

MINUTES

Joint NWWAC/NSAC Focus Group Social Aspects

11 January 2022

Participants

Bruno Dachicourt (Chair)	European Transport Federation	IND	NWWAC
Norah Parke	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation	IND	NWWAC
Marina Le Gurun	Blue Fish	OIG	NWWAC
Jasmine Vlietinck	Rederscentrale	IND	NWWAC/NSAC
Johnny Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary	OIG	NWWAC
Mo Mathies	NWWAC Secretariat		
Matilde Vallerani	NWWAC Secretariat		
Tamara Talevska	NSAC Secretariat		
Mary Campbell	BIM		

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed all participants. Apologies were received from David Curtis, EAA, and Gérald Hussenot Desenonges, Blue Fish. The Chair explained that there was a change the agenda which was then adopted by the participants. No comments were received on the minutes from the last meeting, which were adopted by members.

2. Careers in Seafood Industry – Mary Campbell, BIM

Mary Campbell is Programme Manager with the skills management unit in Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM). She presented on a study BIM commissioned to understand public attitudes to careers in the seafood sector, with the aim to develop supports and campaign materials to promote careers in the industry. To do so, a nationally representative sample of adults aged 16+ was interviewed and asked for views on working in seafood. In order to understand more about the behaviour and needs of students when choosing careers, in-depth one-to-one interviews were conducted with career guidance counsellors.

Campbell reported that *“Pleasant working environment, pay and opportunities for career progression are key factors influencing career choice for 16-24 year olds”*. According to the research, most young people do not see the seafood sector performing particularly strongly on any of these factors, as they typically associate the industry with hard work and long working hours. Most believe that it requires a high level of physical fitness and mainly involves handling fish. Perceived career opportunities are limited, with few people seeing beyond the occupations of fishing, fish monger and processing.

Only 10% of the 16-24 year old respondents associated the seafood sector as one for young people and 5% of them associated the seafood sector as offering opportunities to women.

Campbell pointed out that there is a poor message about the fisheries sector, with perception that the seafood sector is not doing well economically, which makes it less attractive. In 2020, despite the pandemic, the Irish seafood sector turnover was 1 billion euro. However, only 8% of respondents agreed that the seafood sector is thriving.

Guidance counsellors are a key source of information for students when making career choices, as 67% of 16-17 year old respondents identify career guidance counsellors as an important source of information on career choice. Young people also look to draw on the experience of others (parents / personal contacts), as well as searching online. The research pointed out that materials like videos or content on social media are needed to help guidance counsellors advise students on career options in the seafood sector.

As highlighted by Campbell, BIM is not viewed as a provider of information for getting into the seafood sector, but rather for providing direction on training for those that are already involved. Therefore, BIM needs to reach, influence and engage young people from early education stages.

Key findings and recommendations from the research include:

- The development of a suite of tools to support students and guidance counsellors about careers in the seafood sector. This should comprise of a mix of online media (videos, information) and direct engagement with schools.
- The need to put the industry in a positive light and highlight those areas that are successful and represent the future of the sector, making it an attractive prospect for young people.
- The need to highlight the range of career opportunities available to young people – the industry is not just about fishing. This can be best achieved by profiling those already in the industry that are making a success of it for themselves.
- Clarity on the different career paths available to young people entering into the sector and how they can progress through these. Also being wary of needing to highlight the opportunities for both men and women.
- The use of social media when specifically targeting young people. How this engagement happens will need to be targeted specifically at younger age groups.

Norah Parke highlighted the importance of targeting school teachers as well, as they can have an important influence on students. She then asked if young people's career choices are also influenced by the location they live in (coastal or inland locations for example). Finally, Parke pointed out that environmental NGOs also play a big role in influencing the public perception of the fisheries sector and that negative information on environmental impacts of fishing activities can influence that as well.

Campbell confirmed that BIM will attend career days in schools and engage teachers as well. She also replied that young people are very influenced from what surrounds them and the community they have been raised in. Especially for those schools that are not in coastal communities, children need to be informed from a very early age.

"I wouldn't worry too much about anti-fishing components of NGOs", said Johnny Woodlock, who commented on the role of teachers and on the huge impact they can have on students' perspectives. It is important that children hear positive opinions and experiences about the seafood sector and it would be beneficial to invite sector representatives to talk to them at school. He also pointed out that it is indeed challenging to change the narrative of fisheries being a hard job and not suitable for women. At sea activities are traditionally a male-only sector. A change is needed, but it can only come if proper infrastructures on board are provided for women to enable their participation.

Campbell agreed with Woodlock's comments, replying that BIM aims at showing the wide range of opportunities for a career in the seafood sector, including for women. She also added that, according to the research, many children had

experienced sectors such as retail and hospitality through summer jobs and were recommending them as career opportunities. This means it is very important that young people are given experiences in the seafood sector.

The Chair commented that the French sector is facing the same issues in attracting youngsters. A project in Hauts de France is now producing 3D videos targeting young people to provide them with an immersive experience about the job opportunities in the seafood sector. Campbell replied that it would be useful to share practices and experience to progress together. The Chair agreed and pointed out that the NWWAC would be an appropriate forum to bring together studies, research and projects on the topic, including other AC members as well. *“A transnational approach to recruitment in the fishing industry would be highly beneficial”*, commented Parke.

The Chair thanked Campbell for the very interesting presentation.

ACTION: The Secretariat will share with members the slides presented by Campbell, who also made available for consultation by FG members a more detailed presentation on the topic.

Woodlock pointed out that the NWWAC held a workshop in 2010 on the same topic and that it would be useful to have the report distributed among members.

ACTION: Secretariat to share the NWWAC report on the 2010 seminar on the economics of fisheries management.

3. Draft Terms of Reference

Mo Mathies illustrated the changes to the Terms of Reference proposed by the NSAC (the updated version had been circulated in advance of the meeting). Following discussions at the last meeting, the Secretariat rearranged the objectives, adding the production of two pieces of advice on gender equality and on socio-economic viability of communities. Moreover, the identification of ways of addressing 3 pillars of sustainability in future NWWAC/NSAC advice was also added as further objective.

Members suggested to specify that the advice produced by the Focus Group could take the form of one single advice document or get split into separate papers documents.

ACTION: The Secretariat will update the ToR and share it with members for final review. Then the document will undergo the AC approval procedure.

Woodlock commented that the gender issue is quite horizontal and that the women perspective should be considered in every advice produced by the FG. The Chair agreed and added that it could be useful to gather women's experiences and perspectives, as this could help encouraging and promoting women's role in the sector. Tamara Talevska proposed to interview fisherwomen and invite exponents to participate in the FG meetings. The group could also prepare a questionnaire to distribute to other women.

Mathies pointed out that there is already one questionnaire on crew members (next paragraph on this document) to be addressed by the FG. She suggested that the group wait for the Commission to launch the call on gender issues and see how it will be structured and which information will be asked. Then, the FG can consider arranging a questionnaire targeting women in the sector, which could be distributed through NWWAC and NSAC members, and organising a dedicated FG meeting with presentations from fisheries females representatives to inform the preparation of advice. The Chair and other members of the FG agreed with Mathies' approach.

4. Review and discussion of questionnaire

Mathies recalled that the group received a questionnaire from BIM on review of crew members, however it is very specific to Irish fisheries and needs to be streamlined to serve the purpose of this FG. Questions should be appropriate for NWWAC and NSAC members to respond.

ACTION: The Chair will identify the most relevant questions in the questionnaire. Then, Mo Mathies and Norah Parke will review the BIM questionnaire and provide members with a more streamlined version for comments.

The Chair added that in France there is a professional observatory looking at how many fishers there are per region and per type of navigation. As this is produced on an annual basis, it provides a good overview on how the profession is evolving. This information that helps understanding which policies are required to improve the sector. The Chair will share this information with members as it will be useful in the work of rearranging the BIM questionnaire.

5. Next steps

Members agreed to set the next meeting on 15 February at 10:00 CET. This will allow enough time to work on the questionnaire, which will be distributed in advance of the meeting.

ACTION: Dr. Iliana Christodoulou-Varotsi will be invited to attend the meeting and do a presentation. Tracey Floyd (fishing consultant at Dorans Skippers Mate) will also be invited to participate as observer.

6. Summary of actions agree and decisions adopted by the Chair

1	The Secretariat will share with members the slides presented by Campbell, who also made available for consultation by FG members a more detailed presentation on the topic
2	Secretariat to share the NWWAC report on the 2010 seminar on the economics of fisheries management.
3	The Secretariat will update the ToR and share it with members for final review. Then the document will undergo the AC approval procedure.
4	The Chair will identify the most relevant questions in the questionnaire. Then, Mo Mathies and Norah Parke will review the BIM questionnaire and provide members with a more streamlined version for comments
5	Secretariat to invite Dr. Iliana Christodoulou-Varotsi to present at the next meeting, as well as Tracey Floyd to observe.