



PAPER NSMC FCIL 1 (10) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AQUACULTURE & MARINE SECTORAL FORMAT

FOYLE, CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS COMMISSION (FCILC)

AFBI, HILLSBOROUGH

31 MARCH 2010

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The fifteenth North South Ministerial Council meeting in the Aquaculture and Marine Sectoral format was held in the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Hillsborough on Wednesday 31 March 2010. The meeting was attended by Michelle Gildernew, MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Minister of the Environment Edwin Poots, MLA, and Minister of State for Natural Resources Conor Lenihan, TD. Minister Gildernew chaired the meeting.

PROGRESS REPORT

2. The Council welcomed a progress report on the work of the Loughs Agency, presented by the Agency's Chairperson Tarlach O Crosain and the Director of Corporate Services, John Pollock.
3. Ministers noted:
 - the importance and effectiveness of the Loughs Agency's Conservation and Protection work on the fisheries of the Foyle and Carlingford areas;

- progress with the implementation of the Agency's Marine Tourism Development Strategy through the roll out of the projects supported by INTEREREG IV;
- the successful engagement with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and initiation of the Riverwatch Phase 3 Project;
- the Riverwatch outreach environmental science programme with local schools; and
- the implementation of an unsocial hours allowance scheme for the Loughs Agency's field staff.

BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2010

4. Ministers noted that the Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC) has applied efficiency savings to the 2010 budget in accordance with the Efficiency Delivery Plan that was approved by the Finance Departments in November 2009. They also noted the draft 2010 Business Plan and proposed budget for the FCILC and further noted, that following approval by the two Finance Ministers, the Business Plan will be submitted to the NSMC for approval.

MONITORING REPORT ON ESTUARINE FISH SPECIES IN LOUGH FOYLE

5. The Council welcomed a presentation by the Loughs Agency on the monitoring of fish species diversity in Lough Foyle. Ministers noted the practical use of this information and how it is applied in management decisions by the Loughs Agency in the Foyle Catchment.

LEGISLATION

6. The Council approved a set of regulations which prohibits the retention of salmon, sea trout and brown trout from stretches of the Rivers Finn and Foyle, a necessary conservation measure due to the observed decline of salmon populations in this river system.
7. Ministers considered the Agency's legislation implementation plan, welcomed progress in its delivery and noted that further regulations will require NSMC approval during 2010.
8. The Council also approved for a further year, to July 2011, a procedure to support the Loughs Agency in dealing, through regulations, with emergencies such as pollution incidents.

NEXT MEETING

9. The Council agreed that the next meeting in the Aquaculture and Marine sectoral format will take place in June/July 2010.

**Joint Secretariat
31 March 2010**