The attitudes of fishermen on the island of Ireland towards the development of marine renewable energy in their locality

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The 2nd International EIMR Conference, 30th April 2014
Introduction

• Expansion of marine renewable energy (MRE) will increase pressure on existing marine industries.
• Commercial fishing is the sector most likely to be affected.
• Building acceptance towards MRE requires an understanding of attitudes and perceptions.
• Detailed information on fishers’ attitudes could help developers avoid conflict.
Survey Design

• Builds on similar fishermen’s attitudes studies (Mackinson et al., 2006; Pita et al., 2010; Alexander et al., 2013).

• Gather information on the attitudes of fishermen towards the development of marine renewable energy in their locality.
Case Study Sites

• Atlantic Marine Energy Test Site
  ➢ pre-commercial wave energy test site, off Belmullet, Co. Mayo.
  ➢ fishing activity consists mainly of brown crab and lobster.

• Torr Head/ Fair Head Tidal Projects
  ➢ two separate 100MW tidal farms to be built off Torr Head and Fair Head, Co Antrim.
  ➢ fishing activity consists mainly of crab and lobster.
Case Study Sites

- **First Flight Wind Project**
  - 600MW offshore windfarm proposed off the coast of Co. Down.
  - Majority of commercial sea fishing in Northern Ireland is concentrated at three ports in Co. Down.
  - Kilkeel, Ardglass and Portavogie.
  - Majority of fishing effort is directed towards Nephrops fisheries.
Survey Methods

- 104 surveys conducted with vessel skippers/owners operating from ports near case study sites.
- Survey methods used – face to face, telephone and email.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population (registered vessels)</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>% of population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMETS</td>
<td>73 (Bord Iascaigh Mhara)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torr Head/Fair Head Tidal projects</td>
<td>28 (Yates, 2012)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FirstFlight Wind</td>
<td>212 (Yates, 2012)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27%</td>
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Results - Attitudes towards MRE

I think that it is important to develop MRE sources in my locality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>49%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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Overall
AMETS
Torr/Fair Head
FFW
Results - Attitudes towards MRE

• Agree - “if it does not affect fishing”
• Agree – “there will be jobs for local fishermen”
• Disagree – “it will take up fishing ground”
• Strongly disagree – “it will finish a lot of small boat owners”
Results - Co-existence of MRE and fishing

Can fishing and MRE co-exist?

Overall: 90% Yes, 10% No
AMETS: 78% Yes, 22% No
Torr/Fair Head: 58% Yes, 42% No
FFW: 30% Yes, 70% No
Results - Co-existence of MRE and fishing

- Yes – “if properly managed in collaboration with fishermen”
- Yes – “as long as they are not on fishing ground”
- No – “not where they plan on putting it”
- No – “we cannot trawl through farms. Potting will be ok”
Discussion

- Attitudes towards renewable energy development follow a U shaped curve (Wolsink, 2007).
Discussion

• Familiarity with renewable energy technologies shapes attitudes (Ladenburg, 2011).

• Prior experience can influence the acceptance of renewable energy projects.
Discussion

• Place attachment refers to positive ties or connections with familiar locations (Devine-Wright, 2009).

• Most of the ports near the proposed developments have been associated with fishing for centuries.

• Fishermen have concerns over potential loss of access to traditional fishing grounds.
Concluding remarks

• Understanding the attitudes of fishermen towards MRE will assist in the mitigation of impacts.
• Addressing the concerns of fishermen at an early stage could enhance their acceptance.
• Consultation process provides a platform for the discussion of mitigation options.
• Improving the effectiveness of the consultation process remains a key challenge.
Thank you for your time and attention. Questions or comments?

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