A thriving seafood industry for all
Contents

Charting our course
Who we are and what we do
The Seafish way
Our priorities
Evaluating our performance
Introduction

Charting our course

Mike Sheldon
Chair of the Seafish Board

This Corporate Plan delivers an impactful, collaborative and ambitious set of objectives for Seafish over the next five years. As Chair of the Seafish Board I have been hugely appreciative of the time, resource and effort that the seafood industry has invested in ensuring we understand their challenges at a time of great change through geopolitical upheaval and economic turbulence.

Industry clearly communicated to us the issues that matter most through their participation in our Strategic Review consultation during 2021 and through our Sector panels. It gives me and my fellow Board members great confidence and reassurance knowing that we have listened to industry needs and have acted on that. As well as delivering a clear line of sight on our priorities for the seafood industry, the Strategic Review has assured us that we have a strong mandate to deliver and empowered us to make the changes that are required to our funding and delivery models.

It is my job at the helm of the Board to drive forward the change we have been mandated to deliver and to hold the Executive team to account for that delivery. We will ensure governance arrangements around the levy funds entrusted to us are of the highest standards as we seek to meet the needs of industry across the UK.

We know what seafood can do for the nation. It’s packed full of nutrition; when managed responsibly, it’s sustainable; it creates long-term job opportunities; it’s a low carbon food with an important role to play in future food security; it builds and sustains our communities; and it drives business prosperity.

We believe seafood is the way forward and when this sector thrives, the whole nation thrives. That’s why we’re going to do everything we can to support it. I look forward to working with our stakeholders, government and colleagues over the coming years to make good on our ambitions in this new Corporate Plan and deliver the support industry needs to truly thrive.

We are looking forward to working with our stakeholders, government and colleagues over the coming years to make good on our ambitions in this new Corporate Plan and deliver the support industry needs to truly thrive.

---

| 5 |

---
Who are we and what do we do?

Our purpose:
To give the UK seafood sector the support it needs to truly thrive.
Unpacking our purpose

Bringing the UK seafood sector together to help us all thrive

We engage industry right across the UK from Shetland in the north to Cornwall in the south. We work with fishing vessels and their crew, seafood processing businesses, aquaculture producers, and restaurants and fishmongers reliant on the industry and the top-quality seafood we fish, farm and process.

Our industry care passionately about seafood, their communities and the seas around our coast.

Our unique, non-competitive position means we work in partnership with stakeholders across the UK to navigate challenges and seize opportunities.
Our unique position

We are a non-departmental public body (NDPB), established under the Fisheries Act 1981 to support the seafood industry.

Our primary sponsor is the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and we also work closely with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish devolved administrations.

Our Panels and Committees

Also key to our governance are our industry Sector Panels and our Advisory Committees. They provide input and advice on the work we deliver and help us maintain a weather eye on the changing landscape within which the seafood industry operates across the UK.

Our Board

We are governed by our Board, which is made up of eight non-Executive members, a Chair and a Deputy Chair. The Board is responsible for setting our strategic direction, driving performance and ensuring the highest standards of governance. Our Executive Team leads our work programme which is overseen by the Seafish Board.

Our staff

We have 85 staff working across the UK with a range of fisheries and seafood knowledge and expertise. With offices in Edinburgh and Grimsby and local delivery managers based near some of the main fishing and seafood hubs around the UK, we are ideally placed to deliver the support industry needs.
Our commitment to the UK seafood sector

Our Strategic Review told us that industry value our position as the only organisation working across the seafood supply chain and across the UK.

We will ensure that the work of our ‘central teams’ is communicated locally and that our staff around the UK work hard to connect local stakeholders to the support that matters most to them. We will also continue to build on the strong relationships across the four UK administrations.
Most of our funding comes from a levy on the first sale of seafood products in the UK. This includes seafood produced, landed, and imported into the UK. We also secure project funding from government and charitable organisations where appropriate.

The Seafish levy was last amended in 1999. In response to the Strategic Review recommendations, the levy system will be reviewed during 2023 and agreed changes will be implemented in 2024. This review is focused on ensuring the levy system is fair, equitable and efficient.

The Seafish Board is committed to:

• Using levy funds to deliver products and services only where there is a clear value proposition to the UK seafood supply chain.
• Securing alternative sources of funding to support work that is delivered on behalf of government.

In response to stakeholder feedback during the Strategic Review, the Seafish Board is committed to:

• Proactively accessing external funding opportunities aligned to our priorities.
• Ensuring Seafish resources are used to deliver with impact.

We will embed these principles as we embrace our new priorities and our work over the next five years.

Finally, we will continue to use the levy to leverage access to other funds and grant programmes to support the delivery of projects in collaboration with industry. In the past this has focused on public sector and charitable funds but increasingly we will look at private funding opportunities too.
The Seafish way

At Seafish, our passion and expertise put seafood and our industry at the heart of everything we do.
Our guiding principles help us to achieve our core purpose of giving the seafood sector the support it needs to thrive. They underpin how we approach internal and external relationships and how we organise ourselves to deliver, ensuring we have the funds, the people and the technology to achieve success.

We’re enablers…
We make it possible and we make it happen.

We’re specialists…
We can help when others can’t.

We’re innovators…
If there’s a better way, we’ll find it.

We’re team players…
Together we thrive.
We collaborate

We know that we can’t drive the transformation to a thriving seafood industry on our own and working collaboratively with industry, government and researchers will be at the heart of everything we do.

Key to this partnership approach are:

• Our industry Sector Panels who bring expertise from across the UK supply chain and provide a continual and clear line of sight to our Board on the landscape within which our industry operate;
• Our Advisory Committees which create space for stakeholders around the UK to ensure we are aware of local issues;
• Our Issues groups which provide a forum for important UK-wide issues to be discussed, common understanding achieved, and actions defined;
• Engagement with key stakeholders through the projects, services and activities we deliver.
We engage and communicate

Our Operations, Communications and Engagement teams will work hand in hand to deliver on the priorities industry have identified. They will work in partnership to produce meaningful and measurable outputs and outcomes that land with impact, communicating in accessible, engaging, and innovative ways.

We will ensure we:
• Know and understand our audiences, getting the right information to the right people in a timely manner;
• Measure our success, understand our impact, and continually work to refine and enhance our offering to our stakeholders;
• Continue to scan, listen and react to new opportunities and challenges as the landscape changes.

This will be guided by our Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Strategies allowing us to increase our focus on supporting the reputation of the industry and ensure that accurate information about the benefits of seafood and the seafood industry is available to our stakeholders.

We also know that to succeed we will need to:

1. be agile so we can quickly flex and adapt;
2. establish high quality information networks (via our engagement forums, existing stakeholder relationships, and our Issues groups) to stay alert so we can quickly get on the front foot.
Central to the delivery of this Corporate Plan are the internal services that mean we are equipped to deliver a quality service. This includes our finance, human resources, and information services.

These core services mean we:

• Deliver the highest standards of governance in terms of managing our budget and safeguarding our assets.
• Recruit people to work for Seafish who are passionate about the seafood sector and being part of a high performing organisation and committed to delivering a quality service.
• Have the right technology to enable us to work efficiently and effectively wherever we are based across the UK.
A sector with global challenges

The next five years are expected to be the most challenging experienced in at least a generation.

This is precipitated by:

- **Global unrest** following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.
- **Political and economic instability** leading to a ‘cost of living crisis’ and significant pressure on household budgets.
- **Climate and nature emergency** impacting with rising temperatures, uncertain weather patterns, and a continued decline in biodiversity at sea and on land.

Understanding the impact

These macro events will have a direct impact on all seafood businesses as:

- operating costs rise due to the energy crisis;
- labour shortages continue in response to changing immigration policies;
- consumer spend reduces;
- competition for raw material increases globally;
- climate change creates physically challenging operating conditions and shifts the distribution pattern of key fish species.

In isolation these issues are significant, but the cumulative impact is unprecedented. They will shape how seafood businesses perform over the next five years, and likely determine the future structure of the supply chain.
Defining our priorities

There are no easy solutions to the challenges ahead, but we are committed to supporting the UK seafood industry to survive and thrive.

We will do this by working with industry on the issues they have told us are important.

- Ensuring a Safe and Skilled Workforce
- Facilitating and promoting International Trade
- Responding to the Climate Change emergency
- Improving Fisheries Management
- Enabling Supply Chain Resilience
- Improving Data, Insight, and Innovation to support our priority work areas and to deliver products and services directly to business.

Across these priority work areas, we will actively scan the landscape for reputational risks and proactively plan responses to help mitigate impacts and champion industry Reputation.
A Safe and Skilled Workforce

Access to labour has long been an issue for the seafood sector, at sea and onshore, as people have other career choices, and the seafood sector is sometimes seen as an unattractive option. Until recently this was resolved by easy access to labour from the EU and further afield, to ensure we had the crew for our fishing boats and staff for our processing plants, fishmongers, and restaurants. However, the UK’s exit from the EU, and the subsequent implementation of a new immigration policy, has significantly curtailed the use of non-UK labour.

We have been active in delivering services to support the industry to ensure it has access to a safe and skilled workforce, and this work will continue over the next five years. This includes our training initiatives and our support in delivering ‘at sea’ safety and hazard reporting programmes.

Reacting to immigration policy
Businesses now face the choice of competing for labour in a small and highly competitive domestic labour pool or adapting to a new and stricter immigration system.

Creating a safe working environment
Related to this is the need to ensure that all employees, regardless of nationality, are treated equally and have a safe and secure working environment...

Fostering growth and progression
...and that they have the skills they need to do the job at hand, but also to grow and progress in their career.
A Safe and Skilled Workforce

Our goals

What are our goals?

We are passionate advocates for the opportunities that the seafood industry can provide, but we also recognise that improvements are still needed. Our ambition is that the UK seafood sector is recognised as a dynamic, safe, and attractive sector to work in, and that individual businesses have the systems and processes in place to source the labour they need and to provide safe workplaces for all.

To achieve this we will act as an advisor across government on matters relating to labour and safety issues in the seafood sector.

How will we achieve them?

Supporting safe workplaces

- Work across the sector to support businesses to address welfare and human rights issues in their supply chains, regardless of where seafood is sourced from.
- Support seafood business to comply with labour and safety related legislation and regulations, including meeting the requirements of ILO 188.
- Support the offshore safety agenda through our leadership role in the national Fishing Industry Safety Group and our network of regional safety groups.
- Deliver ‘at sea’ safety and hazard reporting programmes.

Skills and training

- Partner with government to successfully deliver funding programmes to improve skill levels across the supply chain.
- Support the development and delivery of training programmes.

Access to labour

- Continue our campaign activity to promote the reputation of the seafood industry as a sector of choice for a dynamic career, and to ensure businesses have the information they need to successfully navigate the labour market.
- Provide direct support to businesses seeking to recruit labour from overseas by providing guidance on the visa application process and, if required, by delivering training for non-UK workers to ensure they meet visa scheme requirements, including English language skills.
- Produce regular analysis on labour issues, at a national and regional level, and benchmark the seafood industry against other food sectors.
- Develop in collaboration with industry organisations and government, a long-term strategic plan to ensure the sector is equipped to access and retain the labour it needs.
Seafood is recognised as one of the most globally traded food commodities — five times the size of the global pork trade, and eight times the size of the global poultry trade.* The UK is a key player in this global trade dynamic. Most of what we catch and land domestically is exported, while we import more than 70% of the seafood we eat, both farmed and wild capture.


**Understanding the international trading environment**

The viability of the UK seafood sector is also dependent on the international trading environment and global events (Covid in China, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine) determine the seafood on our plates.

**Adapting to the post-EU trade landscape**

Post-EU exit, the UK’s trade landscape has become more fragmented and more complex, and businesses must continue to adapt to a dynamic and fragile trade model.
International Trade

Our goals

What are our goals?
Our ambition is to support businesses to achieve frictionless seafood trade with suppliers and markets across the world.

How will we achieve them?
To achieve this we will deliver international trade facilitation and promotion support, which will include:

- Delivering advice and guidance to help businesses to navigate the non-tariff barriers that can increase costs and hinder and disrupt trade flows.
- Providing expertise to support FTA negotiations to ensure the seafood sector’s needs are understood, and potential opportunities are realised.
- Increasing our capacity and focus on international trade promotion by supporting businesses to participate in trade shows and by equipping the UK government’s network of in-market trade specialists to promote the qualities of UK seafood.
- Maintaining factual and up-to-date information on the global footprint of our seafood supply chain – the seafood we catch and export, and the seafood we import.
- Monitoring changes to domestic regulations to assess how these could impact international trade and working with government and businesses to mitigate these impacts.
- Monitoring and responding to instances when regulatory divergence is occurring in key markets to help manage potential risks to trade.
- Providing regular and bespoke Trade Analysis and Insight reports to monitor trends in seafood trade, and to assess likely impacts of national, international, and global events on trade opportunities.
- Supporting industry to establish collaborative partnerships with seafood businesses and research institutes in key markets, to share knowledge and experiences, and to partner on projects of mutual interest.
Climate change is unquestionably the most significant challenge of our times. Its impact is global, and it will require international commitment from governments, research communities and businesses to find practical solutions.

Seafish cannot alone ‘solve’ the climate change challenge, but we play a vital role in helping the sector to understand the scale of the problem and how it must respond.

**Defining the problem**
The seafood sector both contributes to climate change and is also affected by it. When something is so complex and broad in scope, it can be easy to lose sight of what it might mean for individual businesses or communities.

**Adapting to change**
But we know that it presents a significant threat to the seafood industry – to what we catch, how and where we catch it, how we process it and where we sell and trade our seafood.
Climate Change

Our goals

What are our goals?

Our ambition over the next five years is to firmly place the seafood sector on a clear path to achieve its emissions targets, and to ensure businesses understand how they will need to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate on their daily operations.

Our focus on tackling the climate change challenge is not just about the work we do to support the seafood sector – we also have a responsibility to take steps to reduce our emissions profile and to meet our net zero commitments as an organisation.

How will we achieve them?

• Improve carbon literacy in businesses across the seafood supply chain to help increase awareness and build understanding of the business implications of mitigation and adaptation, and the action that needs to be taken to increase supply chain resilience.

• Produce tools and guidance to enable businesses to understand their emissions contribution and to identify the improvements they will need to make.

• Establish pre-competitive forums for industry to learn about new practices and technological innovations, to share ideas, and create a tipping point for ideas and collaborative partnerships to flourish.

• Monitor and report on climate change adaptation in the seafood sector (including changing species distribution and the potential issues for species resilience, fishing safety issues and transport logistics) and work collaboratively with industry and government to progress the policy changes required in response.

• Provide the evidence to enable Seafish and the seafood industry to promote the positive aspects of seafood’s carbon credentials, to help tackle misinformation, and to understand the impact it has on consumer behaviour.

• Collaborate with the seafood sector and research institutes to establish the information gaps that are hindering progress and develop a five-year research plan that can drive research to meet these data and information needs.

• Deliver research and insight on the contribution seafood makes to the blue economy, including its role in delivering ecosystem service and public good benefits.
Achieving sustainable fisheries management is complex. It requires a combination of science and evidence, appropriate rules and regulations, an effective system to monitor and control behaviour, good decision making, the active engagement of coastal communities, clear linkages to the wider supply chain, and fundamentally the support of the wider public.

When these components are in place, they can collectively deliver an environmentally sustainable resource and increased biodiversity, economically viable communities, and the basis for a thriving seafood supply chain that can help to secure markets for UK seafood – at home and abroad.

Leading
Post-EU exit, the UK is on a journey to develop and implement a world-leading fisheries management system and we have an important role to play.

Facilitating collaboration
We are not the only organisation that will contribute to this task, and we rarely work in isolation, but we have the knowledge and skills in science and fisheries management, and our capability in convening and facilitating will be core to this work.
Our goals

What are our goals?

Our ambition is that over the next ten years all commercial fisheries will be managed via Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) that are supported by a robust evidence framework, and provide for genuine co-management between industry, government, and researchers.

How will we achieve them?

We will contribute to the delivery of this ambition by:

- Facilitating and delivering co-management initiatives via the Shellfish Industry Advisory Group (SIAG) and the Finfish Industry Advisory Group (FIAG).
- Facilitating the development and implementation of shellfish FMPs.
- Supporting the fishing industry, across the UK, to build its capacity to engage in co-management initiatives.
- Providing independent analysis and advice on fishery-specific issues to inform processor and retailer purchasing decisions.
- Connecting the UK supply chain so that fisheries management improvements lead to increased opportunities for consumers to eat UK seafood because it meets responsible sourcing requirements.
- Using our UK-wide remit to help promote good practice and the alignment of fisheries management approaches across the UK.
- Stimulating and enabling long-term science partnerships between industry and the research community that focus on fisheries and wider marine biodiversity issues.
- Supporting the development and delivery of a world class fisheries management framework by contributing to core strategic projects.
Supply Chain Resilience

The seafood industry is not unique in finding itself operating in an environment of persistent unpredictability. The issues are often complex, difficult to forecast and to assess impact, and can create challenging trading environments. They are not always problematic; change can also bring opportunities. The certainty is that change is constant and seafood businesses, regardless of size, need to be able to respond and adapt, but our approach will encompass one or more of the following stages when a new issue emerges.

Responding to global events
The last four years alone have seen macro events such as the pandemic, global trade disruption, geopolitical instability, cybersecurity breaches, and climate and energy crises, disrupt global seafood supply chains.

Understanding changing consumer habits
Alongside this, events such as changing consumer patterns impacting seafood sales, adverse social media campaigns, and the emerging cost of living crisis in the UK are also having an impact.
Supply Chain Resilience

Our goals

What are our goals?

Our ambition is to build supply chain resilience by equipping seafood businesses to respond and adapt to emerging supply chain issues; ensuring businesses have the evidence to provide reassurance or counter misinformation; highlighting where change is necessary and supporting businesses to make the shift; creating pre-competitive spaces for businesses to forge solutions and realise opportunities.

In short, we want Seafish to be the first point of contact when issues emerge.

We know that we are already focused on the ‘big ticket’ items – including access to labour, international trade, and climate change – but new issues will emerge during this Corporate Plan.

How will we achieve them?

In the immediate term we will focus on the following supply chain issues:

• Continuing our work on plastics and micro-plastics in the marine environment and seafood.

• Supporting the shellfish supply chain to adapt to regulatory changes relating to crustacean sentience.

• Supporting the aquaculture sector to navigate a complex regulatory environment, to realise the potential growth opportunities in the UK and abroad, and to ensure the positive environmental aspects of shellfish aquaculture are understood and valued.
We can’t solve every issue and problem, and there will be times when it will not be possible to intervene, but our approach will encompass one or more of the following stages when a new issue emerges.

**Stage 1**
Disseminate:
Communicate details of the issue so that businesses are aware.

**Stage 2**
Triage:
Help to explore and define the problem and assess why the supply chain is impacted.

**Stage 3**
Collaborate:
Work alongside government, industry, NGOs, and the research community to develop solutions.

**Stage 4**
Lead:
Take responsibility for leading and coordinating the response.
In times of considerable change, access to data, analysis and insight is essential to help orientate businesses, to inform good decision making, and to support the development of innovative solutions to tackle the complex problems the supply chain faces.

At Seafish, we have a long record of collecting data and providing research and analysis to support the sector; analysis on how it trades, its economic performance, and how its customers behave. In a fragmented industry, where businesses can range from single vessel operators through to multinational food companies, we consistently produce quality analysis and insights into the operation of the seafood sector at both the macro and micro level.

Our independence, and our experience means we are trusted custodians of industry’s data. Our analysis also provides a ‘historical’ narrative of how the industry has responded to a complex and ever-changing business environment.

Increasingly we are moving beyond analysis and impact assessments and are proactively engaging with research institutes and funding programmes to support innovation in the sector, but we know we can do more.
Data, Insight and Innovation

Our goals

What are our goals?

Our ambition is twofold:
1. Become ‘the’ centre for analysis and insight on the operation and performance of the seafood supply chain, and
2. Coordinate and target innovation investment to find solutions to the real issues facing seafood businesses.

How will we achieve them?

To achieve this we will:

- Establish research partnerships to connect academic and business communities so that research outputs are focused on improving the economic performance and long-term sustainability of the seafood supply chain.
- Proactively look for opportunities to maximise the value we deliver from our data by collaborating with partner organisations to deliver transformative solutions.
- Embark on a programme of data collection, data acquisition and analysis that enables us to deliver critical insight into the issues facing the sector now and in the future.
- Provide bespoke and generic analysis on macro and micro issues facing the supply chain, including on the marine spatial squeeze challenge.
- Establish forums for industry to share good practice on creative solutions to problems, and to create pre-competitive initiatives to drive further innovation.
Supporting industry reputation

Our ambition is to enable and empower the seafood industry to respond to the reputational and societal issues that can act as a barrier to consumers choosing seafood. We will do this by scaling up existing efforts and embracing new ones to manage risks and support a thriving sector now and in the future.

We know that the biggest issues of concern for seafood consumers include:

- the impacts of fishing on the marine environment
- marine pollution
- micro-plastics
- animal welfare issues
- the environmental credentials of seafood
- human rights and ethical issues

These issues are moving up political agendas and gaining momentum in the media.

Championing industry reputation has never been more important than now. In a world where consumers have a lot of protein choices – both animal and plant-based – the reputation of a sector can be a key driver influencing purchasing decisions. Heightened awareness of environmental and societal challenges faced by the seafood sector are inextricably linked to the financial sustainability of businesses right across the seafood supply chain.
To deliver effectively we will be investing in research, analysis and supply chain initiatives that are designed to protect and enhance the reputation of the industry through our other priority work areas. This will be complemented by an overarching programme of work where we will:

- Develop a clear narrative around the UK seafood sector to move the dial and improve perceptions of the industry and the seafood it produces.
- Across our priority work areas, actively scan the environment for reputational risks and proactively plan responses to help mitigate impacts while ensuring the resources are in place to manage reactive reputational challenges when they arise.
- Provide stakeholders with trusted, informed, and accessible content on key issues and good news stories to help them communicate better on the issues that matter most, arming them with the tools they need to do it well.
- Upskill businesses to enable them to better deal with reputational challenges and develop a network of ambassadors to work with us to effectively disseminate important information.

In supporting industry with reputational challenges, we will provide evidence-based information and trusted content to enable effective reputation management, and guidance and advice to help businesses to make changes and adapt to new ways of working.
Evaluating our performance

Seafood is a small organisation, but we have big ambitions for the future of the UK seafood industry. Many of the issues that this Corporate Plan seeks to help the industry to address, are significant national and indeed global challenges. Seafood alone can’t deliver the desired change and we recognise that. Our ambition is to see the UK seafood sector achieve greater stability over the next five years.

Success is a thriving seafood industry that:

• has access to the seafood supply (locally produced and imported) to meet demand;

• has consumers, at home and abroad, valuing seafood for the health, nutritional and environmental benefits it provides;

• is valued for the contribution it makes nationally to regional growth and coastal community resilience, and to the food supply of the nation; and

• is recognised as being a leader in corporate social responsibility and delivering best practice while maintaining its competitiveness.
Evaluating our performance

Assessing the contribution that a single organisation can make will always be difficult to measure, but if we are to deliver with impact over the next five years, we want to observe positive change across the following measures:

**Measure 1:** The contribution seafood makes to UK gross domestic product will have increased.

**Measure 2:** The volume of seafood exports will have increased.

**Measure 3:** An increase in the proportion of seafood imports that are destined for value added processing.

**Measure 4:** The current declining trend in seafood consumption is halted.

**Measure 5:** An increase in the volume of seafood landed into UK ports.

**Measure 6:** An increase in the volume of shellfish aquaculture produced across the UK.

**Measure 7:** An increase in the proportion of marine fish stocks (of UK interest) with biomass at levels that maintain full reproductive capacity.

**Measure 8:** A decline in carbon emissions from the UK seafood sector (catching, aquaculture, and processing).

**Measure 9:** An increase in the number of seafood businesses that have access to sufficient skilled labour.

**Measure 10:** A year on year decline in the number of preventable fishing related incidents.

**Measure 11:** Increase in positive media coverage on the seafood industry year on year with a baseline value to be set in 2023/24.

**Measure 12:** We will measure stakeholder sentiment annually and over five years we want to see a year on year increase in stakeholder sentiment with a baseline to be set in 2023/24.