# **Project UK Fisheries Improvements**

# **Channel scallop & monkfish Steering Group meeting minutes - DRAFT**

Thursday 2nd June 2016

Brixham Harbour Office, Torbay Harbour Authority, Brixham TQ5 8AJ

10.00 – 14.15

**Attendees:**

Barry Young (BY)

Bryce Stewart (BS)

Cassie Leisk (CL)

Charlie Samways (CS)

Chloe North (CN)

Claire Pescod (CP)

Ewan Bell (EB)

Huw Thomas (HT)

Iain Spear (IS)

Jeremy Shea (JS)

Jim Portus (JP)

Mark Webber (MW)

Margaux Favret (MF)

Nathan De Rozarieux (ND)

Paul Trebilcock (PT)

Sarah Pilgrim (SP)

Toby Middleton (TM)

Brixham Trawler Agents

York University

New England Seafood

Samways

MSC

MSC, Chair

Cefas

Morrisons

Coombe Fisheries

New England Seafoods

SWFPO

Oceanfish

MSC France

Falfish

CFPO

MacDuff Shellfish

MSC

**Apologies:**

Ally Dingwall

Andrew Pillar

Anne-Margaret Anderson

David Parker

Estelle Brennan

Gus Caslake

Hannah MacIntyre

Helen Hunter

John MacAllister

Laky Zervudachi

Nick Prust

Simon Dixon

Steve Mackinson

Sainsbury’s

Interfish

SWFPA

Youngs Seafood

Lyons

Seafish

Marks & Spencer

Defra

SWFPA

Direct Seafoods

SWFPO

MMO

Cefas

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

CP welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Channel scallop and Western Channel monkfish Steering Group and thanked Barry Young for his help with finding a meeting room. CP explained that the MSC has tried to get all necessary stakeholders in the room and that if any of the attendees could think of others who would be useful to have there, then let us know as the group is not closed.

1. Recap of Project UK Fisheries Improvements

Project UK Fisheries Improvements (PUKFI) is a collaborative, pre competitive partnership be led by the Marine Stewardship Council and Seafish, working towards an environmentally sustainable future for UK fisheries. PUKFI builds on the successful and innovative Project Inshore which identified a number of commercially relevant fisheries that the supply chain were interested in seeing move towards MSC certification.

PUKFI will do this through strategic use of the MSC process to develop credible Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs), giving the fishery the tools to implement changes and to ensure their sustainable future. It will use the MSC Pre-Assessment process as a gap analysis to determine current status and inform development of an Action Plan linked to MSC Performance Indicators, and identify improvements designed to close the gaps in the performance of the fishery.

The project then aims to implement actions set out in the Action Plan and track progress consistently and transparently through the use of the MSC’s Bench-Marking and Tracking tool (BMT). Validation of the sustainability of the fishery will be through the comprehensive, transparent and independent MSC assessment process.

PUKFI is one work-stream of a larger project, Project UK. This project aims to complete large-scale MSC Pre-Assessments on many commercial fisheries that have also been prioritised by the UK supply chain and retailers, and will incorporate fisheries from the whole of the UK. The Pre-Assessments should then feed into further improvements in those fisheries where gaps are identified.

CP reminded the group that Project Inshore was developed at a time when there was a lot of discussion in the media about underutilised species with celebratory chefs like Huw Fearnley-Whittingstall and Jamie Oliver advocating consumers choose underutilised species and move away from the ‘big five’ and commonly eaten species like cod, haddock, tuna and prawns. At the time the question was asked how these underutilised species measure up against the MSC standard and if not, was this push not just transferring pressure from relatively well managed stocks with a lot of data, onto species not managed through Europe and where data was likely limiting and management less. The idea for Project Inshore was then developed to use the MSC process as a gap analysis of the then current state of fisheries in the English Inshore using the MSC standard as a proxy for sustainability, to inform strategic sustainability reviews to feed into management.

PUKFI is funded by a number of supply chain and retailer funding partners (logos can be seen at the top of the page) and facilitated by MSC. Funding is for the development and facilitation of the FIPs for 6 species with specific gears including updating of the Project Inshore PAs, development of action plans and annual reviews and use of the MSC Benchmarking and Tracking Tool – where it is identified that fisheries are not ready to enter Full Assessment. Funding for improvement work identified by the FIP is to be part of wider PUK bid to EMFF.

The FIPs will be compliant with the MSC’s definition of a credible FIP and will use the MSC’s FIP tools to demonstrate progress and transparency. This may provide fisheries with recognition from the supply chain for being in a FIP which is making independently verifiable progress and working towards MSC certification.

1. Why Project UK?

CP invited HT from Morrison’s and JS from New England Seafoods to describe their interest in PUK and PUKFI in particular from a retailer and supply chain perspective. Morrison’s first stated to the group their reasons for supporting the MSC and then their support for Project UK Fisheries Improvements.

Morrison’s explained their view of the MSC and the project. They regard Project UK Fisheries Improvements as an opportunity to bring many companies and industry together. They recognise the robustness of MSC. They see the improvement projects as being examples for other fisheries so the improvements do not stop with just these 6 species. They are members of the Sustainable Seafood Coalition and have signed up to a code of conduct which not only makes them collaborate with other members, but also makes them help fisheries that they are sourcing from into Fishery Improvement projects if they are not at a sustainable level yet. There are barriers to buyers. This project addresses those barriers and allows them to continue buying UK scallops and monkfish. A benefit of all these companies working together is that funders could be involved in advocacy like in the tuna management improvements.

New England Seafood presented the 4 drivers for them for Project UK Fisheries Improvements. Company, customers, consumers, competition. Competition for example in the global scallop market as there are already MSC certified scallops in the market place.

1. The FIP Process

CN presented to the group on the FIP process, the [MSC’s definition of a credible FIP](https://www.msc.org/documents/developing-world/msc-accessibility-tools/credible-fip-infographic/view?searchterm=FIP) (appendix 1) the suggested timelines for the scallop and monk FIP, the predicted outputs from the FIP and presented the Orkney crab FIP as a case study on how the MSC tools have been used to run a FIP and work towards MSC assessment and certification.For details of this FIP see [here](http://www.orkneysustainablefisheries.co.uk/?page_id=142).

The presentation can be found in Appendix 2.

1. Focus on scallops – Steering Group membership, Extent of project: area, gears

SWFPO highlighted that they have been collaborating with scientists and gear technologists for a while already and their product already has a market.

This project is not just about gaining the market benefits of MSC certification, it is also about providing funding to fill data gaps, bring people together and leverage funding. There are legislative drivers too such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) which binds us into reaching Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for all fisheries by 2020, and global targets on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This improvement project can help to future-proof the fishery.

SP raised the point that it is better to be involved with developing management as industry rather than have government impose management to tick boxes for MSFD.

It was anecdotally reported that the American/Canadian scallop fishery has increased its profits since undergoing a similar process to improve the fishery with the direction of industry.

CP suggested that the start of this project could be seen as an audit of what has happened so far. We have an early Pre-Assessment of the scallop fishery, then we also have the Project Inshore Pre-Assessments (which actually look at the whole stock not just the inshore) from 2013 and now we will have an updated Pre-Assessment as part of this project in 2017. The industry has done a lot of improvements leading up to this work and this can also be a way of demonstrating that, as well as carrying on further improvement work where and if necessary.

CL pointed out that it is important to remember that the MSC standard has changed over this time with the introduction of the new version of the Certification Requirements (CR2.0) so benchmarking from a previous Pre-Assessment is not directly comparable and we need to communicate that.

ND agreed that it would be good to reduce data gaps and inform management but they highlighted that they would like to see management of expectations. Some fisheries may not be able to meet the MSC even after improvement work has gone on, or some of the improvement work necessary may be impossible to implement.

**Action 1:** CN to ensure funders are aware that this project is not a guarantee of certification but that if improvements are made they will be trackable using independent annual verification

MSC France gave a view with knowledge of the French industry and supply chain. They thought that the Brittany fishermen would not be interested in being involved in the project but that the Normandy ones might be. Normandy have done a Pre-Assessment on their scallop fishery. They are also having competition from American/Canadian scallops, MSC could be used to mitigate against that.

EB described that the current evidence points to 5 sub-stocks in the channel. However, management is not at this resolution. It is possible that sub-stocks could be locally depleted as there is no sub-stock specific management, effort can flow between them. CP likened this to the situation with *Nephrops* Functional Units in the North Sea, with ICES annually recommending *Nephrops* be managed by FU but giving a NS TAC because this is the level it is managed at. She highlighted that this project may be an opportunity to push for management at a more relevant regional/substock level to avoid localised depletion.

There was discussion on the complexity of the fishery and the different countries and vessel origins that fish it. We need to understand more about the complexity of the fishery, before we can decide on the extent (geographical and industry-wise) of the project.

**Action 2:** CN to start to develop a map of the fishery

**Action 3:** A group representative to report to NWWAC on the project at some point and CN/CP to attend the Scallop Industry Consultation Group in September in Edinburgh

1. Focus on monkfish – Steering Group membership, Extent of project: area, gears

When the fishery was thinking about MSC previously, there were difficulties with plaice bycatch and habitat impacts, but the TAC has now increased for plaice and there are now many more MCZs in place so the scores may have increased with regards to habitats.

PT as CFPO represents all gear types therefore for them to be involved they would want all gear types to be included in the project. The highest proportion of their monkfish is caught by beam trawl but they have everything through to tangle netters.

JP pointed out that a large proportion of monkfish is outside of UK control. There is also an Anglo-Spanish PO which has a lot of monkfish quota. They may not be interested in engaging as all of their monkfish is exported to Spain or landed there. The French have 60% of the TAC so it is important to engage them.

**Action 4:** CN to investigate whether the Anglo-Spanish PO are interested in participating.

MF described that 80% of the French monkfish catch is otter trawl, and 2% gill net. Carrefour has listed it as a species of interest and they are getting all their wet fish counters certified in the next two weeks therefore there is already market desire in France for this certified supply of this species.

**Action 5:** MF to investigate about informing and engaging with Pesche de Betanne on this matter

Samways mostly export to France. HT of Morrison’s told the group that a Spanish supply chain company expressed an interest in a monkfish improvement project to him at the SFP conference.

There was some feeling that the group in the future could consider how the group can work on the issue of choke species and landing obligation. But it decided that this is a related and important but separate issue.

EB told us that Sarah Readdy is the appropriate person in Cefas who would deal with monkfish.

**Action 6:** CN to get in contact with Sarah Ready at Cefas, the chair of the ICES monkfish group and IFRAMER

Note: In the run-up to the 6 steering group meetings there was some discussion about the use of the word ‘improvement’ in the name of the project. A Fishery Improvement Project or FIP is a globally recognised term and field of work. Many companies have FIPs written into their sourcing policies and fisheries in a FIP can potentially gain market benefits. Since this meeting, the Crab & Lobster Steering Group has met and certain parties felt the term ‘improvement’ has negative connotations. It was agreed that it would be explored whether the project title would be changed and that the in-depth communication of the project would still refer to the work as a FIP. It was agreed that there was scope to find a new project title and that members unhappy with the current name should provide CN with alternative suggestions which would be circulated to all other PUKFI Steering Groups and the PUKFI Advisory Group for confirmation of change or not. It was agreed that the project would still refer to the work as being a FIP, adhere to the MSC definition of a credible FIP and Steering Groups still be FIP Steering Groups. Members of the crab & lobster group unsure of the name Project UK Fisheries Improvements suggested an alternative project name and CN to put this to the other FIP Steering Groups, PUKFI Advisory Group and PUK for discussion. We received 8 responses, of which 6 were in favour of leaving the name as it is because it more accurately reflects what the project is doing, with 1 response indifferent and 1 in favour of changing it. Based on this we decided to keep the name as it is so as to avoid confusion about the project.

1. Next steps

CP explained that MSC had thought there might be different stakeholders in the room for the scallop meeting in the morning and the monkfish meeting in the afternoon but it seems that the groups are mostly the same. CP asked the group if they agreed to be a Steering Group for both scallop and monkfish under PUKFI. All agreed to be part of the group for the preliminary stages of pre-assessment updates and drafting an action plan. It was agreed that the group would then reconvene to hear the results and then individual organisations would decide whether they wanted to sign up to the FIP process.

The preliminary stages include:

* Mapping the monkfish fishery in terms of who is catching, how much, where is it landed and what market is it going to.
* An update to the Pre-Assessments that were carried out under Project Inshore. The updates will include new information and data, as well as moving the Pre-Assessments on to the new version of the MSC Standard (CR V2.0).
* The consultant will also draft possible actions that could be incorporated in to the Action Plan to fill in any gaps the fishery has against the MSC standard. With the aim of increasing the scores to a level by which the fishery could pass a Full Assessment.

The steering group will reconvene once the work has been carried out to decide if the fishery progresses to next stages and if so, which actions to take forward.

**Action 7:** CN to progress Pre-assessment updates for channel scallop and western channel monkfish.

**Action 8:** Confirmation of Action 9.

CP suggested that an MoU be developed and signed by the Steering Group members to set out its roles and responsibilities. It was discussed if this should be based on the Project Inshore Advisory Group Mou/ToR but updated for the new project and to reflect the FIP process – then circulated and signed off by email.

The group agreed to develop and sign an MoU.

**Action 9:** CN and CP to develop a draft MoU and CN to circulate if for discussion and input by email.

**Action 10:** All members to input to MoU development once received by email.

1. AOB

None

1. Date & location of next meeting

CP and CN suggested that the next meeting could be once the PA results and draft Action Plans had been received from the consultants so that the group could be presented with the results and have a chance to discuss them. After ensuring sufficient time for the tender process, receiving and considering quotes and then commissioning the work on the PAs it is likely that the next meeting will be in approximately late November or December 2016. Once the tender process was underway and CN had a better idea of the date for delivery of the work, she would circulate a Doodle Poll to find a suitable date. The consultant(s) would attend the next meeting and present the results directly to the group.

**Action 11:** CN to circulate link to Doodle Poll for next meeting.

1. Summary of Action Points

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| Action point number | Steering group member | Action | Status |
| 1 | CN | To ensure funders are aware that this project is not a guarantee of certification | Completed |
| 2 | CN | To map the fishery | Ongoing |
| 3 | CN | A group representative to report to NWWAC on the project at some point and CN/CP to attend the Scallop Industry Consultation Group in September in Edinburgh | Complete for SICG, ongoing for NWWAC |
| 4 | CN | To investigate whether the anglo-spanish PO are interested in participating. | Ongoing |
| 5 | MF | To investigate about informing and engaging with Pesche de Betanne on this matter | Completed |
| 6 | CN | To get in contact with Sarah Readdy at Cefas, the chair of the ICES monkfish group and IFRAMER | Completed |
| 7 | CP/CN | CN to progress Pre-assessment updates for channel scallop and western channel monkfish. | Completed |
| 8 |  | Confirmation of Action 9. | Completed |
| 9 | CN/CP | To develop a draft MoU and CN to circulate if for discussion and input by email | Ongoing |
| 10 | All | To input to MoU development once received by email | Ongoing |
| 11 | CN | To circulate link to Doodle Poll for next meeting | Complete |

## Appendix 1. MSC’s definition of a credible FIP

Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs)

Background

As market demand grows for sustainable seafood, an increasing number of fisheries around the world are becoming interested in making the necessary improvements to become recognised as sustainable and access these markets. This has led to considerable growth in organised multi-stakeholder efforts to improve fisheries towards sustainability, often called ‘Fishery Improvement Projects’ (FIPs).

The MSC definition of a credible FIP

The MSC recognises the important contribution that credible FIPs can make to improving overall fisheries health and in promoting sustainable seafood. However, the MSC believes that it is important that they are operated in a manner that is credible: that their actions are transparent; that they clearly show improvement in fishery performance; and that these fisheries ultimately demonstrate their sustainability through a robust, independent assessment process.

In July 2015, following deliberations by a Board/Stakeholder Council working group, the MSC Board of Trustees approved an MSC definition of credible FIPs. The definition advocates that a credible FIP should be characterised by:

• An initial gap analysis against the MSC Standard (**MSC pre-assessment**)

• An **action plan** inclusive of activities, budgets, roles and responsibilities, that is linked to the MSC performance indicators and scoring guideposts and is ultimately capable of delivering an unconditional pass against the MSC Standard

• Regular **reporting of progress** against the action plan

• Presence of a mechanism to **verify and provide assurance** about the robustness of the **process and progress** being made in the FIP (i.e. pre-assessment and progress reports prepared or reviewed by an MSC assessor or an independent technical consultant)

• A **pre-determined limit** to the amount of time spent as a FIP, which should generally be no longer than five years

• An **upfront commitment to enter full MSC assessment** and achieve MSC certification through a transparent, third party process, to verify the success of the FIP

The above guidance is intended to be used as a roadmap to sustainability, and to provide clarity to FIP providers, fisheries, retailers and stakeholders on what constitutes a credible FIP. The MSC recommends that partners apply it to the development of effective and time-bound fishery improvement projects, and encourages retailers to use these criteria to assess the credibility of a FIP, should they take the independent decision to include FIPs in their sourcing policies.

Further information and support tools

The MSC has a range of tools available to support the development of credible FIPs and to help FIPs stakeholders address each of the elements outlined above.

These include:

• Pre-assessment Template

• Action Plan Template

• Benchmarking and Tracking Tool

• List of technical consultants

• Capacity building program

• Partnering for Sustainable Fisheries

• Get certified! A guide to the MSC assessment process

## Appendix 2. Presentation

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