

NRW B O 55.13 – Annex A

Sustainable inland fisheries in Wales – an agenda for change

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Introduction

Wales' environment is one of our greatest resources. Cherished by the people of Wales and beyond for its wildlife, landscapes and seascapes, it is vital for the range of services it provides – food and water, energy, even the air that we breathe. Our environment contributes to our economic prosperity and our sense of community.

But these are challenging times – the need to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and declining biodiversity sit alongside tackling poverty and the need to raise economic prosperity. The aftershocks of the financial crisis continue to be felt across our economy and in our families and communities. We need to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Wales and ensure that we have long and healthy lives. Natural Resources Wales believes that there is a great opportunity to respond to such challenges – not alone, but by working with and alongside partners including Welsh Government, the third sector and local communities. By fully embracing the principle of sustainability and considering how we should use natural systems and market mechanisms, Wales can be a more prosperous, joined up and resilient nation.¹

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that we use and manage Wales' natural resources in a way that will deliver lasting economic and social as well as environmental benefits and is proposing to establish a statutory framework for the sustainable management of natural resources, through a process of integrated natural resources management.²

In Wales we will adopt an ecosystem approach, which is ultimately about planning a sustainable future for ourselves, our environment, economy and communities. It is about managing our natural resources for the benefit of all by taking a joined-up approach and working together to establish common aims and objectives.

Natural Resources Wales is developing a catchment approach to managing our freshwater ecosystems, identifying issues and agreeing actions using groups comprised of a range of interests and skills and developing multi-purpose action plans that tackle issues at their source, rather than promoting unsustainable approaches to mitigate the local effects.

Fish are a key component of our freshwater ecosystems and an important natural resource. We need to recognise the value of them and to manage them carefully for the long term. It is appropriate that we identify the successes, challenges and specific issues and concerns relevant to our inland fisheries so we can influence the development of a more integrated approach to the sustainable management of natural resources and natural resource planning within Natural Resources Wales and with our partners and co-deliverers.

¹ Natural Resources Wales Planning our future: a consultation

² Towards the Sustainable Management of Wales' Natural Resources Consultation on proposals for an Environment Bill

Sustainable inland fisheries in Wales – an agenda for change - A summary

Freshwater fisheries and their supporting ecosystems are of great importance to the environmental, social and economic well being of Wales.

Fish are valuable and have an important role for:

The Environment:



Fish require good water quality and availability which can be achieved through effective land use management. Fish are a key indicator of ecological performance and environmental quality.

Community:

Fish have an important role in engaging people with the environment, in education and provide opportunities for recreation and associated health benefits.



The Economy:



Wales' fisheries provide jobs and income in commercial and recreational fishing, fisheries management and tourism.

We have achieved much in Wales however there are challenges, now and in the future, to maintaining sustainable fisheries that current evidence, approaches and resources cannot adequately address.

We **all** need to take action now to meet these challenges if Wales is to continue to enjoy the direct environmental, social and economic benefits our fisheries provide and the wider benefits from a healthy environment.

We need to seek the views, ideas and evidence for change, through conversations with partners and co-deliverers, to gain consensus on the aim and outcomes for sustainable inland fisheries in Wales and to co-produce action plans that cover all the pressures on fisheries.

This is an agenda for those conversations. This is an '**agenda for change**'.

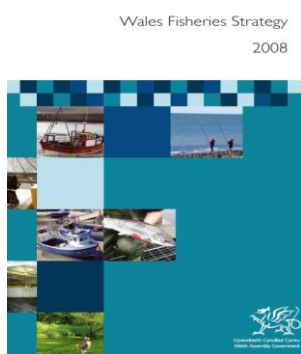
Natural Resources Wales' legal responsibilities for inland fisheries

Overall policy responsibility for Welsh fisheries is devolved to the Welsh Government.

Natural Resources Wales is responsible for regulation of inland fisheries in Wales (including salmon, sea trout, eel, smelt and lamprey out to 6 nautical miles) and has a duty under the Environment Act 1995 to “maintain, improve and develop fisheries”.

This is achieved through implementation of legislation and externally funded work based on actions agreed with Welsh Government.

A review of inland fisheries management



On 27th March 2012, the Minister, Alun Davies, announced a review and renewal of the 2008 Fisheries Strategy for Wales.

Natural Resources Wales is developing a programme² to work with partners and stakeholders to provide the evidence to inform advice to Welsh Government on the development of inland fisheries policy and to inform Natural Resources Wales' approach to natural resources management. The programme will address the ideas presented within the 'agenda for change'.

We are working with colleagues in Welsh Government to ensure that the outcomes and timetable for taking forward the '**agenda for change**' are aligned with the Marine and Fisheries Strategic Action Plan for Wales.

While Natural Resources Wales will focus on inland fisheries, Welsh Government's Marine and Fisheries team will focus on helping the marine fishing industry support economic activity and employment in Wales' coastal communities.

² Sustainable inland fisheries for Wales – an agenda for change. Short term priority actions

The approach

In the past, lead organisations have written fisheries strategies, focussing on single issues or species. These strategies often failed to deliver all their outcomes as they were not developed and agreed with those with the opportunity or responsibility to manage the wider ecosystems that support our fisheries. The outcomes for sustainable fisheries can only be achieved through the actions of a wide range of internal and external stakeholders not just those traditionally with a fisheries interest.

The new approach we will be promoting is to seek the views, ideas and evidence for change, through conversations with partners and co-deliverers, to gain consensus on the aim and outcomes for sustainable inland fisheries in Wales and to co-produce action plans that cover all the pressures on fisheries.



To make best use of resources and skills of Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government, partners and stakeholders we will identify existing programmes and groups where these conversations can take place e.g. Water Framework Directive 'Challenges and Choices' consultation. This will also facilitate the integration of the actions for change across programmes and policies.

The clear message from our work and from stakeholders is that we will need to work collaboratively with a wide range of partners, some new to us, to develop the way forward and deliver the actions on the ground. Some of the actions will be different to our historic approaches. We must be clear that the actions we develop with partners are aligned to the principles of sustainable development and an ecosystem approach from the outset and that climate change adaptation principles are embedded into our action plan.

We have already held discussions on the key issues and opportunities at a series of internal and external workshops in Wales. We have taken the messages from these conversations to develop an initial aim and outcomes for sustainable inland fisheries in Wales and to identify headline ideas for change to deliver these outcomes. These have provided the starting point for the '**agenda for change**'.

What has been achieved in Wales?

Wales' inland waters support rare and iconic fish including arctic char, shad, gwyniad, salmon and sewin (sea trout). The status of stocks (numbers/populations) of these and all the other species of fish in Wales provides us with a clear indication of the current state of and trends in the health of the wider environment. Fish form a key component of, and allow us to meet Good Ecological Status (GES) under the Water Framework Directive. 36% of surface waters are currently at GES. The aim is that 50% of water bodies will meet GES by 2015.



In the past ten years Welsh Government has provided £8million in funding for a Sustainable Fisheries Programme which has delivered projects costing £32million, largely as a result of European Union (EU) funds and support from other partners. These projects have resulted in over 1500km of new access for migratory fish and 500km of habitat improvements.



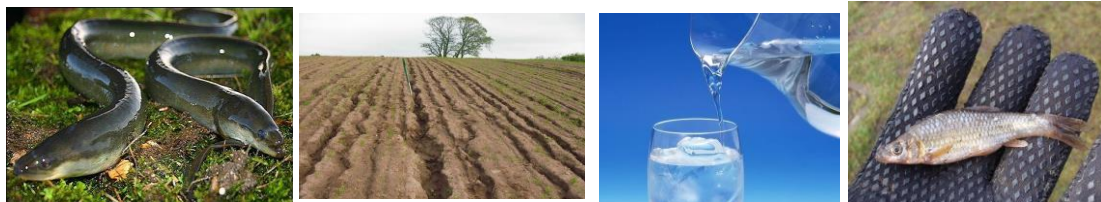
Fisheries are a valuable educational resource. Projects with schools, such as salmon homecoming, enable young people to engage with and understand their local environment.

This promotes a sense of environmental responsibility.

Angling is one of Wales' most popular outdoor participatory sports. It provides a relatively cheap form of recreation, accessible across all sectors of society. There are 1.8 million angling days in Wales each year. It is a resource valued by the people of Wales and attracts anglers from across the world. The income generated through angling related tourism is an important contribution to Wales' economy (£148m per annum in 2005 including sea angling). Marketing programmes have consistently delivered an 80:1 return on investment. In addition to recreational fishing, forty-five commercial salmon and sea trout licences are issued in Wales, including for the unique heritage coracle fisheries on the rivers Tywi, Teifi and Taf.

The challenges

There are challenges, now and in the future, to maintaining sustainable fisheries that our current evidence, approaches and resources cannot adequately address.



Evidence on fish stocks - Although stocks of some species, such as salmon are showing signs of recovery following declines in the 1990s others, such as eels, are in decline. It is still not clear for many species what represents a healthy stock that will support all the demands and withstand all the pressures on this natural resource. We will need a strong evidence base and the flexibility to respond quickly to changes in stocks.

Land use - The main reasons for failing to achieve Water Framework Directive targets are the impacts of barriers to migration and poor water quality on our fish populations. Water quality is affected by diffuse pollution from agriculture, mine-waters and forestry. The solutions will lie with land use and an approach to land use management that takes account of the wider impacts on our fisheries.

Increased demand for natural resources - A growing population will put pressure on land for increased agricultural productivity and space for development in both urban and rural locations. There will also be an increased and sometimes conflicting demand on natural resources such as water for drinking and for recreation. We will need shared outcomes across government, policy, the public and private sectors to enable an holistic approach to managing our natural resources, to sustain the environmental, social and economic benefits they provide.

Climate change -The changing climate is already having an impact on our environment. Warming water temperatures and lower flows in our inland waters will have a direct effect upon our fisheries. There is also the potential for an increase in the number of invasive species that will either impact indirectly through competition or change to habitats or directly through predation or disease. Effective horizon scanning to identify the risks will enable us to define policy, put in place effective legislation and prepare action plans to manage the risks and deal with the issues as they arise.

Resources - In the current economic climate with increasing competition for a reducing level of funding and the pressure to deliver 'more for less', we need to adopt more imaginative and efficient ways of working with a broad range of partners.

We all need to take action now to ensure we have sustainable fisheries into the future, if Wales is to continue to enjoy the direct environmental, social and economic benefits they provide and the wider benefits from a healthy environment.

Why now?

Natural Resources Wales – The establishment of Natural Resources Wales provides the opportunity to consider our role and focus in fisheries management and the promotion of angling and how we can work more with partners in these areas. There are opportunities through management of our estate, our own plans, programmes and projects and through our regulatory role to develop new approaches, demonstrate best practice and implement an ecosystems approach, including to sustainable inland fisheries management in Wales.

Sustainable Development – Sustainable Development has been adopted as the central organising principle across Wales. All outcomes, programmes and policies will reflect this commitment to sustainability and fairness through an emphasis on social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Ecosystem Approach – In Wales we will adopt an ecosystem approach, which is ultimately about planning a sustainable future for ourselves, our environment, economy and communities. It is about managing our natural resources for the benefit of all by taking a joined-up approach and working together to establish common aims and objectives.

Shared outcomes – Shared outcomes across government, policy, private and public sector provides an opportunity to embed the management of sustainable fisheries across Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and other partners in public, third and private sectors.

Welsh Government Marine and Fisheries Strategic Action Plan – The announcement by Welsh Government of a strategic framework to: ‘deliver an empowered, responsible and dynamic industry, maximising its economic value through better internal co-operation with better linkages to markets and more innovative fishing methods’.

Welsh Government legislative programme – Included in the current five year legislative plan is the Future Generations (Wales) Bill, (previously the Sustainable Development Bill), Planning (Wales) Bill and Environment (Wales) Bill to provide for a more integrated management of the environment in Wales with greater environmental protection, economic and social benefits and for connected purposes.



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What we want to achieve

Long term Aim:

Fisheries of Wales are iconic and highly valued. Action is taken to improve them now and in the future to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits for all.

Draft outcomes have been developed that reflect the discussions with internal and external fisheries communities and the shared outcomes agreed with Welsh Government:

- Enhancing our environment
- Protecting people
- Supporting enterprise and jobs
- Improving the nation's health
- Viable and vibrant places
- Delivering social justice
- Supporting skills and knowledge

Agenda for Change – outcomes for sustainable inland fisheries

Environment outcomes

- The environment is managed to support fish as a key component of Wales' diverse and rich wildlife.
- Fish are valued as an important natural resource for Wales and are managed within sustainable limits.
- The status of Welsh fisheries is adopted as a key indicator of the health and resilience of the natural resources of Wales and as an indicator of climate change across all sectors in Wales.

Economic outcomes

- Public, private and third sectors work in partnership to maximise economic, social and environmental benefits of investment in fisheries.
- There are increased economic benefits to Wales, through developing and inspiring business opportunities, through fisheries related activities.
- Wales' fisheries generate more long-lasting and high quality employment within local communities.

Social Outcomes

- The health and wellbeing benefits of our fisheries are extended to a wider cross-section of the people of Wales, through increased access to and participation in angling.
- Wales' fisheries contribute to viable, vibrant communities in Wales where distinctive and diverse local character is maintained and improved.
- Fisheries give the people of Wales, of all ages, the opportunity to learn about and enjoy the environment.

Governance outcomes

- Welsh Government has a coherent strategy for achieving the social, economic and environmental benefits from sustainable fisheries in Wales.
- There is a new model for the management of fisheries in Wales, supported by fit-for-purpose legislation.
- There is cohesion amongst the bodies that contribute to the management of and benefit from the fisheries of Wales.

Headline ideas for change

1 Outcome focussed approach

We need: Shared outcomes across government, policy, public and private sector delivered through better co-ordinated and more flexible ways of working across organisations. This will enable a more holistic, ecosystem approach to addressing issues and maximising benefits, at an appropriate scale. More imaginative sourcing of resources and skills, identifying who can best deliver the agreed outcomes.

Key points to discuss:

- Culture
- Catchment thinking
- Resources and skills

2 Evidence

We need: A strong evidence base for fisheries to justify actions and influence the activities of others. This will require 'shared' data from different sources. Monitoring data needs to be targeted and fit for purpose. Monitoring data interpreted and information on the status of fish clearly presented. The ability to immediately take action in response to changes identified through the assessments.

Key points to discuss:

- Monitoring and assessment
- New technologies and innovation
- Managing risks

3 Protecting and managing our fisheries resource

We need: Legislation, tools and management approaches both directly for fish and for the wider environment that supports fish, which are pro-active rather than reactive and provide real-time control.

Key points to discuss:

- 21st Century Legislation
- Enforcement
- Management approaches

4 Communication

We need: To understand the audience and how they want to be communicated with. The importance of fish, for the social, economic and environmental well-being of Wales, must be communicated to the wider community through messages delivered by a wide range of stakeholders and through opportunities for people to engage with the environment. Cohesive, co-ordinated representative groups who communicate with each other from a position of mutual respect and trust.

Key points to discuss:

- Clear messages, clearly delivered
- Changing relationships
- Advice and services
- Education

5 Promoting sustainable fisheries for all

We need: To promote the health and recreational opportunities from sustainable fisheries and where they can be enjoyed in Wales. A better understanding of societal changes in Wales and the opportunities these offer to promote the wider benefits of Wales' fisheries. Wales to be synonymous with outdoor recreation, of which angling should play a role.

Key points to discuss:

- The wider opportunities for health and well-being from Wales' fisheries
- How and who best to promote angling

6 Funding

We need: To decide on the right things to do to deliver sustainable fisheries management then ensure that the right income is in place. More imaginative approaches to securing adequate future funding to deliver the outcomes, adopting a flexible approach to resourcing. To explore opportunities for more effective use of, or increasing income from current sources as well as identifying new funding sources.

Key points to discuss:

- Use of funding
- New and increased funding

Next steps

Natural Resources Wales will review, in conjunction with Welsh Government, the ideas for change to identify conversations that will deliver evidence to support Welsh Government's inland fisheries policy programme.

We will identify existing programmes and groups where these conversations can take place to integrate the actions for change across programmes and policies.

We will identify the shared outcomes which provide an opportunity to embed the management of sustainable fisheries across government, policy, and the private and public sector.

An early task will be to identify the key ideas for change that can be addressed from within Natural Resources Wales. We will prioritise the actions that deliver remit letter and Corporate Plan outcomes¹:

A Good Environment – ecosystems are resilient and secured for the future, wildlife and landscape are enhanced, and the use of our natural resource is carefully managed.

Good for People – people enjoying, valuing and benefitting from our natural environment and understanding its relevance in our day to day lives.

Good for Business – a 'location of choice' for business and enterprise and a place where best practice environmental management is adopted and encouraged.

Good Knowledge – gaining wisdom and understanding our natural environment and how we affect it – using evidence and applying learning from experience, so that we make good decisions.

We will work with colleagues to embed these actions within the Directorate delivery plans. We will develop clear position statements to enable us to clearly and confidently respond with 'one voice'.

Annex 1 -Ideas for change from the co-production workshops

1 Outcome focussed approach

Culture

- A focus on shared outcomes and actions within and between organisations, with outcomes that are simple, measureable and agreed by all stakeholders.
- Outcomes for sustainable fisheries to be achieved through the actions of a wide range of stakeholders not just those traditionally with a fisheries interest. All stakeholders are accountable for delivering the outcomes.
- Government, Local Government, public and private sector organisations to take account of the needs for achieving sustainable fisheries in their own policies and plans.
- Partners empowered, within an environment of trust, to focus on delivery of outcomes rather than process.
- A joint approach to managing our inland waters and our seas.
- Management of our protected areas for health, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes.
- Flexibility to be innovative and inventive in the final design and delivery of schemes and projects, within key criteria and environmental limits.

Catchment thinking

- A national strategy implemented at an appropriate scale locally using an ecosystem approach.
- Sustainable land management that considers delivery of a range of ecosystem services is the keystone to ensuring sustainable fish populations and sustainable fisheries.
- A catchment approach to identifying issues and agreeing actions using groups comprised of a range of interests and skills.
- Develop multi-purpose action plans that tackle issues at their source, rather than promoting unsustainable approaches to mitigate the local effects.
- Adopt a catchment approach to fish stock management.

Resources and skills

- More imaginative sourcing of resources and skills, identifying those best placed to deliver key activities.
- Better co-ordinated third sector working to tackle common issues and make more effective use of funding.
- Build capacity within the third sector and target new groups to support delivery of fisheries outcomes.
- Better understanding of fisheries resources and skills in Wales and better use of these resources and skills to advise on delivering outcomes through internal and external partners.
- Establish a fisheries resource and skills base within Wales through succession planning, training and apprenticeships.

2 Evidence

Monitoring and assessment

- Better understanding of individual fish populations and how they respond to changing pressures.
- Fish monitoring and interpretation of the data must be undertaken to provide a true assessment of fish stocks and information for fisheries management, rather than reporting on Water Framework Directive status.
- A common glossary of data terms and technical scope to facilitate effective collation and use of 'shared' data.
- Monitoring to be co-ordinated within and between organisations, to provide better, coherent data and allow more effective use of funding.
- Use catch return data more effectively to prepare a clear narrative for each stock, to provide common ground for discussion.

New technologies and innovation

- New monitoring and assessment 'tools' that are, responsive, efficient and flexible to continue to assess stocks.
- Take full advantage of developments in IT (facebook/ twitter/ apps) to get 'real time' information, wider observations and anecdotal evidence from people 'out in the environment'.
- Make better use of the best available technologies, lead the way in good practise and using science and promote the use of our innovations.

Managing Risks

- Effectively use horizon scanning to identify and understand forthcoming developments such as new technologies and societal changes and their potential impacts on fish.
- Use the horizon scanning to develop policies which will inform action plans so we are prepared to manage any impacts.
- Adopt a risk-based approach so we can invest in the actions that are most likely to be successful.
- Investment in climate change adaptation programmes.
- Early identification of the risks from invasive species to develop effective biosecurity measures.

3 Protecting and managing our fisheries resource

21st Century legislation

- Fisheries legislation that is sufficiently flexible and reactive to enable real-time regulatory control.
- Streamlined fisheries legislation that is effective and aimed at delivering outcomes rather than target driven.
- A common 'code of conduct' agreed between and enforced by angling clubs rather than individual club bye-laws.
- Wider environmental legislation that enables more stringent regulation of land use to promote sustainable fisheries.
- More effective mechanism for regulating in or near river activities, including non-main rivers.
- Powers to prosecute more easily for all legislation.

Enforcement

- Intelligence led and more effective targeting of the resource available for fisheries enforcement.
- Closer working and shared duties between wildlife crime enforcement teams.
- More effective enforcement of activities that impact upon the wider environment.
- Clearer communication on the role and effectiveness of the enforcement service.
- More voluntary agreements and self-regulating by industry.
- Understanding the benefits to enforcement from local knowledge and a local presence.

Management Approaches

- Review the role and effectiveness of fish stocking for sustainable fisheries management.
- Identify the wider opportunities for biodiversity, mitigation schemes, research and education that can be delivered by hatcheries.
- A better understanding of the long-term impact of 'low level' pollution incidents on fisheries and how we can more effectively remove them at source.

- Clearer guidance to public sector and private landowners on sustainable land use management practices that reduce the impacts on and promote the opportunities for sustainable fisheries.
- Increase the opportunities for improvement of fish habitat and fish movement through capital schemes, developments and permits.
- A more efficient approach to identifying and implementing habitat improvement schemes.

4 Communication

Clear messages, clearly delivered

- Clear policy for key issues, explained in clear position statements to build confidence and trust.
- Better understanding the audience, who they are, where they are and how they want to be communicated with.
- Greater investment in communicating the importance of sustainable fisheries to the wider community.
- Communications which are self-financing through advertising and sponsorship.
- Increased use of websites and on-line communications promoting opportunities for information exchange from the 'grass root' to the policy level.
- An effective framework for engagement with stakeholders with an interest in and responsibility for, delivering sustainable fisheries outcomes.

Changing relationships

- We need a position of mutual respect and trust to allow honest, open discussion of key issues and priority actions.
- Actions delivered in partnership where all involved understand and respect each others' needs, skills and limitations.
- Change in role for Natural Resources Wales from the traditional 'doers' to that of advisors and facilitators, with actions delivered by land owners, managers, business and communities with local knowledge and local interests.
- Water related recreation interests need to come together to work with Government and public sector bodies to devise a strategy for water related recreation and how they will work together and regulate themselves to deliver the strategy.
- A more cohesive and representative coalition of angling interests.

Advice and Services

- Listen and respond by providing the advice and services required.
- More effective demonstration of benefits and value for money that the fisheries service can provide.
- Increased visibility of and accessibility to those providing the advice and services.

- Review the effectiveness of the emergency number for enabling and encouraging incident reporting.
- Provide operational fish advice to those directly involved with fish and also to those working in the wider environment that could impact upon fish.
- More effective sharing and use of best practice.

Education

- Build on existing initiatives with schools and community groups to produce a more consistent and coherent input to education opportunities for adults as well as children.
- Greater promotion of fish, as an important indicator of the health of our environment.
- Provide the key messages and materials to partners so the importance of fish is included in the messages delivered by others.
- Provide advice and material for the development of school curricula.
- Support coaching scheme with community and youth groups.

5 Promoting sustainable fisheries for all

The wider opportunities for health and well-being from Wales' fisheries

- A change of thinking to marketing of catchments for a range of recreational activities.
- Promote the wider recreational opportunities of fisheries rather than just for angling.
- Increase the opportunities for people to experience or get access to our fisheries.
- Better understanding of the societal changes that are driving a change in the angling demographic in Wales.
- Angling clubs to take greater responsibility for the services they receive and also provide to meet the needs of local communities.
- Consider whether to re-focus away from rivers towards still waters where most of our angling is now taking place.

How and who best to promote angling

- Consider the opportunities for marketing at an all-Wales level by a specialist organisation supported by fisheries advice.
- Consider the opportunities for marketing at a local level by local people promoting their fisheries and associated businesses.
- Wales to be recognised as the home of responsible angling.
- Review the most effective way of promoting angling, as either a single focus activity or part of a wider recreational experience.
- Examine the role of a strong angling body for Wales promoting angling as an activity making use of a natural resource, whose management is 'directed' by Natural Resources Wales.

6 Funding

Use of funding

- Transparency and the ability to track the use of funding, in terms of delivery of outcomes and return on investment.
- A consensus from charge payers that money is used to achieve agreed fisheries outcomes.
- The flexibility to use financial resources to tackle issues at source or deliver wider benefits, which may require legislative or policy changes or a review of funding scheme criteria.

New and increased funding

- Using grant-aiding powers to influence delivery plans to achieve fisheries outcomes.
- Assess the effectiveness of the rod licence as a source of income for fisheries work.
- Incentives and 'off-setting' to encourage investment to deliver fisheries outcomes.
- Assess the options for financial or 'in-kind' contributions from fishery and riparian owners when businesses benefit from environmental improvements delivered by public funding or regulatory income.
- Assess the feasibility of a recreational water use charge.
- Greater access to industry mitigation funds for fish habitat improvement work.
- Increased income from angling either directly by broadening the appeal of fishing to 'all the family' and other social groups or indirectly by linking to other activities as part of a 'recreational tourist package'.