

UK Gear Forum Working Principles

1. Introduction

This document¹ outlines the working principles for the UK Gear Forum.

2. Aim

Convene a UK Gear Forum to discuss and advance sustainability (economic, environmental and social) in all (mobile and static) wild capture fisheries, through the lens of gear technology innovations.

3. Work themes

The Forum is a platform to facilitate engagement, discussion and initiatives that will support the UK fishing fleet to advance sustainability in all (mobile and static) wild capture fisheries. This will include, but is not limited to, supporting the following priority work themes:

1. Advancing the research evidence-base to inform the development of new policy / technical measures.
2. An operating framework in which fishers are able to demonstrate / deploy more selective fishing gear designs.
3. Tangible outputs which provide practical solutions to address priority industry challenges / needs.
4. Timely dissemination of work outputs – and sign-posting to other good practice, including case studies – and in appropriate formats for the intended audience(s.)
5. Further development and delivery of fit-for-purpose training resources for fishers / non-fishers.

Given the underlying challenges, there is an expectation that the Forum will develop and retain a flexible approach to its work programme, as deemed necessary by members. It will also be important to avoid duplication of effort between the Forum's activities and other ongoing initiatives (e.g. work on Fisheries Management Plans.)

4. Membership

The UK Gear Forum includes representation from:

- Fishing Associations / UK Fish Producers Organisations
- Gear technologists*
- Research community
- UK Devolved Administrations

*Ben Collier (NI Gear Trials), a member of the informal UK Gear Group (convened by Seafish), will provide a conduit with gear technologists and informally to the work of ICES-FAO Working Group on Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour ([WGFTFB](#).)

¹ Going forward, should members want to expand / formalise the Forum's remit (e.g. to act as a clearing house on suitable gear trials for funding purposes), a terms of reference would likely be required.

5. Meetings

The Forum shall meet initially bi-monthly until an established work programme is up and running; thereafter up to four times per year.

If required, working groups will be established to progress individual workstreams and associated meetings will be arranged at a time and frequency convenient to working group members.

Forum chair: Seafish is in discussion with industry on a suitable chairperson.

Seafish will facilitate the Forum and provide the following secretariat duties:

- Arrange meetings
- Prepare agendas, supporting papers and meeting notes
- Support the development of an agreed work programme
- Support the submission of any funding applications

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Forum members will commit to:

- Attend scheduled meetings; if necessary nominate a substitute in advance.
- Dedicate time to read and consider meeting papers.
- Open and honest discussions, remaining respectful to the views of others at all times.
- Champion the Forum within and outside their respective work areas.
- Keep all information presented and discussed at the meeting confidential.
- Raise any conflict(s) of interest at the start of each meeting.

7. Forum Term

These Working Principles are effective from August 2022 and will be ongoing until terminated by agreement between the members.