



Agenda item B10

Success Criteria: 4 & 5

By: IFC Officer - Kent

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority – 20 May 2014

Subject: **INFORMING THE FUTURE – ANNUAL REPORT**

Classification Unrestricted

---

Summary: to report on the data collected and analysed as a result of the instigation of the Informing the Future project and to discuss the possibility of extending the project into Essex

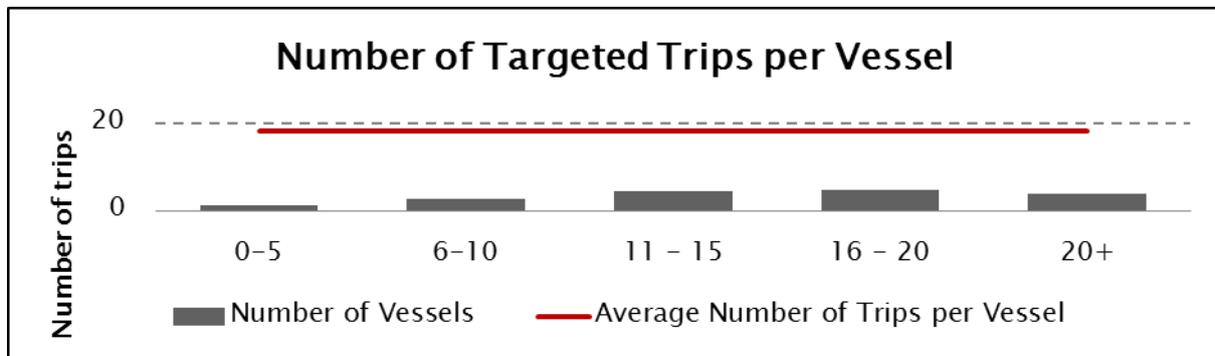
---

Informing the Future was designed to help gather data from the fishermen in our district on a number of key topics, from fishing activity to perceptions of prices received for fish. The project involves a monthly questionnaire that is distributed to the fishing community by a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO), appointed by KEIFCA. Questionnaires are filled in anonymously through the FLO, ensuring that information provided remains confidential. The questions allow us to gather data regarding a variety of influences on fishing. Weather conditions, fish stocks, and species most targeted are amongst key questions, while economic information, such as number employed in the industry and prices received for fish, is also gathered. Once responses are returned to KEIFCA officers, this data is input into a database and a monthly summary report is created that is then distributed to the fishing community through the FLO.

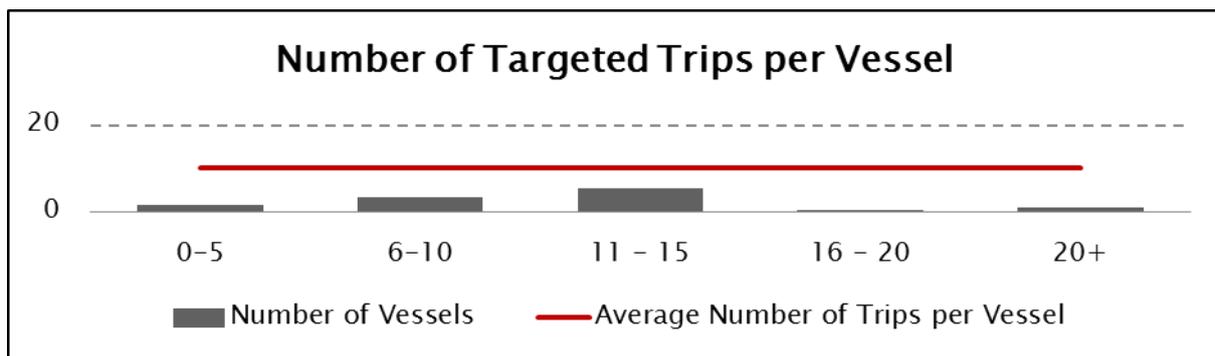
The project has been running now for just over a year with an average of 15 vessels participating. The data collected can now be compared by quarter and once the project has been running for a number of years, will allow for seasons to be directly compared. For example, figure 1 below shows the average number of targeted trips taken and the numbers of trips each vessel took during quarter 2 (April – June) of 2013 while figure 4 shows how this pattern changed in quarter 4 (October – December). It is likely that the average number of trips

taken was significantly reduced in quarter 4 due to fishing activity being restricted by bad weather.

The surveys have provided much interesting data regarding seasonal differences in fishing activity across the district. Data reports for all four quarters of 2013 are presented in the appendices.



**Figure 1:** Number of targeted trips taken by vessels during **quarter 2** of 2013.



**Figure 2:** Number of targeted trips taken by vessels during **quarter 4** of 2013.

The project has allowed KEIFCA to gather data and information about fishing in the district that has not been quantifiable previously. Given the growing focus on data availability in all aspects of marine management, this could prove invaluable to both KEIFCA and the fishing community in the future. Data gathered ultimately belongs to the fishing community that participates, although it can be used by KEIFCA to inform fisheries management plans, management of MPA as well as an array of other projects. This data can be used by the fishing community for other projects such as providing accurate information to consultations, if required. One of the key benefits for KEIFCA has been developing a trust amongst fishing community to create open communications between them and KEIFCA. This ensures that data they provide each month

For the next stage of the project, we will aim to gather data through the same process in Essex. It is likely that a number of FLOs will be required across Essex due to difficulties in getting around the Essex ports. It is important that the right people are selected as a FLO as that person is vital in establishing the relationship with the fishing community, whilst also maximising information received from fishermen by guiding them in answering the questionnaire. Building these relationships takes some time initially but once they are established, both the fishermen and the FLO will not have to spend as long on providing data. The FLO is also instrumental in feeding back suggestions from the fishermen about what they would like to achieve from the project.

**The Authority is asked to APPROVE continuing funding the Informing the Future project in Kent and for officers to work to expand the project in Essex.**