Public Consultation

Development of the IFI Corporate Plan

2010 - 2014

Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

1. Introduction & Contents

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) was established on 1st July 2010 in accordance with the Inland Fisheries Act 2010 in place of the Central and 7 Regional Fisheries Boards. The 2010 Act sets out the authorities statutory obligations in relation to the protection, conservation, management, marketing, development and improvement of the inland fisheries resource in Ireland.

The legislation provides that the new authority must develop a 5 year rolling Corporate Plan for the new organisation within the first six months of its establishment. That Corporate Plan will define what the organisation will achieve in the next 5 years, how the objectives are to be achieved and how they are to be measured. In order to develop a Corporate Plan that is informed, realistic and compliant, IFI is now inviting submissions to the Public Consultation process from any individual, group or, associations who wish to actively contribute. The purpose of the consultation is to provide interested parties in the general public with an opportunity to comment on the future plan for IFI and to provide their views on the role and priorities for the organisation.

Submissions can be sent to Inland Fisheries Ireland by post or by email, to reach the organisation by no later than Friday 20th August 2010. The most efficient method of making submissions to IFI is by way of email to mary.oreilly@cfb.ie

Alternatively, responses can be posted to the following address:

Mary O'Reilly
Inland Fisheries Ireland
Swords Business Campus
Balheary Road
Swords
Co. Dublin.

Please include your name and contact details along with your submission. If you are putting forward a submission on behalf of an organisation please include contact details for the organisation.

This consultation document has a number of sections:

- Section 2 Background to the establishment of IFI and the legislative requirements
- Section 3 Objective of IFI
- Section 4 Questions that respondents may wish to consider in making their submission
- Section 5 A summary of the next steps that are to be taken following the consultation process.

2. Background

Freshwater lakes cover approximately 144,480 hectares (or about 2% of the area of the State). There are also around 13,840 kilometres of main channel rivers and approximately 7,500km of coastline inhabited by a variety of species, including game species such as salmon, sea trout, brown trout and coarse fish species such as pike and bream and a significant number of sea fish species. The resource, across many species, is under threat from a range of factors including but not limited to environmental factors (including pollution and water quality, habitat degradation, and over-exploitation).

The inland fisheries resource is an important natural resource to Ireland and the fundamental concern in any proposals to restructure the sector must be in how best to protect, conserve and develop the resource in the best interests of the country as a whole. The sector is subject to many pressures for change. Recent developments include a more integrated international approach to the threat of over exploitation of the migratory species, the adoption of catchment models of management of the resource and the advent of the EU Water Framework Directive setting out a comprehensive new approach to the management of water resources.

The State's role in relation to the inland fisheries resource is concerned with the management and development of freshwater fisheries in Ireland including the management and surveillance of stocks of fish species listed in the Habitats Directive. In addition, the remit covers certain activities at sea, including commercial fishing for salmon and sea trout, and recreational sea angling. While the Department has overall policy responsibility for the conservation, management, regulation and development of the inland fisheries resource, IFI has primary responsibility for the implementation of fisheries policy. Other Agencies such as the Loughs Agency of the Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, the Marine Institute and the ESB also play important roles in the sector.

3. Objective

The restructuring of the inland fisheries sector was achieved under the Inland Fisheries Act 2010 (No. 10 of 2010) with the creation of a single national agency in place of the 8 Fisheries Boards. The restructuring of the sector is in line with current Government policy for the rationalisation of State agencies. The legislation provides, inter alia, for:-

- The creation of a single strengthened national inland fisheries authority with strong regional executive structures which will be aligned on the basis of the River Basin Districts as set out in the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003). The new authority

will have strengthened powers in terms of development and implementation of national policy.

- The functions of the new authority include:
  - the establishment and facilitation, by the authority, of a National Inland Fisheries Forum, the deliberations of which will provide stakeholder input into policy formulation and sectoral development both nationally and locally,
  - the establishment by the authority of a Standing Scientific Committee, to replace the Scientific Committee established by the former National Salmon Commission to advise and assist on all technical and scientific matters relating to the management of the State's inland fisheries resource.
- Standard corporate governance provisions including the preparation of corporate plans, annual accounts and annual reports.
- The dissolution of the Central Fisheries Board and the 7 Regional Fisheries Boards and the transfer of functions, employees, property, liabilities etc., to the new Authority.

It is envisaged that the following benefits will accrue following the establishment of Inland Fisheries Ireland.

- Advice to the Minister will focus on strategic objectives on a national basis;
- More efficient and effective management of the inland fisheries resource;
- More streamlined, coherent and integrated policy formulation;
- Better use and allocation of financial resources;
- Alignment of the regional operations of the authority with the river basin districts should ensure enhanced delivery of the relevant functions under the EU Water Framework Directive and an approach consistent with that adopted in terms of implementing policy in this area. It will also be beneficial in terms of implementing future EU sponsored measures in this area;
- Formalising stakeholder input into policy formulation through the creation of the new National Inland Fisheries Forum which will act as a conduit to provide advice and inform policy deliberation on the conservation, protection and management of all inland fisheries species;
- An improved national perspective in the formulation of inland fisheries policy.

4. Questions that respondents may wish to consider in making a submission

The Public Consultation process will provide important information that will feed into the development of the IFI Corporate Plan. In order to make the process of analysing submissions as efficient as possible, IFI particularly welcome submissions that are structured in response to some or all of the following questions. These questions have been set up to help focus the consultation process.

Question
1. Based on the legislative remit of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), what work should IFI focus on doing in the next 5 years?
2. How should IFI prioritise this?
3. What, in your opinion, does the inland fisheries service do well?
4. What aspects do you feel need to improve?
5. What does IFI need to achieve to be seen as a success in 2014?
6. What key external influences will effect what we do?
7. What type of organisation would you like to be dealing with?
8. What are your key concerns as a stakeholder about the inland fisheries resource in Ireland?
9. In what aspects would you like to see more/less regulation applied?
10. In your view, what does IFI need to be to achieve its goals with the resources available to it?
11. Who do you see as our key customers?
12. In what way should we interact with them?
13. Who, in your opinion, can assist IFI in carrying out their legislative functions and how?