



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Sea Fisheries Sustainability Impact Assessment

Stakeholder Consultation

31 August 2026

Purpose of the Consultation

Stakeholders are invited to comment on the ICES advice for fish stocks and the European Commission's Communication "*Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2027*" and the accompanying Staff Working Document.

The closing date for submissions is close of business 06 October 2026.

All submissions received, subject to legal and editorial considerations, will be published on the FishingNET website.

Documents accompanying this Consultation Paper

- Table prepared by the Marine Institute indicating the Fishing Mortality and Spawning Stock Biomass of fish stocks relative to their reference points (Table 3)
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council
- Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2027
- Commission staff working document accompanying the document:
Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council
- Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2027

Background

Fishing opportunities (Total Allowable Catches or TACs) for most of the commercial fish stocks of interest to Ireland are agreed on annual basis in the EU Fisheries Council of Ministers on the basis of a proposal produced by the European Commission. In order to examine the implications for Ireland, a Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) of the proposal is conducted. The Minister presents the SIA and directly hears the views of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Fisheries and Maritime Affairs in preparation for the various fishing opportunity negotiations.

The SIA is an important step in Ireland's preparation for the TAC setting process. The SIA draws conclusions from a consultation process with all major stakeholders and expert contributions from the Marine Institute (MI) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM). The objective of the SIA is to look at the overall impacts the proposal could have on the sustainability of the fishing sector from a biological, economic and social perspective.

In the past, the SIA was conducted in October/November after the EU Commission published its proposal for fishing opportunities for the coming year. In previous years, the Commission's proposal would include the proposed TACs and quotas for most stocks, except inshore and shellfish stocks not subject to TACs & Quotas.

In addition, where advice for a stock had not yet been received, or international negotiations for stocks were still ongoing, the fishing opportunities would be presented as *pro memoria* (*pm*) in the proposal. This has been the case for stocks such as Mackerel, Blue Whiting and Atlanto-Scandian Herring. These stocks are jointly managed by the EU and the other Coastal States in whose waters these stocks are present. The TACs for these stocks are set at the Coastal States' negotiations, where the Commission negotiates on behalf of the Member States. The Commission has exclusive competence to negotiate fishery agreements on behalf of the EU Member States.

Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the majority of stocks of relevance to Ireland – which were previously exclusively Union resources – are now shared resources under international law. This means that the Commission, on behalf of the EU, must consult with the UK (and in some cases both the UK and Norway) on the setting of fishing opportunities for these shared stocks. As a result, when the Commission publishes its TAC and Quota proposal, these shared stocks will be listed as *pro memoria* (*pm*).

SIA Format and Process

The new EU-UK consultation process has resulted in changes to the timing and arrangements of the EU's TAC setting process. Consequently, the timing and procedures of the SIA process have been adjusted so that it can continue to provide a meaningful and effective contribution to how Ireland prepares for negotiations on fishing opportunities.

The Minister aims to carry out the SIA process before the consultations with the UK commence, in advance of the Coastal States consultations and before the Commission publishes its proposal for 2027 Fishing Opportunities. Due to this, the advice for some fish stocks has not yet been finalised by ICES. However, carrying out the process at this stage will facilitate input from stakeholders, analysis by BIM and MI and the views of the Oireachtas in time for the start of the TAC setting process.

The scientific analysis of the SIA will be based on the available ICES advice and will also consider relevant reports of the EU Commission's Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF).

The consultation with stakeholders will be based on the ICES advice. The ICES advice forms the basis of the scientific advice used by the Commission in proposing TACs and informs the EU's negotiating position for consultations with Third Countries, such as the UK. Therefore, it is the most suitable option for conducting the SIA, in the absence of a proposal from the Commission.

Table 1 (below) lists the stocks for which ICES has published advice for 2027. This table compares the ICES advice for 2027 and lists Ireland's 2026 quota for these stocks. For clarity, a table showing the stocks for which we do not yet have advice is also included (Table 2). The ICES advice for Mackerel, Horse mackerel, *Nephrops* and Blue Whiting – some of Ireland's most important commercial stocks – is awaited.

A more detailed table, setting down the Fishing Mortality and Spawning Stock Biomass of each stock relative to their reference points is also attached for information (Table 3).

Also attached is the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2027" and the accompanying Commission Staff Working Document which were published on 05 June 2026. This Communication is the Commission's first step in preparing for the TAC setting process and highlights the approach that the Commission will take for setting the TAC and Quota proposal and for consultations on fishing opportunities with

Third Countries. These documents give an insight into the Commission's objectives and guiding principles.

Table 1. ICES advice for 2027 that is currently available.

Stock name	Advice for 2027	TAC code	2026 TAC	2026 IE quota
Cod 6b	9	COD/5W6-14	74	5
Haddock 4,6a,20*	87,366	HAD/03A.	5,675	0
		HAD/5BC6A.	10,289	812
		HAD/2AC4.	92,337	0
Haddock 6b	23,721	HAD/6B1214	14,060	858
Anglerfish 3a,4,6*	34,245	ANF/04-N.	NA	0
		ANF/2AC4-C	19,387	0
		ANF/56-14	10,971	880
Megrim 4,6a + Megrim 6b†	6,773 + NA = NA	LEZ/56-14	6,190	650
		LEZ/2AC4-C	3,065	0
Saithe 4,6,3a*	48,320	POK/56-14	5,608	81
		POK/2C3A4	54,053	0
Cod 7a	0	COD/07A.	165	74
Haddock 7a	586	HAD/07A.	586	214
Plaice 7a	0	PLE/07A.	614	132
Sole 7a	548	SOL/07A.	545	69
Cod 7e-k	0	COD/7XAD34	191	27
Haddock 7b-k	0	HAD/7X7A34	1,824	329
Whiting 7bk	0	(WHG/7BCE-K)†	2,310	624
Whiting 7d	20,646	(WHG/7D)†	39,265	10,607
Plaice 7bc	12	PLE/7BC.	15	13
Plaice 7fg	77	PLE/7FG.	114	7

Stock name	Advice for 2027	TAC code	2026 TAC	2026 IE quota
Plaice 7hjk	126	PLE/7HJK.	130	53
Sole 7bc	12	SOL/7BC.	15	14
Sole 7fg	972	SOL/7FG.	989	28
Sole 7hjk	136	SOL/7HJK.	170	77
Hake Northern*	46,824	HKE/04-N.	NA	0
		HKE/03A.	1,645	0
		HKE/571214	30,607	1,630
		HKE/2AC4-C	1,904	0
		HKE/8ABDE.	20,756	0
Anglerfish (black) 7,8 + Anglerfish (white) 7,8	19,130 + 36,980 = 56,110	ANF/07.	46,122	3,265
		ANF/8ABDE.	12,358	0
Pollack 6,7*	3,216	POL/07.	2,224	154
		POL/56-14	93	13
Saithe 7-10	146	POK/7/3411	146	41
Herring 6aN	24	HER/5B6ANB	1,501	192
Herring 7aN	3,716	HER/07A/MM	4,178	41
Herring 7aS,7g-k	0	HER/7G-K.	869	750
Ling NEA*	9,322	LIN/03A-C.	101	0
		LIN/04-N.	465	0
		LIN/04-C.	1,586	0
		LIN/6X14.	7,635	527

Notes:

* In cases where the ICES stock advice covers multiple TAC areas, the ICES advice for 2027 is presented, along with the proportions of the TAC and IE quota for 2026 per TAC area.

‡ Catch advice for megrim in 6b will be published in autumn; it has been in the order of 1,000t in recent years.

† The parts of the WHG/7X7A-C TAC that can be fished in 7b,c,e-k and 7d respectively.

Table 2. Stocks of relevance to Ireland for which catch advice for 2027 has not yet been published. Note that Albacore tuna advice is not provided by ICES; this is ICCAT advice.

Stock name		Advice for 2027	TAC code	2026 TAC	2026 IE quota
Cod 4,6a,7d,20*		NA	COD/03AN.	1,596	0
			COD/07D.	650	0
			COD/5BE6A	625	31
			COD/2A3AX4	11,164	0
Whiting 6a		NA	WHG/56-14	5,364	1,280
Whiting 7a		NA	WHG/07A.	646	211
Megrim 7b-k,8abde + Megrim (4-spot) 7,8†		NA + 694	LEZ/07.	16,024	2,431
			LEZ/8ABDE.	1,585	0
Nephrops 6 no FU	Subarea 6†	NA	NEP/5BC6.	16,367	221
Nephrops FU11		NA			
Nephrops FU12		NA			
Nephrops FU13		NA			
Nephrops 7 no FU	Subarea 7†	NA	NEP/07.	13,167	4,191
Nephrops FU14		NA			
Nephrops FU15		NA			
Nephrops FU16		NA			
Nephrops FU17		NA			
Nephrops FU19		NA			

Stock name		Advice for 2027	TAC code	2026 TAC	2026 IE quota
Nephrops FU20-21		NA			
Nephrops FU22		NA			
Small-eyed ray 7fg		NA	RJE/7FG.	103	8
Undulate ray 7de		NA	RJU/7DE.	3,639	367
Undulate ray 7bj		NA			
Blonde ray 4a,6	Skates and rays in areas 6 and 7, excluding 7d † † †	7‡	SRX/67AKXD	9,320	1,131
Blonde ray 7afg		573‡			
Blonde ray 7e		213‡			
Cuckoo ray 6,7,8abd		NA			
Sandy ray 6,7		27‡			
Shagreen ray 6,7		134‡			
Spotted ray 6,7bj		NA			
Spotted ray 7ae-h		NA			
Thornback ray 6		NA			
Thornback ray 7afg		NA			
Thornback ray 7e		170‡			
Other rays 6,7		NA			
Albacore tuna NEA		NA	ALB/AN05N	27251	4604
Blue whiting NEA		NA	WHB/1X14 §	851,344	30,188
Bluefin tuna		NA	BFT/AE45WM	40,570	0
Boarfish 6,7,8		NA	BOR/678-	29,720	20,537
Herring 1,2		NA	HER/1/2	533,914	2,763
Herring 6aS,7bc		NA	HER/6AS7BC	3,269	2,972

Stock name	Advice for 2027	TAC code	2026 TAC	2026 IE quota
Horse mackerel NS	NA	JAX/4BC7D	970	17
Horse mackerel W	NA	JAX/08C.	10,142	0
Horse mackerel W	NA	JAX/2A-14	64,072	16,113
Mackerel NEA	NA	MAC/2CX14 §	299,010	18,705
Spurdog NEA	NA	DGS/15X14	7,663	1,273
		DGS/2AC4-C	2,417	0
		DGS/03A-C.	795	0

Notes:

* In cases where the ICES stock advice covers multiple TAC areas, the proportions of the TAC and IE quota for 2026 per TAC area are presented.

† For *Nephrops*, ICES provides advice at the Functional Unit level, whereas the TAC is set at Subarea level (6 or 7).

†† For rays and skates, ICES provides advice at the stock level but most skates and rays in areas 6 and 7 (excl 7d) are managed under a single TAC.

‡ Catch advice is available for 2027 for these stocks but not for the other stocks that are managed in the same TAC.

§ For blue whiting and mackerel, the EU publishes a TAC for these species (Council Regulation EU 2026/249), but the sum of the coastal states' quota does not necessarily add up to this value