COUNTRY NOTE ON NATIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS -- IRELAND

Profile of Irish Fishing Industry

1. The Irish fishing industry makes a significant contribution to the economic and social fabric of the many small communities located around our coastline. It contributes some EUR 380 million to the Irish economy annually.

1.1 Employment

2. In total some 15 000 people are employed directly in the sea fishing, aquaculture and support industries. Of these, 6 100 people are employed in the fishing fleet, 4 000 in Seafood factories, 2 600 in the aquaculture industry and some 2 000 in ancillary employment servicing the industry.

1.2 Fleet

3. The fishing fleet is largely a coastal fleet made up of about 1 400 vessels, of which over 90% are skipper/owner single vessel family operations. Of these 1 400 vessels, around 400 are greater than 12 metres in length and make up the offshore commercial fleet. The balance (1000) makes up the inshore fleet, many of which operate on a part time or seasonal basis.

4. The sea fishing industry can be divided into three distinct segments:

- the pelagic segment, focused on mackerel, horse mackerel and herring;
- the offshore whitefish fleet which is located in the major fishery harbours around the coast, focused on round whitefish such as whiting, haddock, hake and anglerfish
- the inshore fleet, focused on shellfish such as lobster, crab, and scallops.

Table 1. Volumes and values of landings per segment (2002)

Segment	Volume (t)	Value (EUR m)
Pelagic	180 000	66
Whitefish	37 000	79
Shellfish	61 000	89

1.3 Production

5. There are some 130 seafood-processing plants, most of which are small operations focusing on niche seafood products. There are almost 20 large seasonal pelagic (herring and mackerel) processing plants in the north-west of the country which provide substantial amount of fish.

6. The value of primary production in the seafood sector was EUR 313 m in 2001, made up of EUR 206 m as the first landed value of the catch from the sea fishing industry and EUR 107 m as the value of the primary production from the aquaculture industry. Total seafood exports amounted to EUR 433 m in 2001. The bulk of the employment and economic benefit of the industry is concentrated in peripheral coastal communities along the western seaboard. The industry is most concentrated in areas of high economic disadvantage and is therefore vital to the maintenance of the socio-economic fabric of these areas and to the overall spatial balance of economic development.

Management of fisheries

7. With annual quotas imposed on all the principal species the objective of fisheries management is to regulate and maximise the catching, sale and processing of fish within the limits set.

8. Each month, on the basis of national quota allocations, the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources in consultation with the industry decides on management regimes for the following month. These management regimes involve catch limitations per vessel.

Pelagic Fisheries

9. The term "pressure stock" is applied to certain high demand species. Such species are subject to additional management measures controlling times, areas and weekly or monthly amounts fished. An added stipulation requires early notification of intention to fish. Open and closed seasons are imposed where necessary. At present the following are pressure stocks:

- Western Mackerel - In ICES Divisions IV, Vb, VI, VII
- North West Herring - In ICES Divisions VIa(N), VIa(S)/VIIbc
- Celtic Sea Herring - In ICES Divisions VIIfghjk
- Horse Mackerel – In ICES Divisions Vb, (EC Waters), VI, VII, VIIIabdde, XII, XIV

10. In addition to requiring sea fishing boat licenses, participants in the above fisheries must hold current pressure stock licenses.

11. Pelagic Management Advisory Committees are in operation in the following areas:

- North West Pelagic Management Advisory Committee
- Celtic Sea Herring Management Advisory Committee.

Demersal Fisheries

12. Key whitefish stocks of importance to Ireland are managed monthly. A whitefish quota management committee comprising of members of the industry and national administration officials meets monthly to undertake detailed analysis of key stocks including Cod, Haddock, Whiting, Hake, Monk, Megrim, Nephrops Sole and Plaice, as well as deep sea species (see below). The majority of quota fisheries are controlled by means of separate Ministerial Orders which restrict the fisheries as necessary, by setting catch limits per boat, according to the size of the vessel based on recommendations of the committee. The principal objective is to maintain access on an equitable basis throughout the year. Practical implementation of management regimes falls to Sea Fisheries Protections Officers on land, and the Naval Service at sea.

Deep Sea Species

13. Total allowable catches (TACs) for deep-sea species were adopted for the first time in 2002 (for 2003). Ireland secured quotas for certain deep sea fish stocks allowing for Irish involvement in this fishery as follows:

- Black Scabbardfish – In ICES Divisions V, VI, VII, XII (EC Waters)
- Greater silver smelt – In ICES Divisions III, IV, V, VI, VII, (EC Waters)
- Tusk – In ICES Divisions V, VI, VII (EC Waters)
- Roundnose grenadier – In ICES Divisions Vb, VI, VII, (EC Waters)
- Orange roughy – In ICES Divisions VI, (EC Waters)
- Blue ling – In ICES Divisions II, IV, V, (EC Waters)
- Ling – In ICES Divisions VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XII, XIV, (EC Waters)
- Red seabream – In ICES Divisions VI, VII, VIII, (EC Waters).

14. Under the legislation adopted in 2002 participants in this fishery are required to hold a permit, which is granted to an applicant who has met criteria as laid down by the national administration.

15. Participants in this fishery are then issued with monthly notifications advising them of catch restriction limits. These monthly limits are set following consultation with the industry and take into account the uptake of the available quota.