



FISHING INTO THE FUTURE

**CORE VALUES FOR
WORKING TOGETHER
EFFECTIVELY**

SUMMARY

Who is this document for?

This document is for anyone who is interested in ideas around improving how we work together in fisheries science and management.

More specifically, this document was written with decision-makers in mind - those working in politics, policy and management who have influence - to provide some insights into a collective vision on approaching co-management and how more effective ways of working together can be woven together through discussion, action, sharing of ideas, and holding of shared values.

It is built from conversations held at the Fishing into the Future 'F-REP' (Fisheries Resource Education Programme) events in 2023 and 2024, with an aim to inform the development of UK fisheries management under the UK Fisheries Act 2020.

What are our core values for working together effectively?

These Core Values were developed and discussed between the people attending the FITF F-REP event, they include input from stakeholders engaged in the catching sector, fisheries science and fisheries management and highlight ideas around working together to build meaningful co-management around the UK coast. Many of these values represent ways of working that will be essential to co-management taking root, and remaining resilient into the future.

Over 100 people attended the F-REP events and participated in this discussion – aligning their core values as a community of fisheries stakeholders who believe in co-management underpinned by collaborative science and research. The following is a summary of what was agreed.

CONDITIONS FOR CO-MANAGEMENT

A series of Core Values drawn from discussions at Fisheries Resource Education Programme sessions for working together effectively.



WE CAN BE TRUSTED AND SHARE OPENLY

Open, respectful and thoughtful communication is foundational to building constructive relationships and producing mutually beneficial outcomes.



WE PLACE IMPORTANCE ON CONNECTIONS & FAMILIARITY

Regular face-to-face meetings, and ensuring continuity of those present helps to create deeper, more fluent relationships between stakeholders.



WE LISTEN, UNDERSTAND & COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER

Ensuring that information is presented in a way that everyone can understand, that there are clear lines of communication and that appropriate methods are used to speak with one another.



WE KEEP OUR SYSTEMS FOR WORKING TOGETHER SIMPLE & DEPENDABLE

Establishing systems of working together that are easy to understand, but which are also responsive to changes, so that everyone can seamlessly feed into decision-making processes.



WE WORK EFFICIENTLY AND VALUE EVERYONE'S TIME

Ensuring that everyone's time is valued, and working to rhythms that fit with the seasonality and daily rhythms of the industry, will enhance motivation to be part of decision-making processes.



WE BASE DECISIONS ON EVIDENCE

Making decisions based on evidence allows stakeholders to collaboratively weigh the risks and benefits of certain decisions. Evidence-based reasoning provides greater credibility to the decisions taken.



WE VALUE DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDER ROLES ACCORDINGLY & SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ISSUES & HOW TO SOLVE THEM

Making certain everybody has a clear understanding of each other's roles, to ensure everyone in the industry has channels to share their voice and share information with ease.



WE INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF FISHERIES AND COMMUNITIES

Understanding sustainability as building social and economic as well as environmental resilience over the long term, and acknowledging the important roles everyone has to play in this.

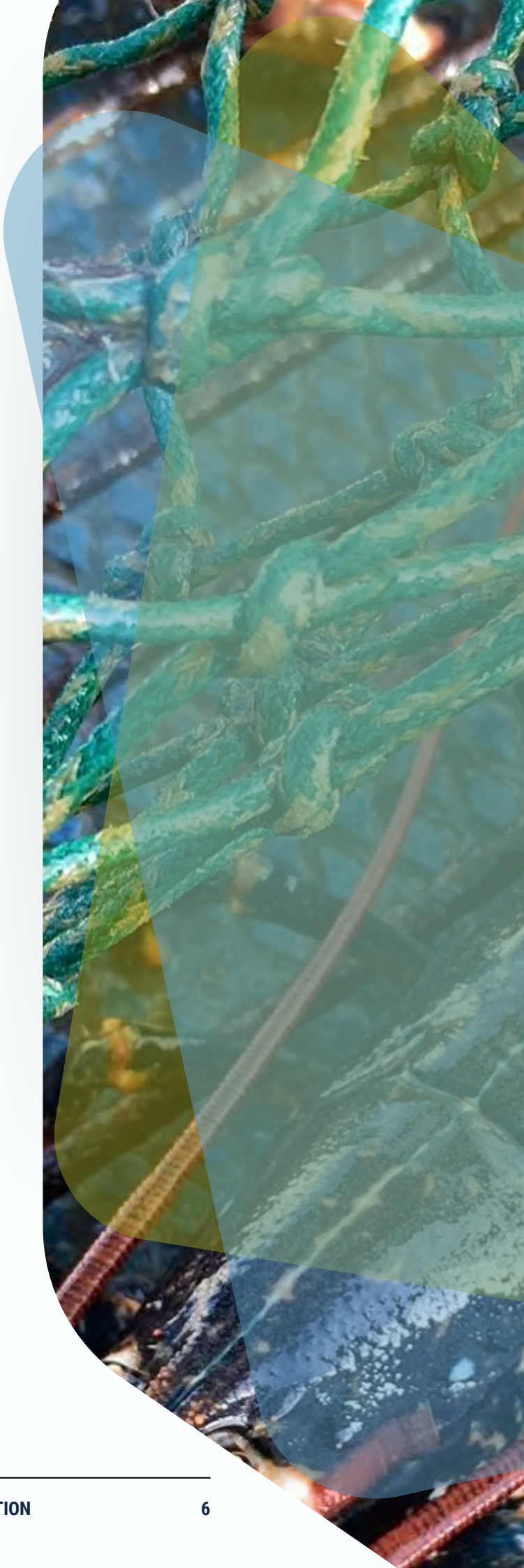
INTRODUCTION

Fishing into the Future (FITF) is a UK-wide charity pioneered by fishermen, for fishermen. Striving for sustainable and thriving UK fisheries, FITF is unique in its mission to bring together all those who have a stake in the industry to work more effectively together and is actioning measures to ensure fishermen's knowledge and expertise is central to the process of decision-making in the industry.

The Fisheries Resource Education Programme (F-REP), run by Fishing into the Future (FITF), encourages and enables information exchange between the network of fishermen, vessel owners, skippers, crew, and industry representatives with those in fisheries policy and management: scientists, governments and beyond.

The F-REP learning events give fishermen the tools and connections to engage more effectively in science and management. These in-person events are unique opportunities to bring together all stakeholders within industry and government to ensure effective dialogue and shared participation with the common ambition of building sustainable and prosperous fisheries. FITF is enabling forward-thinking change in the industry by making positive collaboration between all stakeholders the norm.

For many fishermen and policymakers, it isn't common to be in the same room as each other, let alone to have extended periods of time for open and honest conversations together. The F-REP approach is unique within fisheries management and creates a space for industry stakeholders who are often underrepresented giving the opportunity for everybody to be more effectively involved.




The following document outlines a list of core values for working together effectively in UK fisheries co-management and what they mean in practice. These values were assembled from the 'Core Values' sessions at F-REP South & East Coast (held in Southampton in 2023 & Yorkshire in 2024) and intend to be a guide for organisational actions, to navigate the nexus between industry and governments, and to represent the foundational beliefs about the identity and culture of people working in UK fishing.

This document can be used in building effective engagement systems, and informing future policy which directly or indirectly affects the fishing industry.

A note on the core values sessions

These sessions were facilitated by a core group of FITF Trustees and F-REP participants, hosting breakout groups to inspire discussion & capture thoughts. The sessions involved groups comprised of fishermen and managers, along with industry representatives, academics, and other people connected with and involved in the fishing industry. On a series of flipcharts, the groups wrote down statements and ideas, drawing on their experiences of what has or has not worked well before, to define a series of core values enabling effective collaboration. The breakout groups then came together for a wider discussion. The following captures the major themes discussed during these sessions.

The following passages represent the voices of people who attended the Fishing into the Future F-REP events in 2023 and 2024. We took these notes during the Core Values session, mixing sub-groups of fishermen with people working in fisheries science and management. They reflect a collective discussion and are not the views of a single person, institution or organisation.



WE CAN BE TRUSTED AND SHARE OPENLY

- ◆ **Fishermen should be recognised as experts in their field, with their knowledge being an accepted and credible source of information.** This may require putting new systems in place and building capacity to capture information effectively. Equally, fisheries managers are experts in what they do; their qualities and expertise should be valued too.
- ◆ **The future of a resilient and thriving UK fishing industry lies in meaningful co-management and a move away from top-down management.** Fishermen and those in the seafood industry should be recognised as part of the decision-making infrastructure, integrating their knowledge in the development of policy and management measures in order to draw on their expertise and reduce unintended impacts and consequences on the industry.

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FISHERMEN SHOULD BE RECOGNISED AS EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELD.

- ◆ **It's important to move away from scenarios where fishermen feel “sidelined” or “inconsequential” in the process and the results of decision-making,** recognising that all the surrounding infrastructure (markets, management, fisheries, science) depends on a thriving industry. Fishermen are food producers and should have a prominent and fair stakeholder position in decision making, as in other industries, like farming or aquaculture.
- ◆ **Trust and understanding brings mutual respect.** There needs to be set expectations and consistency around how to interact with one another, with clear rules on what is acceptable in terms of how people approach each other and respond to meeting or information requests.



WE PLACE IMPORTANCE ON CONNECTIONS & FAMILIARITY

- ◆ For the full array of fisheries stakeholders to work collaboratively, **spaces for interpersonal relationships and continuity of the people present in these spaces is needed**. When appropriate, face-to-face options for communicating are valued by the industry.
- ◆ **In-person spaces and meetings benefit from effective and thoughtful facilitation**, when possible, including industry people to support these internal communications. It is important to always be mindful of considering different voices that are important to the conversation, and create appropriate means to include these voices.

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FACE-TO-FACE OPTIONS FOR COMMUNICATING ARE VALUED.

- ◆ **When groups of fisheries stakeholders are brought together, consider the tone and language being used, as well as explaining and reinforcing new or unfamiliar technical jargon**. Fostering a clear, common language helps to reduce barriers to working together. Bringing in industry voices to the planning of events and meetings - including in developing agendas, choosing the time and locations etc - additionally supports an inclusive and engaged event.
- ◆ **Safeguards should be put in place to ensure key voices are not excluded and barriers – such as financial restrictions on travel, timings of meetings, taking time off fishing and earning – do not sideline collaborative decision-making**. It was suggested that systems within the industry, or a dedicated grant scheme, could be set up to compensate fishermen when they take time off from being at sea to engage in a management or policy-focused meeting.



WE LISTEN, UNDERSTAND & COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER

- ◆ **All individuals involved in fisheries management should be notified of new information in an appropriate way for the audience.** Understanding and using the right methods for communication with each group or person can be transformational – for example, using different methods such as websites, WhatsApp, leaflets and videos.
- ◆ In order to move past the historically poor experiences and ‘eroded’ trust within different groups of people in the industry, **everyone involved is responsible for making renewed efforts to communicate well and make time to participate**, and acknowledge each other’s efforts and give space and allowances for mistakes, learnings and improvements.
- ◆ **There should be clear and transparent feedback loops when groups of fisheries stakeholders communicate, or when the industry communicates with government.** Outreach from policy or science to the industry should always focus on relevant information for the audience, whether this be based on specific regions, fisheries, topics, or people.
- ◆ **People within every component of the systems in which policies are developed should be able to access information on these policies and how these relate to the fishing industry**, creating a wholly transparent network of information channels. This information should be presented in a user-friendly manner from an easily accessible source.
- ◆ **There is a responsibility on the part of industry to create cohesion and more developed internal systems of organisation and representation**, especially for the fleets and regions where organisational systems and representation is weak. It was suggested that industry should work towards developing shared aims and collaboration over different gears, this will help create a mutual bond and shared understanding that the industry is united and everyone is connected. This may require, at least initially, new capacity and funding to build these systems from wider industry, government and charitable sources.

A woman with long dark hair is speaking into a microphone. In the background, there is a whiteboard with handwritten notes in green and black ink. The notes include 'How?', 'TRUST?', 'honesty?', 'Openness?', 'Respect?', 'Common Language', 'Commitment to RFGs', and 'Building Personal Relationships'.

WE KEEP OUR SYSTEMS FOR WORKING TOGETHER SIMPLE & DEPENDABLE

- ◆ **It is suggested that systems which are dependable and straightforward, as well as flexible and responsive to changes, are ideal for collaboration.** This simplicity of the system should allow everybody to understand how the infrastructure operates – reinforced by audio-visual information with relevant details to get involved – so it’s easy to understand how to feed into decision-making processes.
- ◆ **Effective infrastructure for the interface between the industry and policy (or science) will ultimately be built on people you can reach out to and with whom you can build trusting relationships.** This, in turn, ensures the systems for working together respect the rhythms of all involved so that everybody can participate in the process effectively. For example, what is logistically convenient to a member of government to participate in a process may not be workable for a fisherman.



BUILD TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

- ◆ **When possible, it is preferable to favour education over compliance** - understanding why a regulation exists and participating in developing it is a powerful way of promoting compliance. Suitable frameworks for education around regulations and addressing inconsistencies must exist for this to be effective.
- ◆ **Expectations are managed through developing a broad understanding on international and national policies and frameworks, along with regional legislations.** These should be consistent with one another and well understood, so when industry participates in a process, they are clear on the legal requirements around a decision, and the scope of being able to make changes.



WE WORK EFFICIENTLY AND VALUE EVERYONE'S TIME

- ◆ **Meetings should recognise and respect the attendance of unsalaried industry people, who may additionally lose income while they are “tied-up” to be involved in a meeting or process.** These meetings need to cover relevant topics for those participating and be effectively facilitated to balance and consider all voices in attendance. By considering who is inputting into the conversation, time can be used more efficiently.
- ◆ **The industry needs a better understanding of why certain regulations exist.** Involving industry from the initial stages of development and providing greater context to new policies is expected to lead to better engagement and compliance once it is implemented. If the existence of a regulation cannot be justified or creates conflict and confusion, this must be addressed, and industry should feel their views and input are considered and responded to appropriately.

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THE UK FISHING INDUSTRY NEEDS TO BE VALUED AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE WIDER-UK COMMUNITY

- ◆ There is a sense of fatigue from multiple consultations on multiple topics being run at the same time, making it difficult to meaningfully and effectively participate. **There should be a consideration of the rhythm of the fishing industry and its busy seasons, with clear timeframes and templates for participating.** This will allow internal industry organisations to discuss topics and respond – and responding/participating effectively then becomes more achievable.
- ◆ **The UK fishing industry needs to be valued as an important part of the wider UK community,** reflecting national affection toward British seafood, the celebration of fishing communities and its importance to local and regional economies, and the wider UK economy.




WE BASE DECISIONS ON EVIDENCE

- ◆ **Everybody should be made accountable for their decisions, and decisions require an appropriate level of evidence to justify the reasons behind them.** Transparent access to key information and available evidence allows those participating to collaborate in understanding the risks and benefits of decisions.
- ◆ Policy decisions reflect a wide scope of knowledge, that may include social and qualitative data. **It is recognised that it is not possible, or systems don't yet exist, to 'evidence' specific knowledge, but that does not make this knowledge less valuable.**



THERE IS A SEAT AT THE TABLE FOR EVERYONE WITH A STAKE.

- ◆ **Everybody operating in the systems of decision-making should meet standards of professional conduct and be measured against targets.** This will create an environment where successes and failures are acknowledged and resolved, and these become opportunities for feedback, learning and improvement.
- ◆ **There is a seat at the table for everyone with a stake; all involved, should justify the reasoning for why they are involved in decision-making.** It needs to be better understood and justified why each stakeholder, specifically eNGOs, are involved in decision making processes and address scepticism around including different stakeholders in the conversation.



WE VALUE DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDER ROLES ACCORDINGLY, AND SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ISSUES AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM

- ◆ **The industry should have a fair system for participation and treatment, making spaces accessible to all involved.** Rather than filtering information ‘up and down’, the industry should work towards channelling information around and across the board, with clear spaces to pull every group of people together. This type of engagement can only be achieved if everyone has the foundational skills, knowledge, connections and means to all participate effectively. Therefore, an appropriate infrastructure and pace should be set for everyone in the industry to handle involvement in management.
- ◆ **In order to channel information effectively, there needs to be a clear understanding of each other's roles and who does what in the process,** in a way that considers all stakeholder groups. This will ensure that decisions are made consistently and appropriate to the fleets involved.
- ◆ **Opportunities should also be provided for fishermen to set the agenda, co-facilitate or host meetings.** This will need to be supported through funding and time to build internal industry capacity on a broad set of skills.



WE INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF FISHERIES AND COMMUNITIES

- ◆ **The fishing industry needs opportunities facilitated by science and management to understand and build capacity to be involved in their work, and vice versa, science and management need to invest time in understanding the industry and building skills to communicate and engage with industry effectively and understand the nature of fishing.**

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CELEBRATE FISHING INDUSTRY PEOPLE AS PROUD GUARDIANS AND STEWARDS OF THE OCEAN.

- ◆ **People working in the fishing industry are acknowledged as prominent providers of food and valued beyond their industry.** Wider government departments and decision-making that occurs beyond the fishing industry, that may directly or indirectly impact fishing, considers and appreciates the importance of the catching sector – for example in energy production, housing, tourism and infrastructure.
- ◆ **Sustainability is a top priority for the industry and it encompasses environmental, social, and economic factors.** There needs to be a change in the narrative that fishermen are perceived to be against sustainability, and instead celebrate fishing industry people as proud guardians and stewards of the ocean.
- ◆ **Working in fishing is perceived to be an honourable career, fishermen can walk “with their head held high” and are valued by government, scientists and the wider general public for hard work, innovation and commitment to feed the nation (and beyond).** This requires building a narrative that will maintain a high level of respect for this career and attract new entrants to join the industry and its supporting roles, to build a resilient and buoyant future for everyone involved in the industry.

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 For all of our socials, go to:
[Linktr.ee/fishing_future](https://linktr.ee/fishing_future)

If you're interested in learning more about the Fisheries Resource Education Programme and sign up for future events, go to our dedicated F-REP page on the Fishing Porthole website:

www.FishingPorthole.co.uk/f-rep

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