

**Note of Common Language Group (CLG) meeting held at Friends House, London.
Wednesday 29 June 2016**

For the CLG minutes and meeting presentations see:

<http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/discussion-forums/the-common-language-group>

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Mike Kaiser welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Alan Steele	Traceall Global Ltd
Alex Olsen	Esperson
Alma Bonilla	Joseph Robertson Ltd
Ally Dingwall	Sainsbury's
Andy Matchett	Combe Fisheries
Angus Garrett	Seafish
Barry O'Neill	Marine Scotland
Brian Young	Seafish Board
Chloe North	MSC
Chris Brown	Asda
Christina Dixon	World Animal Protection
Clare Dodgson	Seafish Board
Claire Pescod	MSC
Daniel Skerrett	MRAG
Dan Watson	Safetynet
David Parker	Young's Seafood
Elena Balestri	Scottish Industry Discard Initiative
Emily Botsford	The ADM Capital Foundation
Esther Luiten	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
Harry Owen	MCB Seafoods
Helen McLachlan	WWF
Herman Wisse	GSSI
Ian Rolmanis	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Iain Shone	Global Aquaculture Alliance
Jennifer Mouat	The Aegir Consultancy
Jim Masters	Fishing into the Future
John Butler	Oscar Mayer Group
Ian Kinsey	Norwegian Fisherman's Association
Karen Green	Seafish (Minutes)
Katie Miller	Sustainable Seafood Coalition
Katrina Borrow	Mindfully Wired Communications
Kenny Coull	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Laky Zervudachi	Direct Seafoods
Lucy Blow	New England Seafood
Mark Webber	Ocean Fish

Matthew Sanders	Cefas
Max Goulden	MacAlister Elliott & Partners Ltd
Melanie Siggs	Sancroft International
Mary Beaver	2 Sisters Food Group
Mike Kaiser	Bangor University (Chair)
Mike Mitchell	Consultant
Mike Short	Food & Drink Federation
Mike Montgomerie	Seafish
Neil Auchterlonie	IFFO
Nicki Holmyard	Consultant
Phil MacMullen	Seafish
Richard Slaski	Fisheries Innovation Scotland
Ryan Ono	Ocean Conservancy
Sam Stone	MCS
Sean Ashworth	Sussex IFCA
Stephan Hall	Avalerion Capital
Stephan Mangi	Cefas
Steve Simpson	University of Exeter
Stewart Cuchey	Cefas
Stuart Smith	Co-op
Tom Pickerell	Seafish
Tristan Hugh-Jones	Rossmore Oysters Ltd PM only
Tristram Lewis	Funding Fish
William Davies	Icelandic Seachill

Apologies

Barry Harland	Whitby Seafoods
Bertie Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Bryce Beukers-Stewart	University of York
Dale Rodmell	NFFO
David Garbutt	Sealord
David Jarrad	SAGB
Huw Thomas	Morrisons
Jess Sparks	Seafish
Jon Harman	Cleugh Maritime
Jonathan Shepherd	Consultant/Seafish Board
Katherine George	World Animal Protection
Libby Woodhatch	Seafish
Malcom Morrison	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Marcus Coleman	Seafish
Martin Jaffa	Callander McDowell
Mel Groundsell	Seafish
Mike Brummit	Regal Fish
Mike Platt	RS Standards Ltd
Nigel Edwards	Icelandic Seachill
Paul Leonard	Sussex IFCA
Sarah Pilgrim-Morrison	Macduff Shellfish (Scotland) Ltd
Toby Middleton	MSC
Tracy Cambridge	WWF

2. Minutes from the last meeting held on 22 March 2016.

The final minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting and have been added to the CLG web page. Attendees were asked to take note of the meeting guidelines. In the following minutes Seafish will provide a link to the various presentations given at the meeting but not summarise the whole presentation. In the main we do not attribute the comments made at the meeting. Papers were sent round and tabled covering the activities of the other Seafish groups (Aquaculture, Discards, Ethics and Skates and Rays) and a list of forthcoming seafood events. A full list can be found on the Seafish website: <http://www.seafish.org/about-seafish/news-and-events/events>

Matters arising covered the circulation of various links which were sent round in the CLG meeting follow-up email. All the presentations were added to the website. There were requests to look at gear selectivity and new initiatives which are both on the agenda today.

Advances in gear technology and selectivity

3. Fisheries Innovation Scotland. An introduction to Fisheries Innovation Scotland and the projects they are funding. Richard Slaski, FIS.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1638942/clg_june2016_disruptivegearworkshop.pdf

Fisheries Innovation Scotland is an independent, non-profit-distributing organisation with the remit of bringing together government, scientists, industry and other key stakeholders to lead an on-going programme of research, knowledge exchange and education concerned with the management of Scotland's marine fisheries and related areas. This public/private partnership was formed in May 2014. Richard explained the organisation; the structure - members and advisors; how it operates and the projects. Member contributions: £450,000 p.a. and EFF support has been 60% of project costs. The focus was fairly broad in 2014/2015 with seven projects funded, the first Annual Scottish Fishing Conference, as well as international placements. The aim is to be much more focussed in 2016. £600,000 is available to fund eight projects with five focussed on how the Scottish fishing industry is going to cope with the Landing Obligation.

3.1. FIS: Developing and facilitating a range of possible future FIS projects in innovation in selectivity through on-net or alternative technologies. Daniel Skerrett, MRAG.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1638939/clg_june_2016_fisselectivity.pdf

The aim of this project is to review the state of knowledge in selectivity; identify novel ideas and innovations from other sectors; identify possible funding sources to support future research; and to develop a research plan for future research on selectivity. The project is currently reviewing trends and recent advances in gear selectivity research and innovation. It is covering species which are most relevant to Scottish fisheries (e.g. gadoids, small pelagics, *Nephrops*), and those fisheries most vulnerable to the landing obligation. The aim is to focus on issues where few or no solutions have been trialled, or where roadblocks/limitations are identified, and to see if new technologies can be applied to the fishing sector. This will help FIS plan future projects.

Discussion

- **Q.** This review of trends and recent advances in gear selectivity research and innovation. Has it been a literature review? **Answer.** Yes this has mostly been a review of published literature but we also have an extensive network of contacts.

- **Q.** Given the cross-border nature of fishing will your research extend beyond Scotland? **Answer.** In terms of issues yes however our funding is through FIS.

4. Trends in Selectivity: As a result of the landing obligation? Mike Montgomerie, Seafish.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1638945/clg_june2016_seafishselectivitytrends.pdf

The key is getting fishermen to use any new technology. There are not many enquiries with requests for advice on selective gears – except when fishermen come to the flume tank. Fishermen are already a long way down the road with selectivity. Fishermen know their own gear very well and up until now there was no real requirement to be too species-specific and very little incentive to use many of the new selectivity devices. There is a lot of work being done on discard survivability and the best solution is always to avoid catching the fish the first place. In the past fishermen would change gear throughout the year but industry moved away from this and has tended to stick to one gear aimed at size selectivity not species selectivity. The industry knows how to get rid of small fish but now needs to focus on species selectivity. Much of discarding today is due to a lack of quota. There is an appetite for some innovative technologies and many skippers are already using selective gear, and new gear designs rather than retro fitted selective devices. There is already a large toolkit available to improve selectivity and initiatives ongoing in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland to develop these.

Discussion

- **Q.** How can we get more of this known as a local level? **Answer.** There is a lot of information on this on the Seafish, Cefas and Marine Scotland websites. The flume tank has been instrumental in demonstrating how these gears really work. The fishermen themselves are the best advocates – they need to pass on the message.
- The Scottish Industry Discard Initiative is planning a workshop in October to bring fishermen together to talk about their experience.

5. Project Trawlright – An example of a small scale fishery improvement and innovation in the supply chain. David Parker, Young's Seafood and Dan Watson, Safetynet.

http://www.seafish.org/media/publications/CLG_June2016_Trawlright2.pdf

This new technology has been trialled on a 15-18m twin rig Nephrops TR2 vessel (FV Providence) operating out of North Shields. The trials were carried out in October 2015, November 2015 and February 2016. Project Trawlright is all about illumination to guide the fish to the escape area within the net. Trawlright Gear uses 90mm aperture light rings (x6) – bright LEDs bolted into the square mesh panel on the starboard side trawl. Over four hauls initial observations suggest a reduction in bycatch of around 33% which is very promising. It was not clear whether the fish would have a passive or active reaction to the lights. There appeared to be a greater reaction the further you moved from the selectivity panel.

Discussion

- Need to compare square mesh panel, square mesh panel with the lights (but not on) and square mesh panel with lights on for a complete picture.

Action: Circulate a copy of the trawling report.

Developing out of this was the idea to get a group together to look at new and up and coming technologies with a view to supporting industry in experimenting with these ideas to improve gear selectivity where required. This would be from a supply chain/retailer

angle where the expectation is that fishermen will get their house in order in respect of discard reduction with a minimum of support. He sees a day, probably 2019, when, if the fishing industry does not address any issues of excessive discards in its fleet they will be classed by the larger retailers as IUU fisheries because they are not properly working to the requirements of the landing obligation. To try to support the industry in addressing the discard ban and prevent the buyers from getting into an IUU situation David wants to pull together a group to encourage testing of some really innovative, high tech ideas, many of these will be technologies that have been developed for other industries and may have potential to aid selectivity in the fishing industry. He is looking to pull together a group consisting of supply chain companies, retailers, NGOs government groups etc who can all contribute **financially**, to enable the group to use this as match funding to apply for other forms of funding, such as EMFF to finance projects to source and test some of these more radical ideas with a view to commercial sea trials to test their effectiveness in commercial fishing gear. This will be an ongoing project.

Action: A follow on meeting was held after the CLG meeting to explore this further.

6. Disruptive technology: selective seafood harvesting. Alex Olsen, Esperson

http://www.seafish.org/media/1638942/clg_june2016_disruptivegearworkshop.pdf

We want a 'revolution' in design. Bottom trawling has its problems associated with elevated by-catch rates, high fuel use, it is detrimental to the benthic, consumer disapproval, old technology and a proposed EU Commission ban. This workshop was intended to look at alternatives. Disruptive technology is all about finding a new way to do it. The design challenge is to: ensure the current and future availability of affordable food originating from sustainable fish stocks; to reduce/eliminate the negative environmental impact of bottom trawling, including on the benthic and GHG emissions; to improve the selectivity of wild seafood harvesting to reduce by-catch and protect fish stocks; and to benefit the fishermen. The workshop focussed on innovation and different technologies including: laser nets, lights, sensor and sound herding, seabed impact and pulse trawl, seaborne drones, ultrasound and sonar and underwater fish selector. Three design concepts are being progressed.

Discussion

- **Q.** What were the three broad themes mentioned? **Answer.** A lot of this was based on seaborne drones to find fish, using them like sheepdogs, to suck up the fish rather than being dragged behind the vessel.
- With the sea viewed as a network of interconnected information sources we can use better technology to save time and effort in finding fish.
- There are also options to separate out catching, grading and processing.
- It could be interesting to look at the impact of light and noise together in attracting fish as sound travels a lot further than light. Examples do exist – some fish will freeze, some will shoal etc
- **Q.** Is pulse fishing being considered as there is a lot of interest? **Answer.** The Dutch are working in this area.
- **Q.** As well as innovation in gear design we need innovation in governance. 90% of the discard reduction measures being considered by UK fishermen are illegal. Half of the square mesh panels currently fitted are illegal. We have massive problems with the regulatory framework. Could bodies such as FIS apply for exemptions? **Answer.** If you have good evidence you could apply for exemptions. In specific trials there is rarely a problem in getting dispensation or a derogation.

- **Q.** There has been a lot of talk about mobile gears – what about static gears? There are not so many issues with static gears however there is work to look at the use of lights in pots.
- **Q.** There would appear to be a lot of activity in this arena which could have massive economic implications and there are the incentives to get gear selectivity right. Is there enough thought being given to the bigger picture?
Answer. FIS is certainly trying to look more broadly and this session today has given a good insight into what is going on however we do need to be aware technological programmes are happening across Europe and we do need collaboration.

Action: Circulate link to the report and film.

7. Brexit and the UK fishing industry. Bryce Beukers-Stewart, University of York by Skype.

Bryce Beukers-Stewart from the University of York introduced the topic by skype. Bryce has written a few pieces on Brexit, the most accessible probably being this in the Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/what-would-brexit-really-mean-for-the-uks-fishing-industry-56312> There is also a presentation online:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303882907_UK_Fisheries_and_Brexit_What%27s_the_catch The full in depth report (which spawned all the other articles is here: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301549409_Fisheries_Policy

His focus is on the environmental aspects around Brexit and fisheries and he covered (quite succinctly) the current situation and the risks and possible opportunities. **Key points:**

- There is huge uncertainty but nothing will change until Article 50 is invoked which will herald in a two year negotiation period. There are also questions over Scotland.
- With regards to fisheries management everything that applies under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) continues to apply until negotiations are concluded. After we leave the European Union we also leave the CFP and the UK will have to create its own fisheries management plans.
- The fishing industry should temper expectations of large rises in quota for British boats. Most of the fish stocks for which quotas are set under the CFP are shared, managed stocks and there will have to be some kind of shared management arrangement going forward. Any changes in the percentage allocation of quota to British boats, or the access of foreign vessels to British waters, would have to be agreed by other countries and this is not going to be an easy negotiation. If the UK did not agree with its quota allocation and set a higher quota this could lead to other countries doing the same and we would be back to the recent mackerel situation.
- As indicated by George Eustice the landing obligation would stay.
- It is very likely that the scientific advice produced by organisations such as ICES would continue to be the driving force.
- Marine Conservation Zones and Marine Protected Areas are national arrangements and would not change.
- The situation with regards to European Marine Sites is completely unknown – they may or may not be adopted by the UK.
- The fishing industry is probably not going to be a huge priority given all the other negotiations that need to take place, however trading relations are going to be

crucial. There is the potential that intense negotiations over quota could damage those trading relationships.

- The Norway model has been mooted as a path we could follow however the Norway model allows for the free movement of people and on the face of it this is what the British people have voted against.
- In terms of opportunities UK fisheries management should be better connected to local management, which will be a particular benefit in the South West. We should have a more responsive system and better connection between the decision makers. We could have more influence – we would have a UK place at the meetings of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) rather than having to sit within the EU.
- The UK seafood industry needs to be convening to offer strategic advice to Government and push solutions. We need to take on board Best Practice models from around the world and push these.

Q&A

- **Q. What are your thoughts with regards to EMFF?** After we have left the EU these funds will no longer come to the UK. The UK fishing industry will have to make sure they get the equivalent from UK Government. It is important to keep the pressure up on UK Government to ensure a similar arrangement. Whichever model we want to adopt going forward (whether it is the Norway model) 27 other countries have to agree to this. Nothing will happen in the next two years+ so it is important to make the most of EMFF now.
- **Q. Is it a conceivable option to buy-in to specific funds?** It may be and Universities could be looked to as a model re this but it needs to make economic sense to do so. There was match funding before and the industry needs to make sure UK Government puts money in.
- **Q. Is it likely the UK 200 mile zone will be extended?** It does not really extend to 200 miles in many places anyway. This touches on the issue of shared stocks and the negotiations about these. In theory the UK should have a stronger bargaining power but this brings into question whether other parties will back down.

Seafish activities - Seafish is currently:

- Reviewing how Brexit could impact Corporate Plan work streams
- Reviewing how Brexit could impact work areas
- Reviewing how Brexit could impact the wider UK seafood sector (30'000ft view)
- Angus Garret is collating the information already out there and seeking industry views
- There is an all-panel meeting scheduled for late September putting in place the groundwork for our new Corporate Plan (18-21)

Seafish next steps

- Mike Kaiser asked the group whether they wanted Seafish to have a session on Brexit within the next CLG meeting (scheduled for 10 November) or whether to convene a separate forum specifically on Brexit before 10 November. The consensus was to have a separate dedicated CLG one-off meeting on Brexit sooner than 10 November. The audience would probably be slightly different than a regular CLG. September was suggested but from a Seafish perspective October would be better.
- Mike canvassed opinion on what the agenda for this meeting should cover:

- Engaging with Westminster – invite a Government representative along to get a better understanding of the process, the legal situation and the timeline. This also lets Government know what conversations are taking place.
- This group could start the process for producing a roadmap to support an already over-stretched civil service.
- Seafish, as representative of the whole seafood industry, needs to be mindful there will be different expectations from different sectors but industry needs to work together and find common ground.
- The issues of the UK fishing industry and the UK seafood sector will be different.
- Could consider a pre-meeting survey to canvas opinion on the top five key issues and concerns we should cover.
- Need some specifics around EMFF and other EU legislation. Clear signals about funding opportunities.
- Need some big thinkers presenting, possibly from the food sector. Stephan Hall (Avalerion Capital) who was in the room was mentioned.
- We already have a CLG Steering group who can help shape the agenda.

Action: The date for the CLG Brexit special was set for Friday 7 October.

Collaboration and partnerships between science and industry

8. Future-proofing oysters: American Shellfish Farmers team up with Scientists and Policymakers. Ryan Ono, The Ocean Conservancy.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1638948/clg_june2016_futureproofingoysters2.pdf

Ryan outlined issues with oysters on the U. S. West Coast where between 2006 and 2008 they recorded 70-80% oyster larvae die-off which was blamed on increasing ocean acidity. This has now prompted research into salmon and flatfish as well. To address the issue shellfish farmers have worked with scientists and policy makers and have installed monitoring equipment and changed practices in the hatchery. Ocean acidity is more prevalent in colder water.

Discussion

- **Q.** Do you think that the issue has been addressed? **Answer.** The biggest problem was in the egg and larvae form and we have been able to address it in the hatchery but we still want more monitoring.
- **Q.** Do businesses just have to accept the situation and adapt. Can anything be done to address the problem at source? **Answer.** The dilemma is that there is no real evidence of the exact cause.

9. The role of the Science Advisory Group and its remit. Mike Kaiser, Bangor University.

<http://www.seafish.org/about-seafish/our-structure/science-advisory-group-sag->

The Seafish Science Advisory Group (SAG) has been established to provide high-quality, independent scientific challenge and support. The SAG will help ensure Seafish has access to the best possible scientific evidence, and where relevant, increase engagement with the scientific community. Two meetings of the group have already been held and a third is imminent. The members are listed [here](#).

The role of SAG is to help Seafish access, interpret and understand the full range of relevant scientific information, and to critically look at, and make judgements about, its relevance, potential and application. The group will also take its own view on horizon

scanning. Topical subjects that SAG has already looked at include deep sea fisheries and the comparison between scientific advice and the TACs that are set. SAG is very keen on drawing on a network of expertise to support Seafish. This also connects to possible research topics for future Masters students. A mechanism has been established whereby Seafish can put ideas forward for research projects. This also links to the Seafish Risk Assessment for Sourcing Seafood and the Seafish work on data deficient fisheries.

New and ongoing initiatives

10. Fishing into the Future (FITF). Jim Masters, FITF.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1638951/clg_june2016_fitf.pdf

FITF started life as a strategic partnership. There are three key issues: training for sustainability, and industry/science collaboration and enhanced engagement and coordination under a Fishermen-Science Interface Programme. These are being funded through industry collaboration. There are likely to be a series of workshops. FITF is reliant on Seafish and Sainsbury's at the moment and the current target is to raise over £100,000 from retail and the supply chain over the next three years to support core functions.

11. Project UK. Claire Pescod, Marine Stewardship Council.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1638954/clg_june2016_projectuk.pdf

Project UK builds on the outputs and methods of Project Inshore which used the MSC pre-assessment process as a tool to assess and inform the management of English inshore fisheries. It aims to: replicate the PI model to identify, improve and ultimately certify market relevant UK fisheries; replicate in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; - update in England for 2016 and the new MSC Certification Requirements; establish and facilitate Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) for priority species identified by PI, using MSC FIP tools and definition of a credible FIP to create change on the water; and establish a 'FIP conveyor belt' to identify, improve and certify UK fisheries. Six fisheries have been identified: North Sea plaice, North Sea lemon sole, Channel scallop, Western Channel monkfish, South West brown crab and South West lobster, as well as three FIP regions: North Sea flatfish, Channel scallop and monkfish and South West shellfish. All six Steering Groups have been established and have met but the final membership is still open.

12. GSSI. Herman Wisse, GSSI.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1638957/clg_june2016_gssi.pdf

Herman described the development of the tool. The Alaska RFM is the first certification scheme to be benchmarked against GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool and to achieve recognition demonstrating alignment (12 July 2016). This recognition follows a rigorous benchmark process over the last seven months, which included a 30-day public consultation, before approval by the GSSI Steering Board. There could be between three and five recognised schemes by the end of 2016. There was also reference to a quote from Sodexo. "If other certification programs are recognised by the GSSI benchmarking tool, Sodexo will also recognize these certification programs. Sodexo encourages its suppliers to themselves become members of the GSSI and to also recognize the certification schemes that will be recognized by GSSI." Sodexo Sustainable Seafood Supplier Charter – March 2016.

13. Responsible Fishing Scheme. Tom Pickerell, Seafish.

The Responsible Fishing Scheme was officially launched in the House of Commons in January 2016. In total 164 vessels are in application with 20 certified. The Scheme has been publically committed to by a number of retailers by including RFS vessels in their sourcing policies. The KPI is to have 1,000 vessels certified by March 2018. Seafish has run one-day courses aimed at skippers, vessel owners, POs and supply chain contacts to equip attendees with the knowledge to support others through the RFS audit process. International roll-out of the Responsible Fishing Scheme has always been the plan. Feasibility studies carried out working with vessels from the Icelandic cod and Peruvian anchovy fisheries have been very successful in demonstrating the international applicability of the RFS Standard. The next step is to use the results to inform the development of the International Translation Process, which will be how international fleets can enter RFS and over the coming months we'll need to identify fleets with the resources and commitment to fund and participate in International pilots. A Vessel Improver Programme toolkit has been finalised in draft. We now need to road test the "VIP Toolkit" and have identified two pilots – the Ben Tre project is progressing well with Phase 1 well underway and we're supporting the IPLNF in facilitating a second pilot which will enable us to capture feedback from a tuna fishery's perspective. We are also working with the Marine Stewardship Council on a pilot in Poole to see how MSC and RFS certification could work together. The future of RFS beyond the current Seafish Corporate Plan (post March 2018) is currently being discussed internally.

14. Sustainable Seafood Coalition. Katie Miller, ClientEarth.

Katie outlined the next steps for the Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC). This could include working with Fishing into the Future, the Celtic Sea Project and alignment with the Seafish Risk Assessment for Sourcing Seafood. SSC members have also agreed to include social criteria within the codes. The first stage will be to look at legal requirements.

15. Date of next meeting

The date for the next meeting is Wednesday 10 November at Friends House, London. The CLG Steering Group will meet to discuss the agenda for the next meeting. There will also be a CLG Brexit special on Friday 7 October. Any ideas for agenda items for either of these meetings should be sent to k_green@seafish.co.uk