

News next steps for the future of U.K. inshore fisheries

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The next steps for an ambitious and collaborative project which aims to improve how inshore fisheries are managed in the UK have been published.

The industry-led steering group of the Future of Our Inshore Fisheries [project](#) has released both a report, detailing discussions from a [conference](#) held last year and an action plan, which sets out the first stage of practical actions to reform the management of UK inshore fisheries. At the heart of the project is the desire to establish an effective inshore fisheries management system that can deliver a viable and profitable inshore fishing industry that supports flourishing coastal communities.

The two-day Future of Our Inshore Fisheries conference, which took place in October 2019, brought almost 180 representatives together to discuss the challenges faced by UK inshore [fishermen](#). Participants included sixty active fishermen together with industry leaders, policy makers, regulators, researchers and representatives from [environmental groups](#).

Conference attendees heard examples of fisheries management solutions and best practice from around the world and considered their relevance to the UK's inshore fisheries. Seen as the first milestone in the delivery of the project, the conference set out to ensure that the vital expertise and experience of active inshore fishermen set the priorities for the project's next phase and inform its upcoming work.

The Future of Our Inshore Fisheries conference report details the conference presentations, the findings from group discussion sessions and the results of live polling. While the report does not make specific recommendations, it does outline the key themes which emerged and captures the priority areas identified by participants. The report concludes by recognizing that the scale of change which is wanted and needed is significant, and that developing and implementing solutions will take time.

Based on the report's findings, the steering group has identified five themes that will shape future work: co-management; collaborative science; credible fisheries management; rights and access; and effective compliance. The action plan is the first attempt to set out clear, deliverable actions across these themes that will be progressed over the next 12—18 months.

A series of pilot studies will be used to test and refine the various initiatives. This will ensure that the experience and expertise of fishermen will directly inform the project, every step of the way. This project will also act as a focal point for a range of wider initiatives taking place across government and industry that will ultimately contribute to improved fisheries management.

Commenting on the publication of the report and action plan, steering group chair Michel Kaiser, Professor of Fisheries Conservation, and Chief Scientist, at Heriot-Watt University, said: "At the conference we heard about approaches to inshore fisheries management from around the world. Crucially, we also considered how well they might apply at home. With this next phase of work, we will start developing and testing some of the solutions to see what will work best for UK fisheries."

"The action plan is wide ranging and reflects the complex nature of the task ahead of us. Transforming how our inshore fisheries are managed

will not be easy, will take time and there may well be mistakes along the way. Too often reasons have been found not to start this work, but with the industry and government collaborating we have an opportunity to get this right now.

"I firmly believe that the conference was a success because we had active fishermen in the room contributing their vital expertise and experience. This is the ethos we will maintain as we undertake this critical project and I am very pleased that we have inshore fishermen represented on the steering group."

More information: The full report, action plan and further information are available online: www.seafish.org/article/future...ur-inshore-fisheries

Provided by Heriot-Watt University

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