

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING between Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) and the Environment Agency (EA)** Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4UD.

## **1. Aim of the Memorandum**

**This Memorandum agrees a coordinated approach to sustainable development in our seas and oceans based on active engagement, shared information and effective management of fisheries and the environment in estuaries and coastal waters by the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and the Environment Agency.**

## **2. Purpose of the Memorandum**

- 2.1. This memorandum establishes the responsibilities of the parties and the general principles for their cooperation.
- 2.2. The Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and the Environment Agency agree that this Memorandum is not intended to be a legally binding document.

## **3. Roles and functions of the signatories**

### **3.1. Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs)**

- 3.1.1. There are 10 inshore fisheries and conservation districts in England, made up of county and unitary authorities and their corresponding seaward areas out to a limit of 6 nautical miles. Each inshore fisheries and conservation district is served by a corresponding Authority (IFCA), whose vision is to *“lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries within their district, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry”*.
- 3.1.2. IFCAs work through the guidance of Statutory Committees whose balanced membership reflects their districts’ economic, social and environmental needs and gives them local democratic input and accountability. The Committees have the right level of representation from the communities they serve to be able to make effective decisions on the sustainable management of sea fisheries resources within their districts. They have the backing of constituent local authorities and provide the strategic direction to ensure the long-term sustainability of the marine environment in and around their districts.
- 3.1.3. IFCAs develop and enforce distinct local policies but also operate within, and contribute to, the national framework for managing the marine environment. They work across district boundaries and engage with Local and Central Government and key partner organisations at a national level, to the benefit of IFCAs and their local communities as a whole.

### **3.2. The Environment Agency (EA)**

3.2.1. The principal aim of the EA is to protect and enhance the environment across England and Wales. It has a key role in the sustainable management of estuaries and coastal waters, including controlling polluting discharges from land-based sources, strategic overview of flood risk management and coastal erosion, management of migratory fisheries (to six nautical miles), protecting and enhancing biodiversity and acting as competent authority for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

3.3. Through adherence to the principles of this Memorandum the IFCAs and the EA will work closely together in areas of mutual interest such as marine planning, marine licensing, marine monitoring, fisheries management and enforcement. A list of the working arrangements and activities which underpin this effective collaboration are detailed in Annex 2.

## **4. Principles of working together**

4.1. The IFCAs and the EA will work closely based on common principles:

- The IFCAs and the EA each recognise the independence and remit of the other party, but will always seek to collaborate and cooperate in the achievement of their shared and respective objectives in the marine environment.
- The organisations will operate transparently in relation to the other, while undertaking their responsibilities.
- The organisations will involve and work with each other in areas of shared interest or concern, with other relevant delivery partners included where appropriate and agreed.
- The parties will keep each other informed of any data, research, collected information or other work or development that might influence the decisions or activities of either party, to the fullest extent possible, taking account of their respective obligations under relevant legislation.

4.2. Through the observation of this Memorandum, all of the IFCAs and the EA will seek to ensure their respective responsibilities are discharged consistently in keeping with the principles as outlined.

## 5. Methods of joint working

- 5.1. The IFCA's and the EA will explore further opportunities to expand shared working and reduce duplication of effort. This aspect will be enhanced by exchanging information, collaborating on enforcement (through cross-warranting, where appropriate), joint training, research, monitoring, data and evidence gathering at national and local levels, sharing environmental issues and intelligence and pooling expertise and resources.
- 5.2. The relationship will thrive on a policy of transparency and "no surprises" based on pre-notification of significant public or policy announcements where there are implications for the other party.
- 5.3. The IFCA's and the EA will aim to ensure consistent and coordinated messages when working with Government, delivery partners and the public.
- 5.4. IFCA's and the EA will support each other in their respective roles in the administrative function for, and active membership of, IFCA Committees.

## 6. Data Management

- 6.1. Each party will, subject to a separate information sharing agreement, provide information in its possession that may be reasonably requested by the other, subject to necessary confidentiality constraints, safeguards and statutory rules. The parties will, in line with Freedom of Information Act 2000 'provisions on information provided in confidence' and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, contact the originating party with regard to any requests for information it holds, but did not collect, and which it is aware is confidential in nature. Each party will consult the other party about any significant disclosure of received information it proposes to make to a third party.
- 6.2. External publication of any information generated in the use of exchanged data will require the other party's approval, which will not be unreasonably withheld. All Intellectual Property Rights belong to their owners and no rights are transferred or assigned as a result of this Memorandum.
- 6.3. Data exchanged under this Memorandum cannot be used for commercial purposes without the prior agreement of the party supplying the data. When it is agreed that exchanged data could be used for commercial purposes, financial and copyright terms will be negotiated and agreed outside the terms of this Memorandum<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The IFCA's and EA accept that they should not disclose information received from other with a classification of "high risk". A separate Data Sharing service level agreement will be established to define the parameters for data sharing and disclosure.

## 7. Continuous Improvement

Senior officials of IFCA's and the EA commit to twice-yearly meetings (these may be via video or telephone conferencing) to review and explore the shared wider strategic context of the environment in which they operate and actively explore opportunities for the continued development of joint working practices. These strategic reviews will be in addition to local discussions on collaborative working at IFCA Committee or joint enforcement meetings.

## 8. Review and appraisal of the Memorandum

This Memorandum is jointly owned by the IFCA's and the EA and will be reviewed annually, by March 31, and whenever substantial changes occur to the policies, external relationships and structures of the parties concerned.

## 9. Primary Contacts

The IFCA's and the EA will each nominate a lead contact. These primary contacts will be responsible for maintaining a fluent, transparent relationship between the IFCA's and the EA, resolving difficulties and monitoring the smooth operation of the Memorandum.

## 10. Signatories

The following parties agree to the terms set out in this Memorandum.

Environment Agency		
Chairman		Chief Executive
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities		
North Western IFCA	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	Chairman
Devon and Severn IFCA	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	Chairman
Cornwall IFCA		

	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	Chairman
Isles of Scilly IFCA	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	Chairman
Southern IFCA	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	Chairman
Sussex IFCA	Chief Executive	Chairman
Kent and Essex IFCA	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	Chairman
Eastern IFCA	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	Chairman
North Eastern IFCA	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	Chairman
Northumberland IFCA	Chief Executive	Chairman
Association of IFCAs	Chief Executive	

## ANNEXES

- **Annex 1 – Marine enforcement roles and responsibilities**
- **Annex 2 - Overall working arrangements for IFCAs and the EA**
- **Annex 3 – Data and information sharing agreement (to be drawn up)**
- **Annexes 4-11 – Specific working arrangements agreed locally between individual IFCAs and EA**