

# Responsible Fishing Port Standard – development process



# Responsible Fishing Port Standard Development Process

## Background Information

In recent years, the members of the BPA Fishing Ports Group have become increasingly aware that the variety of legislative, environmental and operational procedures implemented by commercial fishing ports around the UK leaves the sector open to different interpretations as to how the procedures should be enforced. They believe this has resulted in potential inconsistencies, which, in turn, has led to ports within the fisheries sector conducting similar operations in different ways. The group also believes that many of these differences (for example, in how legislation is enforced) may be the result of individual port requirements, and thus that for the longer term development of this sector there is an opportunity to harmonise operations in many aspects of port landings. This could be achieved by the development of a Code of Good Practice, with the conformance of ports against the code assessed by a Responsible Fishing Port Standard (RFPS), the process for development of which forms the basis of this document. The potential benefits for individual ports participating within this programme include the exchange of good industry practice and recommendations, which will result in uniformity and structure in their operations.

A comprehensive scoping project was conducted by a third party consultancy company in March 2015 for a period of 3 months, specifically to seek collaboration with UK fishing ports and the UK supply chain and develop a set of objectives. The scoping project also examined how such a fishing ports standard could complement the other existing standards in the supply chain, such as Responsible Fishing Scheme, and assist in the development of more confidence within this port sector, the catching sector, and for buyers and sellers.

## Proposed Terms of Reference of the RFPS

Key areas to be included within a fishing ports code of good practice and their compliance to be assessed by the RFPS could be as follows, in no particular order of priority:

- Enhance and Maintain Hygiene levels – inside and out to meet with sector and supply chain expectations;
- Maintain and determine a minimum Structural Condition - inside and out of the market selling hall, fishing landing area and fish loading area to ensure that good food safety requirements can be adhered to;
- Care of the landed seafood to enhance its Quality Maintenance, to reassure both the catching sector and the wider supply chain;
- Where applicable, ensure that the Grading compliance of landed seafood is consistently met and adhered to;
- Promote and ensure that the seafood Traceability documentation trail is maintained from the catching vessel to the first stage in the fish processing sector;

- Provide Waste Management and Recycling provision for both the catching and supply chain sectors that use the port facility;
- Creation of Environmental Controls to mitigate any risk of pollution that may emanate from a port's operations;
- Consider what additional Service provision - Electricity, Fuel, Ice, storage, net mending etc. - should be available to service both the catching and supply chain sectors.

The proposed key message/objective for this standard (which was discussed during the scoping project and will need to be agreed) is:

***“To support the long term development and maintenance of a credible and robust third party certification programme for all types of UK commercial fishing ports, which will assure the UK seafood industry, key stakeholders and seafood supply chain that all certified or engaged ports within this programme are acting in a responsible manner; and will support and develop greater assurance and transparency within the Seafood Industry.”***

## **Rationale and Potential Benefits of the RFPS to the Port Sectors and wider Supply Chain**

The standard should be voluntary, and if a port were unable to comply initially with the industry code of good practice, it should have the opportunity to undertake an improvement journey that would be recognized by the supply chain, if it were structured in an appropriate and credible manner.

To avoid confusion, the RFPS standard should be a standalone standard with positive affinities with:

- The Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS) programme, the scope of which is fishing vessels and their allotted skippers;
- Chain of Custody standards for both fishery and fishing vessel certification programmes, to support in ensuring that the provenance of the seafood as it passes through the port sector is maintained;
- Food Safety standards that are required by the supply chain, which shall be enhanced by the adherence of a port to this new RFPS.

### **Proposed Benefits to the Port Sector**

- Improve Profile.
- Improve Image
- Improve service provision to Fishers/Supply Chain.
- Unification of sector - self regulation and strong voice to discuss legislation implementation.
- Improve operating standards.
- Improve funding opportunities to enhance the port sector.

## **Proposed Benefits to the Supply Chain**

- Greater level of assurance to the supply chain and fishers – e.g. through quality and grading consistency.
- Greater transparency and consistency to the supply chain and fishers – including on what is and is not good practice in a port.
- Electronic Auctions, if adopted, provide better choice of ports from which a buyer can select to purchase fish.
- Fish purchased through an auction market port should deliver better processes to the catching sector rather than using the direct sells option, which could result in a fisherman being rewarded with more value for their catch.
- Greater assurance that no Illegal, Unreported, or Unregulated (IUU) fish enters the supply chain.
- Full Traceability of the catching vessel and their product through the port sector into the supply chain.

## **Proposed RFPS Standard Development Process**

The standard should be designed such that it can be complied with by all types of ports. However, all users of the port that impact directly or indirectly on its operations shall need to be engaged in the standard development process to ensure full stakeholder engagement and also that any cost implications arising from compliance with the RFPS can be apportioned accordingly.

The standard should be developed in a modular format. Universal modules, which are applicable to all participating fishing ports, should include criteria relating to key aspects such as hygiene, structural condition, and environment controls. Separate modules that apply only to specific to fishing ports, such as those with auctions, should also be developed; these will cover key aspects such as traceability, quality control, and grading. The detail on what requirements are to be included in each module shall be determined by an RFPS technical committee and supporting working groups of technical experts, following the direction of the RFPS Oversight Board.

The standard should be based on areas that are in the control of the port authorities and users of the port, and could include the following 5 key areas. These have been chosen because they complement other industry standards, such as the RFS scheme and other recognised on-shore food safety and chain of custody standards.

### **All Ports Core Modules**

- **Care of the Catch**
  - Hygiene levels – inside and out
  - Structural Condition - inside and out
  - Quality Maintenance
  - Temperature Control
- **The Port and its Mission**

Demonstrate Due Diligence and Compliance with Legislation  
Improve Skills and Knowledge, Training Provision

- **Care of the Environment**  
Waste Management  
Recycling  
Environmental Controls

#### **Ports with Auctions Specific Module**

- **Chain of Custody**  
Grading Compliance  
Traceability  
Labelling Provision

#### **Aspiration Module**

- **Service provision**  
Electricity  
Fuel  
Ice  
Plus others

The standard shall be developed to be in compliance with relevant international guidelines for the development and certification of programmes. ISO/IEC 17065 2012 specifies general requirements for third-parties operating a product certification system, and the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance (ISEAL) provides a Code of Good Practice for setting the social and environmental components. Following these guidelines in the development of the RFPS shall ensure that the final standard provides the utmost credibility to the applicant port, and also provides full transparency in relation to what the standard shall denote to the users of the port and the supply chain.

The development of the standard shall follow a thorough consultation process to ensure that all stakeholders that might be affected, either directly or indirectly, shall have an opportunity to suggest what should and should not be in the new standard. In addition, to ensure that the developed standard and resulting certification programme could be accredited to meet the requirements of ISO 17065, a full, transparent and credible governance structure shall be introduced. The proposed RFPS governance structure is as follows:

**Seafish** – Main standard holder and owner of all the intellectual property generated by the programme. The Seafish Board shall make the final approval decision on any standard that is generated by this programme.

**Oversight Board** - Selected organisations shall be chosen for their credibility, and shall be tasked by the Seafish Board to give a strategic overview to the direction of the standard and agree this Terms of Reference (TOR). The Oversight Board shall promote broad stakeholder involvement, consensus, and

transparency in the standard's development process. Seafish staff and consultants to the programme shall be made available to the Board to give guidance and oversight for this process.

This Oversight Board shall be tasked with giving direction to the scheme's Technical Committee to develop the conformance criteria required within the RFPS, and shall be the governance body that recommends approval of the final version of the RFP standard by the Seafish Board.

The RFPS Oversight Board shall be governed by a bespoke set of terms of reference for the role they shall be required to perform, and shall be overseen by the Seafish Board to ensure that the approved TOR for this standard are being adhered to.

**Technical Committee** - The RFPS Technical Committee shall be tasked with developing each of the standard's conformance criteria with the assistance of a separate expert working group for each specific module within the RFPS programme.

The RFPS Technical Committee shall be governed by a bespoke set of terms of reference for the role they shall be required to perform, and shall be overseen by the RFPS Oversight Board to ensure that the approved TOR for this standard are being adhered to.

## **Proposed RFPS Development Process**

The proposed development stages used in the preparation of the RFPS are as follows:

1. Outline of Standard modules drafted and agreed by the Oversight Board;
2. Technical Committee/Working Group draft of RFP Standard conformance criteria for each agreed RFP module;
3. Technical Committee approve draft of each RFP Standard;
4. Oversight Board approve draft of each RFP Standard;
5. Presentation to Seafish Board for preliminary sign-off
6. Public comment draft on the RFP Standard following 60 day Public Consultation on BPA/Seafish Website and through direct canvassing of affected stakeholders by BPA/Seafish Staff;
7. Final Oversight Board draft of the RFP Standard;
8. Oversight Board review and recommendation for approval of RFP Standard;
9. Seafish Board final approval for each RFP Standard;

The length of time from the point of approval of this proposal to creating a standard that could be certified against would be in the region of 12 months.

## **Proposed Technical Competencies for the RFPS Technical Committee**

On agreement of this TOR for the RFPS, the Seafish secretariat shall seek out and consult with key individuals who can offer the correct level of competency and expertise to create the RFPS code of good practice, along with a set of credible conformance criteria for the development of the RFPS.

The proposed expertise that members of the RFPS Technical Committee shall need to be able to demonstrate includes the following key areas:

- Fishing Port operations;
- Seafood Grading and Traceability specification;
- Fish assessment methodologies;
- Environmental Assessment Impacts;
- Social and Welfare Assessment Criteria;
- Standard setting requirements to meet ISO 17065 and ISEAL criteria.