



Agenda item 6.1
For information

Council

CNL(16)36

***Annual Progress Report
on Actions Taken Under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2015***

EU - Ireland

CNL(16)36

Annual Progress Report on Actions taken under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2015

The primary purposes of the Annual Progress Reports are to provide details of:

- any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the Implementation Plan;
- actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plan in the previous year;
- significant changes to the status of stocks, and a report on catches; and
- actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention

These reports will be reviewed by the Council. Please complete this form and return it to the Secretariat **by 1 April 2016**.

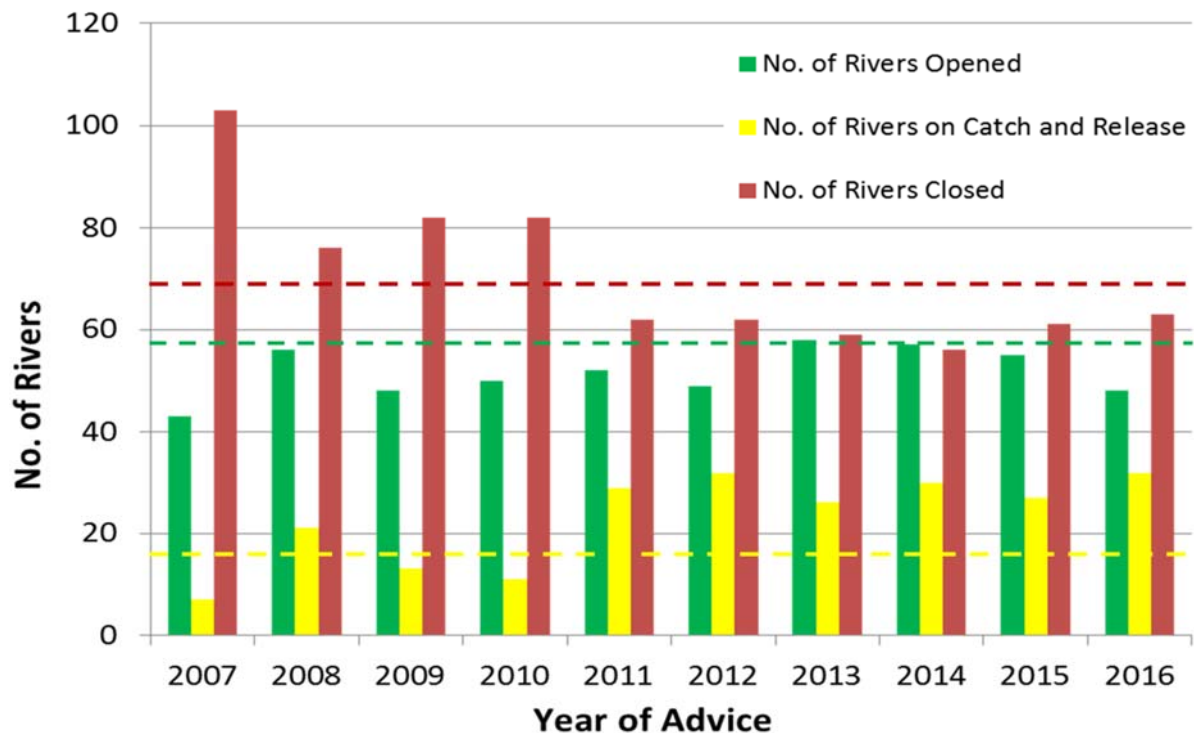
Party:	European Union
Jurisdiction/Region:	Ireland

1: Changes to the Implementation Plan
1.1 Describe any proposed revisions to the Implementation Plan <i>(Where changes are proposed, the revised Implementation Plans should be submitted to the Secretariat by 1 December).</i>
No changes
1.2 Describe any major new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management that you wish to highlight.

2: Stock status and catches.

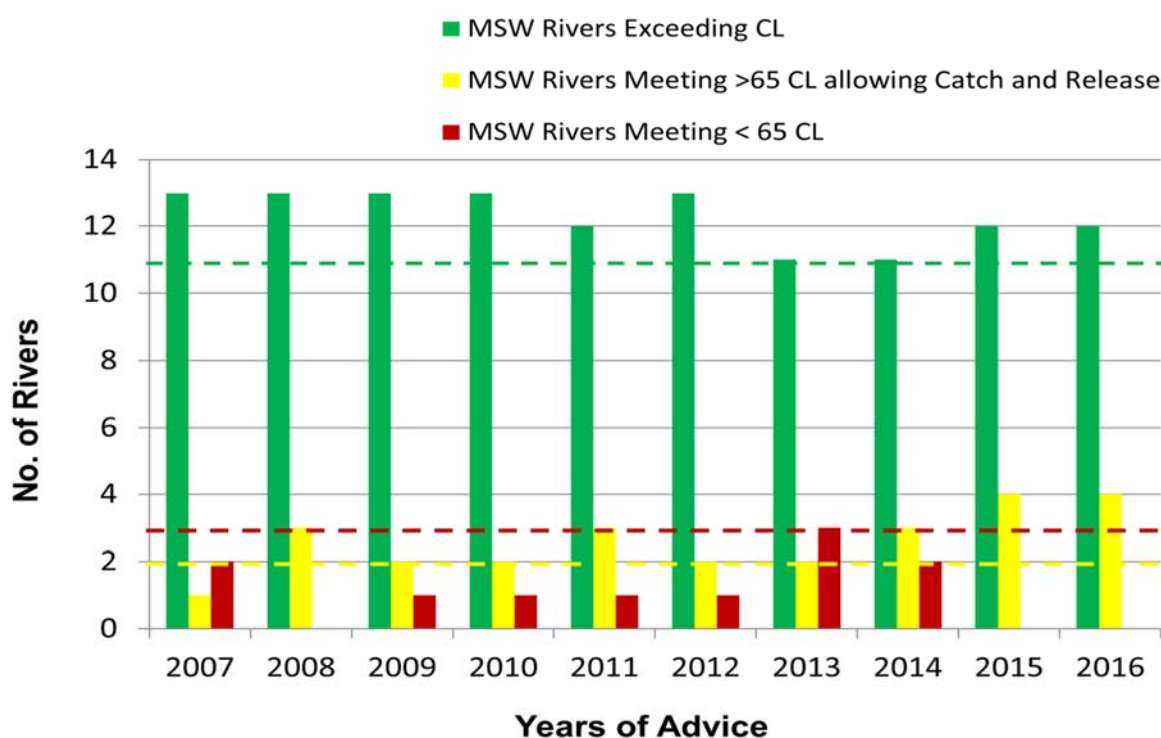
2.1 Provide a description of any new factors which may significantly affect the abundance of salmon stocks and, if there has been any significant change in stock status since the development of the Implementation Plan, provide a brief (200 word max) summary of these changes.

Summary of status of stocks and catch advice and forecast for 2016 fishery season



(Dashed lines indicate corresponding baseline stock status reference points as set out in the Implementation Plan)

The stock status and catch advice forecasted for the 2016 fishery is that 48 rivers have an advised harvestable surplus as they are exceeding their conservation limits (CL). A further 32 rivers could open for catch and release only based on exceeding a minimum fry threshold (>17 salmon fry/5 min electro-fishing average) in catchment-wide electrofishing surveys or based on IFI management criteria that they meet over 65% of their CL. 63 rivers should be closed for fishing as they do not exceed the management target of meeting 65% of CL, electrofishing thresholds have not been met or there is insufficient information for full stock assessment. This represents a moderate decline in the number of systems open for harvest fishery, an increase in fisheries open solely for catch and release and a reduction in closed fisheries in comparison to the baseline stock status reference points as set out in the Implementation Plan.



(Dashed lines indicate corresponding baseline stock status reference points as set out in the Implementation Plan)

There are 16 rivers for which a separate assessment is made for MSW (spring) salmon where there are significant fisheries. Of these, 12 have an advised harvestable surplus as they are exceeding their CL. The remaining 4 rivers could open for catch and release only based on exceeding a minimum fry threshold in catchment-wide electrofishing surveys or based on IFI management criteria that they meet over 65% of their CL. In addition, there are four assessments on rivers used for hydro power which have been assessed as being below their CL i.e. Upper Liffey (Dublin), Upper Lee (Cork), Upper Shannon (Limerick) and the River Erne.

In applying the scientific advice to management it should be noted that where rivers are only marginally above their CL they may be restricted to C&R so that the actual number of rivers open under regulation will be less than the number of rivers actually achieving CL.

2.2 Provide the following information on catches:(nominal catch equals reported quantity of salmon caught and retained in tonnes ‘round fresh weight’ (i.e. weight of whole, ungutted, unfrozen fish) or ‘round fresh weight equivalent’).

	In-river	Estuarine	Coastal	Total
(a) provisional nominal catch (which may be subject to revision) for 2015 (tonnes)	42.5t	20.8 t	0	63.3t
(b) confirmed nominal catch of salmon for 2014 (tonnes)	30.5t	25.8t	0	56.3t
(c) estimated unreported catch for 2015 (tonnes)				6.33t
(d) number and percentage of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries in 2015.	9,374 (37.3 % of total rod catch)			

3: Implementation Plan Actions.

3.1 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to the Management of Salmon Fisheries (Section 2.8 of the Implementation Plan).

Note: The reports under 'Progress on Action to Date' should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.

Action F1:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Protection against illegal fishing is a high priority in Ireland and the state invests a considerable amount of resources on these activities (Fishery Inspectors, Navy, Garda etc). More outreach to local communities is planned to bring the problems of poaching as a major impediment to stock recovery into focus.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Buy-in by local communities in identifying active illegal practices.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	172,195 fishery staff man hours were spent on protecting Ireland's Fishing Resource in 2015. Protection Patrols were carried out using different methods on lakes, rivers, estuaries and at sea. This protection was largely related to salmon but fishery patrols were also targeted at other fish species. In total, 350 nets were seized measuring 14,780 metres and 261 Fixed Charge Notices were issued for Fishery Offences in 2015. There were 77 prosecutions in 2015.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F2:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	IFI is actively promoting the returns of accurate information from anglers through the national carcass tagging and logbook scheme. This scheme facilitates the identification of inaccurate information and allows some follow-up to redress the issue. Move towards electronic Salmon licences.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	More awareness by stakeholders on the need for accurate statistics.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	Return of logbooks by anglers was 70.5% in 2015 compared to 71% in 2014. All anglers who do not return logbooks are written to as a means of improving logbook returns and a proportion are taken to court annually and fined for non-return of logbooks. Return of commercial licences has been 100% in recent years. The electronic licence system is in place and can be accessed at www.salmonlicences.ie .

	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F3:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	IFI is developing a National Fish Counter Strategy to maintain, operate and enhance the current counter resources and to evaluate where extra counters might be required. This will be enacted in 2014.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	A more robust and reliable counter assessment using the most up to date methods for validation of counts (video surveillance, tracking, tagging etc). New database for verification and data capture.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	A national reporting mechanism for fish counter data and validation has been in place since 2014. This is facilitated through a national fish counter website and database for the input and validation of fish counter data. In total, counts from 32 fish counters were used by the Standing Scientific Committee on Salmon in their 2015 assessment for the 2016 forecast of the status of salmon stocks, an increase of 1 counter since the 2013 assessment and 11 counters since the 2011 assessment.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	

3.2 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Habitat Protection and Restoration (Section 3.4 of the Implementation Plan).

Note: The reports under 'Progress on Action to Date' should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.

Action H1:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Agricultural enrichment Following the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the formation of River Basin District management structures, a collective approach to reducing all adverse impacts including agricultural enrichment and eutrophication on aquatic resources is now in place. Having characterised the risks posed to water-bodies nationally, Programmes of Measures are being developed to address habitat impacts / land use practices and to restore impaired water bodies to good status. The aim of the Water
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		<p>Framework Directive is to prevent any deterioration in the existing status of our waters, including the protection of good and high status where it exists, and to ensure that all waters are restored to at least good status by 2015. As a consequence of the implementation of the WFD and the Nitrates Directive, the impact of agricultural enrichment on salmon rivers is expected to reduce considerably over the coming decades.</p> <p>The CAP reform due in 2013 also provides an important opportunity for aligning agriculture objectives with habitat protection.</p>
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Significant improvement in water quality due to improved agricultural practice
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	There is evidence of an overall improvement in water quality. However, Ireland faces major challenges to achieve water quality targets set for 2021 and 2027 as required by the WFD. The target for 2015 is unlikely to have been met. The latest published WFD assessments (2010-2012 period) show that approximately 53% of Irish river channels, 43% of Irish lakes, 45% of transitional waters and 93% of coastal water are unpolluted (good or high status). The main success story has been the virtual elimination of seriously polluted (bad ecological status) river sites. In addition, assessment, using the biological Q value scheme, showed that Irish rivers were in high or good condition along 73% of the monitored river channels.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H2:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	<p>Forestry Related Impacts</p> <p>Many Irish forests that are now mature, or approaching maturity, were planted in landscapes that were unsuited to economically viable forest production. The increasing recognition of the impacts from forestry on water resources has led to the development of a Code of Practice for forestry (Forest Service, 2000). Generally, forest management is based on the Code of Practice, although a new Forestry Bill, which will replace the out of date Forestry Act 1946, has been drafted with the opportunity to ensure that forestry management is better able to protect sensitive habitats.</p>
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Improved water quality and protection of habitats

	<p>Progress on Action to Date (<i>see note above</i>):</p>	<p>The Forest Service’s IFORIS GIS-based management system for forestry grants is being used to ensure that planting, felling and road building operations in forests are approved only following detailed environmental consultation with a range of public bodies and the general public. There was general compliance with the forestry codes of practice nationally. Many companies are also participating in additional independent forest certification schemes (e.g. FSC & PEFC). Many estates are being managed with biodiversity as the primary objective, e.g. when conifer trees are felled, there is now a greater percentage of broadleaved trees being planted in their place.</p> <p>The Forestry Act was passed into law in October 2014 (Number 31 of 2014). This confers responsibility on the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to promote and monitor the protection and enhancement of water quality in all aspects of forestry, including ensuring that forestry operations and forest-based activities regulated under this Act are compatible with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive.</p>
	<p>Current Status of Action (e.g. ‘Not started’; ‘Ongoing’; ‘Completed’):</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?</p>	
<p>Action H3:</p>	<p>Description of Action (<i>as submitted in the IP</i>):</p>	<p>Poor water quality from Inadequate Sewage Treatment and Industrial Discharges</p> <p>In Ireland, there has been considerable investment in upgrading of treatment facilities, primarily in larger towns, and this process will continue with the Programme of Measures under the Water Framework Directive. The Department of the Environment have invested many millions of Euro nationally over the recent years in new treatment facilities, and many of the smaller town and village schemes have been upgraded in this process. It is therefore anticipated that the impact on productive capacity of salmon rivers from inadequate sewage treatment will decrease considerably over the coming years with the requirements of the WFD being achieved.</p> <p>Significant upgrading of wastewater treatment plants has occurred in recent years to assist local authorities in complying with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. The EPA regulates major industrial activities through the Integrated Pollution Prevention</p>

	and Control (IIPC) regulations while the local authorities license small-scale industrial discharges to waters under the Water Pollution Acts. The Work of the EPA in enforcing the regulations and the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive are likely to ensure that industrial discharges are adequately regulated to prevent impact on rivers nationally.
Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Improved waste water treatment targeting upgrading of the most urgent facilities
Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	<p>Irish Water has been formed as an independent State-owned subsidiary within the Ervia group. Irish Water has taken over the water investment programmes of the 34 county and city councils, with the key aim of delivering water and sewerage schemes, and water conservation works aimed at finding additional water supply capacity. In recent years, 61 waste water projects have been completed in Ireland with 34 such projects currently in progress.</p> <p>The Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012 provides for the introduction of a registration and inspection system for domestic wastewater treatment systems, including septic tanks and similar systems. Owners of domestic waste water treatment systems are required to register their systems in accordance with these regulations to ensure protection of water quality. The EPA has developed a National Inspection Plan. All areas of the country are liable to inspection but priority is given to areas where water quality is most at risk from pollution from on-site waste water treatment systems. The aim of the plan is to protect water and human health by using a two-strand approach of education and awareness strategies linked with a risk-based inspection process. 987 inspections were undertaken in the first year of the plan (1st July 2013 – 30th June 2014), with an initial failure rate of 48%. However, by February 2015 79% of these were compliant after remediation works were undertaken. 1,000 inspections annually are planned in the period 2015-2017.</p>
Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Ongoing
If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	

Action H4:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	<p>Salmon Farms in Estuaries</p> <p>Both existing and proposed salmon farms in estuaries may pose a threat to wild salmon populations and a number of publications have raised concerns regarding lice induced mortalities of salmon. In Ireland protocols are in place with regard to permitted sea lice thresholds on salmon farms and measures can be taken for farms in breach of protocols. In 2011, this led to stringent action taken by the Irish authorities in removing farmed salmon from an area. The challenge for management is to develop strategies including effective lice treatments to ensure low lice levels on farmed salmon in spring prior to and during wild salmon migration. In fact the thresholds are treatment triggers and when they are reached a treatment must be carried out to reduce lice infestation levels. This is clearly set out in protocols.</p> <p>Annual fallowing of sites, use of single generation sites, avoidance of partial lice treatments and harvesting carried out remote from grower sites are planned to reduce the potential impact of sea lice infestation. Availability of new sea lice treatments are also being pursued to increase effectiveness of sea lice control.</p>
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Improved compliance with sea lice protocols and lower sea lice levels in spring
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	In recent years, this led to stringent action by the Irish authorities in enforcing treatment trigger levels including accelerated harvests and early fallowing of sites. The EU Commission carried out a detailed investigation into complaints that stocks in a number of rivers in the west of Ireland designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for Atlantic salmon were under threat. They closed the case in 2014 stating that no evidence was provided to show that particular SACs designated for wild Atlantic salmon do not meet their conservation objectives and that this failure could be attributed to aquaculture and sea lice infestation.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	

<p>3.3 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics (Section 4.8 of the Implementation Plan).</p> <p><i>Note: The reports under ‘Progress on Action to Date’ should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.</i></p>		
Action A1:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	<p>Escapes of farmed fish</p> <p>The industry comply with the codes of practice regarding husbandry and good engineering practices.</p> <p>In the event of an escape, the farm operator will make an emergency application to the Department of Agriculture for a special licence under Section 14 of the Fisheries Act 1959 to deploy nets to recapture the escaped fish. Inland Fisheries Ireland may take such action as it considers necessary to recapture stock which has escaped from a facility operated under a licence. Under 77(2), the Minister (DCENR), may authorise a licensee or other person or body to take such action as is specified in the authorisation to recapture stock which has escaped from a facility.</p>
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Prevention of escapes generally. In the event of escapes, prompt recapture of a significant proportion of the stock.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	A recent pan-European review carried out as part of the FP7 project <i>Prevent Escape</i> of farm escape events shows that where mandatory reporting and sound regulation and licensing of aquaculture structures are implemented the incidence of escapes is lower. Reductions in the levels of escapes were recorded in Norway following on the introduction of equipment standards. The same study showed that the level of escapes in Ireland is low in comparison to the other countries assessed (Jackson <i>et al.</i> , 2015). There were no recorded incidents of fish farm escapes in 2015.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. ‘Not started’; ‘Ongoing’; ‘Completed’):	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action A2:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	<p>Sea lice Infestation</p> <p>During the spring period Sea lice protocols are in place which set out ovigerous lice thresholds (0.3-0.5 ovigerous lice per fish March –May and 2.0 ovigerous lice per fish outside this period). When the threshold is breached a notice to treat is issued to the salmon farm to bring lice levels under control.</p> <p>In 2008, a new pest Management Strategy was developed that introduced detailed following</p>

		<p>requirements and a new approach to monitoring to deal with situations where target lice levels were not being achieved. This approach will identify ‘breakout’ site options for sites with persistent sea lice problems.</p> <p>While some farms do exceed these thresholds annually, in spring 2012, non-compliance with lice thresholds at two salmon farms resulted in the Minister giving an order to harvest fish early, prior to wild smolt migration.</p>
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Reduced sea lice levels on farmed salmon
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	<p>Continuous on-farm sea lice checks have facilitated early intervention resulting in better sea lice control generally. The use of alternative approaches to complement husbandry and medicinal treatments, coupled with rigorous pro-active regulatory oversight, has led to improved sea lice levels over all in Ireland during 2015. As has been the case in previous years, sea lice levels on salmon in their first year at sea were low in 2015 with ninety seven percent of sea lice inspections below the Treatment Trigger Levels (TTL), this compares with 94% in 2014 and 100% in 2013. Sea lice levels on one-sea-winter salmon decreased in 2015 compared to 2014. In 2015 78% of inspections were below TTL compared to 71% in 2014 and 82% in 2013.</p>
	Current Status of Action (e.g. ‘Not started’; ‘Ongoing’; ‘Completed’):	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action A3:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	<p>Transfer and increases in incidence of diseases</p> <p>Early harvesting of farmed salmon where gill damage has been recorded is effective in preventing further outbreaks. See section 4.7 – improved treatments and investment in R&D will result in greater control of gill related disorders in 2013.</p>
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Reduced incidence of disease outbreaks in aquaculture facilities.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	<p>Mortality due to Amoebic Gill Disease has decreased significantly in the past 12 months. This has been due to weekly gill monitoring and early intervention using freshwater baths. Zooplankton and Phytoplankton related damage continues to be problematic in certain bays, depending on the natural environmental conditions. Early intervention in relation to fish</p>

		husbandry and management has however, helped significantly
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	

4: Additional information required under the Convention	
4.1	Details of any laws, regulations and programmes that have been adopted or repealed since the last notification.
	No new legislation has been adopted. Fisheries Regulations and By-laws regulating recreational and commercial fishing have been updated for the 2015 and 2016 seasons. A <i>Draft National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development</i> which, in part, reviews the current status of farmed salmon production in Ireland and its potential for sectoral growth, was published for public consultation in June 2015 by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
4.2	Details of any new commitments concerning the adoption or maintenance in force for specified periods of time of conservation, restoration and other management measures.
	No new commitments since last reported.
4.3	Details of any new actions to prohibit fishing for salmon beyond 12 nautical miles.
	No new actions.
4.4	Details of any new actions to invite the attention of States not Party to the Convention to matters relating to the activities of its vessels which could adversely affect salmon stocks subject to the Convention.
	No new actions.
4.5	Details of any actions taken to implement regulatory measures under Article 13 of the Convention including imposition of adequate penalties for violations.
	No new actions.