



**Wild Fisheries Reform:
Update from ASFB and RAFTS Chairmen
19 August 2015**

Dear Trust and Board Members,

Alasdair Laing and I sent a briefing to all Boards and Trusts on the 2 June (<http://www.asfb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/WFR-Briefing-2-June-2015.pdf>) concerning the possible geographical scope of any new FMO network. In that document we indicated that we both would be available and willing to come and meet any Boards/Trusts to assist with discussions on this issue. We are happy to report that we got a good response to this briefing and have subsequently had several useful meetings in different parts of the country with boards and trusts and often, helpfully, both together. We have been encouraged by the measured and imaginative response to the challenge of trying to establish what sort of areas FMOs might logically cover and have had interesting debates about the issue of 'scale' in an attempt to find the 'sweet spot' between having organisations large enough to be financially and administratively viable, whilst being small enough to retain the strengths of local management.

As indicated in our previous briefing we are stressing that, ideally, local solutions to this issue are the ones that are likely to be the best ones but we may have a role, when asked, to play in:

- facilitating such discussions
- helping with any difficulties that may emerge
- helping with the wider political context
- assisting in ensuring that discussions in one area are complementary to discussion in neighbouring areas

The meetings have also been useful to both receive and communicate ideas and views about other aspects of the WFR process.

For those who have responded please ignore this briefing (except where ongoing discussions are required). To those who have yet to respond, either because the matter is in hand locally or due to the fact that the discussion has not perhaps yet started, we would like to reiterate that we are both available for any meetings (or discussions by phone) that might prove helpful. If discussions are being had it would be helpful to hear of any progress.

The Joint Working Group (JWG) whose minutes are published regularly, has discussed this matter and, subject to agreement by both the RAFTS and ASFB Boards, we are hoping to firm up our ideas about what a network of FMOs might look like from a geographical perspective. Clearly, this debate also has to be had in the context of what these organisations might be required to do and how they might be funded. Work-streams are well advanced in both these areas too. Ideally, we would like to have some reasonably clear ideas on this issue (and also to know where any difficulties lie) by October 2015 well in advance of the draft legislation which we understand will appear early in 2016. This is a process that Government has encouraged us to do some work on and we believe it important to come up with our own solutions rather than have them imposed upon us. This will not be a definitive process but it would be useful to go to Government with some well-articulated ideas and we would stress, as we did in our last briefing, that such solutions need to be "logical, evidence based, defensible and fundable".

Could we both encourage you to start having these discussions, if you are not doing so already, and we would reiterate that we are both available to discuss/meet should that be required and helpful. Clearly, given pressures in diaries, the sooner we get such meetings in the diary the better.

We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Andrew Wallace (chair RAFTS)
Alasdair Laing (Chair ASFB)