liable to VAT and an unregistered (for VAT purposes) fisherman can only claim repayment of such VAT provided the fishing vessel concerned has been the subject of a grant or loan from BIM.

As outlined above the majority of the Irish fishing fleet are under 15m and a significant number of these vessels are less than 15 GT and are therefore unable to reclaim VAT which means in effect, that it increases the costs to those under 15 GT vessel owners by in or around 23% and could be the difference between the entity being viable or not.

Economic Viability

The group considered that a new targeted decommissioning scheme, targeted at vessels in the under-pressure whitefish sector, would have a significant positive impact on the income of fishermen who remain in the industry, thus making it more attractive to new entrants as a career choice.

The Cawley Report cited the clear need for decommissioning. Indeed, two successful Decommissioning Schemes have been implemented previously. The Value for Money Review for Decommissioning Schemes 2005-2008 were of the view that a further, targeted programme could be considered, if all other options to address overcapacity had been previously examined. The group is of the view, that a new targeted decommissioning scheme should be introduced. The group is also of the view, that revised quota and fleet management arrangements should be considered in tandem. In that regard, it was noted that the quota management review would be undertaken as part of the Discards Implementation Group.

Working group members from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine clarified that implementation of any future decommissioning scheme will be subject to the relevant criteria set out in the European Maritime Fisheries Fund, a full cost benefit/value for money (CB/VFM) analysis, the approval of the Minister/Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and other relevant Government Departments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1	Training Incentives/Career Structure: Appropriate Training Incentives and Career Structures should be put in place for those working in the fishing industry.
4.2	Seafarers' Allowance: that the requirements to allow individuals qualify for the Seafarers' Allowance be amended, to remove the current exclusion of "fishing vessels" from the definition of seagoing ships.
4.3	Social Protection: The group recommends the introduction of a more tailored, and appropriate, social-protection system that would include share fishermen. This new system would take account of the specific needs of the fishing industry, along the lines of the Family Income Supplement (FIS) and Farm Assist Schemes.
4.4	Economic Viability: That in order to enhance economic viability for current workers and boost attractiveness to new entrants, the group recommends the introduction of a targeted decommissioning scheme. The Group also recommends that revised quota and fleet management arrangements should be considered in parallel. A targeted decommissioning scheme should take account of the interests of vessel owners and non-vessel owners (fishermen working on decommissioned vessels).
4.5	VAT: That the current restriction of rebate for vessels under 15GT vessels should be removed.
4.6	Inshore Management: The group recommends that industry and state partners work together to devise the necessary structures and measures to guarantee the sustainable management of high-value, inshore stocks. This would be consistent with conservation requirements and give the necessary confidence, to those already involved in the sector, and considering entering it, alike.

Chapter 5: Career Structures and Life-long Learning

Ireland has the highest proportion of young people with a third-level qualification in the EU. More than half (51.1%) of 30-34 year-olds, have completed third- level education. Likewise, Ireland is now one of 12 member states where early school-leaving rates are below 10%. It has proven extremely challenging to attract new entrants in to the fishing industry despite the economic downturn. In addition, the absence of a clearly defined career structure in the sea fishing industry makes entry in to the industry less attractive.

Both the fishing and the commercial shipping sector, have experienced a challenge in attracting new entrants. However, the commercial shipping sector enjoys two distinct advantages over the fishing industry in this regard. Firstly, the opportunity for career development and secondly, the opportunity to move and transfer skills. As noted in chapter 2 of this report, where it is recommended that Ireland ratify STCW-F, if this recommendation is followed then a similar career path can be developed for the fishing industry.

Career Development

For over 40 years, commercial shipping has been offering this desirable and valuable approach to attracting the best and helping them build their careers. For example, well laid-out apprenticeships or cadetships, provide certain new entrants with timed, co-ordinated training to a first Certificate of Competency. In every case, this training-and-development pathway was linked to a third-level qualification. Today, many of those taking a cadetship also obtain a diploma or degree (or higher) in nautical science, marine engineering or other related discipline. While their training still encompasses the usual traditional skills, among them navigation, stability and seamanship, it now also includes training in business, law and I.T. skills.

Movement/Transfer of Skills

The opportunity for movement and transfer of skills has been critical in enhancing commercial shipping as a career prospect. Not alone can certified officers move between what are radically-different classes of vessel, they can also transfer to shore-based occupations, such as in-port management, insurance, shipping or training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That BIM develop a career-development programme for aspiring deck and engineer officers in the fishing industry.

5.2 That BIM, in conjunction with the MSO, provide courses leading to certificates of proficiency for deck hands in the fishing industry (for example *Efficient Deck Hand or Able Bodied Seaman*).

5.3 That BIM, on a phased basis, and in conjunction with the MSO, provide further conversion courses for fishermen, who wish also to operate part-time in the commercial shipping sector.

Terms of Reference

Name of Group:

Working Group on Safety, Training & Employment in the Irish Fishing Industry

The group will consider and advise, with appropriate recommendations, on the following priorities:

1. Safety Standards on vessels, and the quayside and ways to improve compliance with safety regulations and change culture and attitudes to safety generally
2. Safety training
3. Technical innovation in safety, procedures and equipment
4. Making the fishing industry more attractive for new entrants
5. Career structures and opportunities for lifelong learning in the fishing sector

In the context of the priority areas set out the group will:

1. Consider ways to enhance safety on board fishing vessels (and on quayside), highlighting appropriate training options
2. Pay particular attention to the needs of small vessels, focusing on stability and other safety issues
3. Look into and identify where appropriate, innovative safety procedures and equipment
4. Identify the key issues that are impacting negatively on new entrants joining the catching sector concentrating on:
    a. Examining appropriate training for new entrants with particular emphasis on progressive, on-the-job training
    b. Evaluation the introduction of new and more appropriate qualification for crew members
5. Identify possibilities for career structures and personal advancement within the fishing industry
6. Establish the applicability of professional training and life-long learning for the catching sector with specific emphasis on the following:
    a. Training options, including appropriate 3rd level qualifications, that provide fishermen with attractive, professional, career pathways
    b. Consideration of the need for the introduction of new qualifications for operators vessels under 15 metres
7. Identify areas for cross agency/cross departmental co-operation to further the objectives of the initiatives and more efficiently deliver on the recommended actions.

Members and Alternates of the Working Group

In alphabetical order

Chairman
Lt. Cdr. John Leech, Chief Executive, Irish Water Safety

Ministerial Nominees
Mr Alex Crowley
Mr Bill Deasy
Mr Joey Murrin

Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Department of
Mr Peter Meany
Mr Kevin Moriarty

Transport, Tourism & Sport, Department of
Mr Eugene Clonan
Mr Brian Hogan
Ms Eilish Kennedy
Mr Chris Reynolds

Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Capt. Shane Begley
Mr John Connaughton
Capt. James Hegarty
Ms Sinéad Howard *(also acted as Secretary to the Working Group)*
Mr Michael Keatinge

Irish Fishermen's Organisation
Mr Ebby Sheehan

Irish Fish Producers Organisation
Mr Francis O'Donnell
Mr John Ward

Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation
Ms Caitlin Uí Aodha

Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation
Ms Eibhlín O'Sullivan

Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
Mr Seán O'Donoghue
Mr Ted Breslin

There were thirteen meetings held over the course of this project.

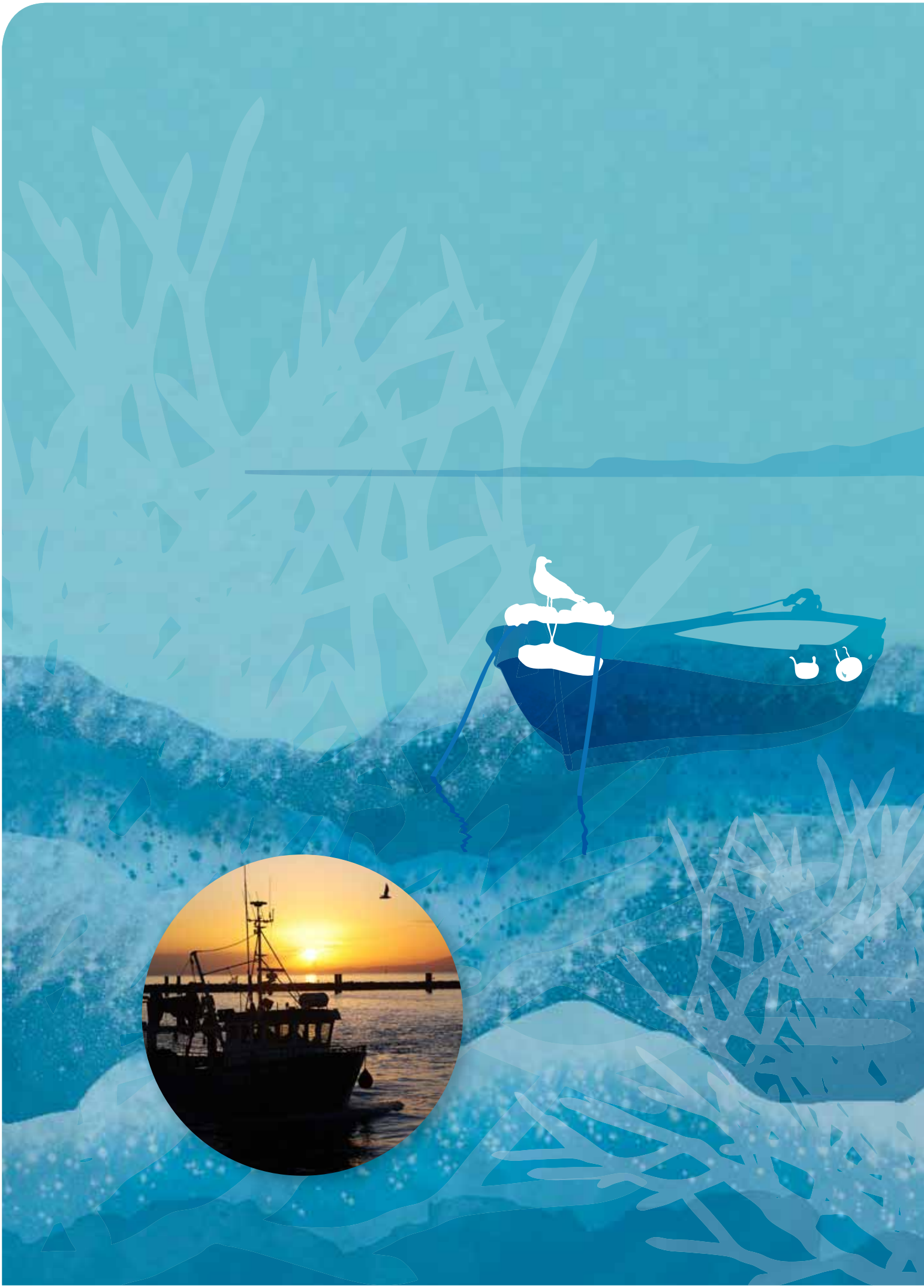
Presentations

The Members of the Working Group wishes to acknowledge and thank for their presentations to the Working Group, all those listed below:

- Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) – Ms Cliona Cassidy, Chairman
- Sea Fisheries Protection Agency (SFPA) – Dr Susan Steele, Chairman
- Department of Defence-Commander Pearse O'Donnell N.S. Lt. Cdr. Patrick Harkin N.S. & Mr Jerry Kelliher
- National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) – Mr Roddy Cooke, Senior Lecturer
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) – Mr Michael Keatinge, Deputy CEO & Director of Fisheries Development & Training
- Health & Safety Authority (HSA) – Mr Brian Higgisson, Assistant Chief Executive Operational Compliance & Prevention, Mr Pat Griffin, Senior Inspector
- Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) – Mr Martyn Smith, Mr Howard Ramm, Mr Frankie Horne
- Commissioners for Irish Lights (CIL) – Ms Yvonne Shields, CEO & Capt. Robert McCabe, Director of Operations & Navigation Services
- Harbour Masters' Committee – Capt. Brian Sheridan, Chairman, Irish Ports' Association

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all those below who replied to our questionnaire

- Dr Pádraig Walsh, Quality & Qualifications Ireland
- Mr Barry Deakin, Wolfson Unit MTIA, University of Southampton
- Mr Jack Kemerer, Chief, Fishing Vessel Safety Division, Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance (CG-CVC) U.S. Coast Guard
- Dr Jennifer M. Lincoln, PhD, CSP, CAPT US Public Health Service, Injury Epidemiologist, Commercial Fishing Research and Design Program National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, NIOSH Director, Alaska Pacific Office Anchorage, Alaska
- Capt. Hilmar Snorrason, Principal, Maritime Safety and Survival Training Centre
- Mr Philip Cantwell, Villa Maria, Manorland, Trim, Co Meath
- Ms Gina McKay, Fish Safe, British Columbia, Canada
- Mr Noel O'Regan, Promara, Mallow, Co Cork
- Ms Orlaith O'Callaghan, Report Editor
- Ms Susan Curran, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority

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