

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC FCIL 1 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AQUACULTURE & MARINE MEETING

**FOYLE, CARLINGFORD & IRISH LIGHTS
COMMISSION (FCILC)**

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

1 MARCH 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The nineteenth North South Ministerial Council Aquaculture and Marine meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on 1 March 2012. The meeting was attended by Michelle O'Neill, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and Nelson McCausland, MLA, Minister for Social Development. Minister O'Neill chaired the meeting.

PROGRESS REPORT

2. Ministers welcomed the recently appointed FCILC Chairperson Winston Patterson and Vice Chairperson Alan McCulla to their first NSMC meeting and received a progress report on the work of the Loughs Agency, from the Chairperson and the Chief Executive, Derick Anderson.

3. The Council welcomed the positive effect on Agency field staff morale as a result of meetings with Ministers and the Chief Constable of the PSNI following attacks on the Loughs Agency's enforcement staff and volunteer River Watchers.
4. Ministers welcomed the success of the Agency's enforcement actions under the Oyster Fishing Regulations. The Agency successfully convicted every individual or company that had caused a fish kill by pollution in the Foyle area in 2011. The improvement in the oyster population of Lough Foyle was noted and Ministers encouraged the Agency to continue to develop management strategies to consolidate and refine these improvements.
5. The Council also noted the issuing of a declaration suspending commercial fishing in Lough Foyle and the tidal Foyle to help improve the survival of Atlantic Salmon.

INTEGRATED AQUATIC RESOURCE MANGEMENT PROJECT BETWEEN IRELAND, N. IRELAND AND SCOTLAND (IBIS)

6. The Council noted that the Loughs Agency as Lead with partners from the University of Glasgow and Queen's University Belfast was successful in securing funding through INTERREG IVA for the project "Integrated Aquatic Resource Management Project between Ireland, N. Ireland and Scotland (IBIS) The overarching aim of this project is the development of a common approach to the delivery of high priority training, research and knowledge sharing, supporting freshwater and marine resource management and policy and the biodiversity that these ecosystems support. The total value of the programme is approximately £8 million which runs from August 2011 to June 2015.

PRESENTATION ON LOUGH FOYLE OYSTER FISHERY

7. Ministers welcomed the presentation by the Loughs Agency on the Lough Foyle Oyster Fishery and Oyster Spawning Assessment. The findings and recommendations from these annual reports allows the Agency to use the evidence gathered to inform its decision making in relation to regulation, policy development and enhancement works for the fishery.

ST ANDREWS REVIEW – FCILC RECOMMENDATIONS

8. The Council considered two specific recommendations concerning the Loughs Agency and agreed to refer the following recommendations for endorsement to the June 2012 NSMC Plenary:
 - The Loughs Agency to establish and provide services to producer organisations for the development of marine products with any legislative obstacles identified by the agency to be addressed by the two Sponsor Departments; and
 - An amendment to be sought to the Magistrates' Courts (Costs in Criminal Cases) Rules (Northern Ireland) 1988 to enable costs awarded

to better reflect the cost of bringing prosecutions; DARD will keep under review the opportunity to amend the Foyle Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1952 to allow for a fixed penalty regime.

LEGISLATION

9. Ministers welcomed the progress on the delivery of the Loughs Agency's, Legislation Implementation Plan, approved one set of regulations and noted that further regulations will require NSMC approval later in 2012.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10. The Council agreed to meet again in Aquaculture and Marine sectoral format in June/July 2012.

**Joint Secretariat
1 March 2012**