

This meeting explored new initiatives and standards to ensure all commercial fishers have minimum standards and decent conditions of work on board fishing vessels, as well as an effective means to voice any concerns.

GSA RFVS Transition Program. Mike Platt, RS Standards/Global Seafood Assurances

https://seafish.org/media/SECLG_July2020_GSARFVSTransition.pdf

The final Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS) has been publicly shared. It was officially handed over from Seafish to Global Seafood Assurances (GSA) on 11 June 2020, following a two-year, open and collaborative development process. Key transition points:

- Agreed RFS to RFVS Transition of Certificates Plan. Where members had RFS certificates expiring before October 2020, all of their certificates have been extended until 1 Oct 2020.
- All RFS members will be contacted by Seafish to advise of transition of ownership to GSA and also invited to formally “engage” with RFVS.
- Provided engaged (and where necessary) RFS certificates may be further extended to allow for assessment against RFVS once open for application once Certification Model finalised.
- RFVS pilots to test and refine certification model in progress.
- The GSA Standards Oversight Committee (SOC) will be comprised of members with broad stakeholder representation with the goal of one-quarter conservation, one-quarter academia, one-quarter industry and one-quarter production (harvesters).

Discussion

- **Q. Is there any clarity around audit costs?**
A. We are looking at how to streamline audits and the recognition of whether parts of the standard could reflect national standards. We will be working with one audit body. It is not yet clear how much it will cost however it will be credible and the costs will be compatible with other audit patterns seen throughout the supply chain.
- **Q. When will the pilots be finished?**
A. COVID-19 has been delaying things. We are keeping a watching brief and keeping everyone in the picture. We will take every opportunity and we are trying to get them completed by the third quarter 2020.
- **Q. If searching for RFVS will seafood assurances website be automatically linked to that?**
A. There will be an automatic link. The email address will be RFVS@seafoodassurances.org
- **Q. Is there any indication of how many RFS v1 certifications may be lapsing? Have you any indication of the scale of complexity in ensuring a vessel transitions from RFS to RFVS. Is this seen to be a significant challenge?**
A. This is seen to be a challenge in retaining these vessels and we are working with Mick Bacon on this. We are continuing to work with Seafish to actively encourage those vessels to move over. There are significant challenges especially now. We really hope SWFPA vessels will transition over in a phased approach. The market will dictate progress.
- **Q. Is there any prospect/interest in a pilot with Alaskan wild salmon which is typified by very small scale artisanal vessels? This could be really interesting as a pilot?**
A. We have been reaching out and would welcome the opportunity

Links for further information

- [Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard \(RFVS\)](#)
- [Global Seafood Assurances](#)

FisheryProgress draft social policy for Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs). Kristin Sherwood, Fish Choice. https://seafish.org/media/SECLG_July2020_FisheryProgress.pdf

Draft policy elements.

Requirements

- Sign the Human Rights Code of Conduct
- Provide a list of vessels included in the FIP

- Ensure that fishers in the FIP are aware of their rights and have access to grievance procedures to seek remedy if their rights are abused
- Complete a human rights risk assessment each year
- Create a work plan to address high-risk issues
- Report publicly on risk assessment results and action progress

Voluntary

- FIPs may report on actions taken to address social issues beyond those included in the code of conduct.

Allegations

- FisheryProgress will investigate allegations of human rights abuses occurring in FIPs reporting on our site, and requires a remediation process for verified abuses.

Scope

- This covers: discrimination and abuse; human trafficking and forced labour (including ethical recruitment); child labour; freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; wages; working hours; worker food and housing; worker safety; and rights and access to resources.

Consultation

- There was a broad spectrum of concerns.
- There will be a second stakeholder feedback period in autumn 2020 and the target is to release the final policy and develop guidance by March 2021.

Discussion

- **Q. For existing participants how will this all fit and go together. Will there be a period of time given to all FIPs to move into accordance with policy.**
A. There will be six months to assign a code of conduct and then a year to do that first assessment. For a lot of FIPs this will amount to more than a year dependent on when the audit is scheduled. The timescale is likely to slip due to COVID-19.
- **Q. This model has really been led by Conservation Alliance using the MSC as a benchmark but there is no requirement to go for MSC. There are a number of vessel social standards coming through and a benchmark initiative underway. Would a simpler route be to go the same way and to look at one of these benchmarked standards and use this to measure progress?**
A. This is based on the Seafood Risk Assessment Tool developed by Conservation International. This has been developed to recognise other standards. There was no one core standard that covered all the SRAT topics. The FIP work could potentially recognise other standards.
- **Q. This work is likely to highlight issues. Would there be envisaged any 'resources' capacity for FIPs that have assessed their social criteria and found there is more to be done. Typically this needs to be via government (e.g. implementing ILO188)/ advocacy -type approach, which fishery/companies may not be familiar with doing?**
Q. Following up and addressing grievances can be difficult and dangerous. Once the social criteria have been assessed there could be a number of issues to deal with. Usually it is fisheries and management expert and supply chain players who are engaged with PIPs and they are often experts in environmental issues and not social experts.
- **A.** We will be building up tools to ensure assessments are conducted properly and are guided by experts. We will also be producing on how to implement a good grievance policy. For allegations made externally we will convene a panel to help make sure this is addressed correctly. For internal allegation we will make tools available to build a proper grievance mechanism.
- **Q. Will the social assessments be made public?**
A. Balance is needed to recognise sensitivities. The balance between trying to protect the identity and safety of those bringing the allegations but being transparent about the results.

- **Audience comment.** It takes a lot of work to create a FIP and in the development period there could be the time and opportunity to produce a pre-assessment of social considerations. Could there also be the possibility that the environmental and social elements of a FIP could move at a different pace. They do not necessarily all have to run at the same time.

Links for further information

- The consultation on the social policy has closed. E: [Kristin Sherwood](mailto:Kristin.Sherwood@seafish.org) to submit feedback on the social policy via email.

GSA Fishery Worker Voice Project. Melanie Siggs, Global Seafood Assurances

https://seafish.org/media/SECLG_July2020_WorkerVoice_GSA.pdf

- Part one. A global project to identify the different terms and phrases used under the genre of Worker Voice, as it relates to those working on fishing vessels with examples of systems or projects under those definitions. Language is seen as a key barrier.
- Part two. Build consensus as to what buyers, policy makers, standard holders et al can and should expect in terms of Worker Voice (and agreed terminology). Deliver that consensus and note actions needed
- Key Traceability, led by Iain Pollard, are carrying out the research and bringing together the white paper. An inner circle Advisory Group has been formed; with stakeholder mapping and global outreach taking place. A global survey, intended to be culturally appropriate and multi lingual will be undertaken in July 2020, including a global call for evidence.
- First draft of paper September/October 2020. Delivery of paper accompanied by webinars on findings. ToR for Part Two, December 2020. This is not about building a standard – it is about consensus building.

Discussion

- **Q. Who is the target audience for the survey?**
A. We want to capture the views of different stakeholder groups as typified by the advisory group which is made up of fishers and fishing companies, NGO, retailers, processors, supply chain experts etc. We want both a regional and national level typical of what we are looking for and want to recruit local people to help us do that.
- **Q. This subject has been talked about a lot in a number of smaller projects. This takes a much broader approach. What has been the feedback on the GSA approach?**
A. I'm really looking forward to seeing the white paper. Clarity on worker voice and best practices across the globe will be incredibly useful and important! So thank you for doing the research.
- **Q. How will you embed remediation as part of this conversation? Will this paper lead to something?**
A. This is more likely to happen in the second project. This first part is about us looking at what is out there and not passing an opinion. The second project will focus on what does good look like. Hopefully we can layout and describe best practice. Language is paramount. Have to gather all this intelligence first and can't let the enormity of this put us off.

Links for further information

- [Global Seafood Assurances](#)

[Home and Dry](#) safety campaign

Home and Dry and has been developed by the Fishing Industry Safety Group (FISG) and Mindfully Wired Communications. The campaign aims to connect and engage with fishermen on staying safe at sea. It will run for 6 weeks from Tuesday 7 July. See the [beautiful short film](#).