

**Notes on the Responsible Fishing Port Standard Oversight Board meeting (inaugural)**  
**Friend's House, London 26/01/16**

**1.0 Welcome, introduction and apologies**

Jonathan Shepherd welcomed everybody to the meeting.

<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Sector</b>
Jonathan Shepherd	Seafish Board	Interim Chair
Michaela Archer	Seafish	
Mike Platt	RS Standards Ltd.	Consultant
Marcus Jacklin	Seafish	
Mike Mitchell	Young's Seafood	Processing
Huw Thomas	Morrison's	Retail
Tim Silverthorne	National Federation Fishmongers (NFF)	Retail
Jim Portus (on phone)	South West Fish Producers Organisation (SWFPO)	Catch
Mike Park	Scottish White Fish Producers Association (SWFPA)	Catch
Barry Young	Brixham Trawlers Association (BTA)	Agent
Pete Bromley	Sutton Harbour	Port
Celia MacKenzie	Whitehaven Port	Port
Martyn Boyers	Grimsby Port + Chair of British Ports Association Fishing Ports Group (BPAFPG)	Port
Richard Ballantyne	British Ports Association	Port
Steve Norton (on phone)	Grimsby Fish Merchants Association (GFMA)	Processing
Katie Miller	Client earth	NGO
Alison Roel	MSC	NGO
Martin Gill	Acoura	Certification Body
<b>Apologies</b>		
Rob Parsons	Newlyn Fishmarket	Port
Bill MacKenzie	Don Fishing (Scotland)	Agent
Nigel Edwards	Icelandic Seachill	Processor
Laky Zervudachi	Direct Seafoods	Food Service
Ally Dingwall	Sainsbury's	Retail
Richard Wardell	National Federation Fish Friers (NFF)	Food Service
Malcolm Morrison	SFF	Catch

## **2.0 Mission for the day**

The purpose of the meeting was to inform members of the UK seafood supply chain about the initiative to develop a Responsible-Fishing-Port/harbour standard with a view to them becoming members of the Oversight Board (OB), the steering committee responsible for the strategic direction of the standard's development. The sectoral composition of the delegates was highly representative of the supply UK seafood chain, providing a robust foundation for discussion and agreement

The meeting was arranged into two parts. The first provided background context to the need for the standard. The second part of the meeting was given over to the group to discuss their support for the standard and provide feedback on key aspects/ components.

## **3.0 Scene setting**

Martyn Boyers outlined current issues with port operations, the need for consistency and standardised handling practices, and the need to link to existing chains of custody (Responsible Fishing Scheme and downstream initiatives); all of which underpinned the initial need for a scoping study to examine the feasibility of developing an appropriate standard (Responsible Fishing Ports Standard). There was some scepticism about potential costs of a scheme; however, the principle and general approach was supported by the majority of BPAFG members.

### **Discussion**

- On the question of geographical scope, the group agreed the standard should be UK wide at present as it was aimed at the UK industry. However, it was suggested that consideration of extending the scope to an 'international context' should be considered when constructing the standard.
- The utility of a logo was discussed in the context of perceived difficulties and costs associated with protection. The use of a 'simplistic' logo, especially if it were based around the Seafish logo, was discussed. In acknowledging these issues, the group agreed the need to consider further the use of a logo and potential implications.

## **4.0 Scoping Study**

Mike Platt provided an overview of the scoping study and summarised the main findings. Twelve ports were interviewed along with nineteen interviews within various sectors of the supply chain (catchers, fish buying agents, brand, retail and food service sectors). Following this, their comments and feedback were reviewed by a Working Group that provided recommendations that were fed back to Seafish and BPAFG for consideration.

Support for the standard was not unanimous in the ports sector; eight ports were in favour, three were undecided due to a lack of information, while one could see no benefit. The supply chain supported any initiative that would improve standards. Areas of interest included; hygiene, quality, structural condition, grading, traceability, waste management/recycling, environmental controls, and service provision (e.g. water, fuel and electricity). A number of benefits were identified, both within the port sector and the wider supply chain (traceability, transparency, consistent and

standardised operation, and better access to markets), and it was proposed that the standard, if developed, should be capable of gaining ISO 17065 accredited certification.

In developing the standard, there was a need for a code of practice (COP) to underpin the standard, to accommodate the different activities carried out by the different types of ports. It should cover all personnel and operatives working on the ports, go beyond legal compliance and be voluntary. It would be possible to consider a phased approach in working towards the different levels of the standard, but that this could be considered later in the development process.

#### Discussion

- There was overall support for the introduction of the standard, advising that it should cover all types of port and all operational aspects.
- If a port weren't able to adopt the standard then it should be provided with the opportunity to be taken on an 'improvement journey'.
- There was a need to include harbours within the scope of the standard as they were significant landing places for fish.
- It was agreed that the standard should be stand-alone, but align with RFS and other standards within the onshore supply chain.
- Labour rights were highlighted as an important issue to include. This should include health and safety of port workers, welfare issues and the provisions of labour and associated contractual arrangements, and scope for criminal activity – with some of these activities being outside the control of ports. The different areas of responsibility between ports and fish agents operating on port premises were highlighted as areas of confusion.
- This led onto discussions concerning the 'unit of certification' (i.e. who should be certified) since port owners and operators can be different entities. It was agreed that all users need to be involved. Proposed approaches included all parties working together via a local 'user group' to develop local agreement, or, alternatively, ports potentially revising agents' contracts to ensure compliance with a port COP. It was agreed that the standard would need to cover these areas.

#### **5.0 Setting Objectives**

Mike Platt outlined the responsibilities of the Oversight Board, which included setting the overall vision, objectives (modules), the market goals and where to set the bar (difficulty of standard). He presented a proposed mission statement, examples of market positioning and issues the OB would need to address. The more detailed components (COPs and the standard's conformance criteria) would be dealt with by the Technical Committee.

#### Discussion

- Members highlighted the need to consider critically the purpose of the standard and the need for a clear communication message. The group agreed with meaning/ethos of mission statement, requesting revision and brevity. The group also highlighted the need to refer to harbours within the standard and that the standard will confer 'consistency' throughout the sector.

- In response to the question of ownership of the standard, the group were advised that Seafish would be the standard owner, and that this point had been agreed previously at a BPAFG meeting.

**Action:** Seafish to review and amend mission statement in line with OB members' comments and circulate this round for comment.

## **6.0 Accreditation criteria and process**

Mike Platt outlined the key components of the accreditation process, which include guidance produced by the technical committees on how to comply with the modules within a standard, a communication statement derived from the OB, the assessment and certification stages carried out by a certification body, and the final accreditation stage involving the accreditation body, UKAS.

### **Discussion**

- The supply chain would require accreditation for full assurance purposes and that it should follow on from the development/certification of the standard; however, the supply chain advised there was merit in a standard developed up to the certification stage as full accreditation could be sought at later stage, if required.
- It was highlighted that membership of the technical committee would need to be balanced and be representative of the wide range of stakeholders in the supply chain
- The RFP standard would need to take into account other existing standards such as the FAO's 'Port State Measures Agreement' that is awaiting ratification.
- The RFP standard would need to take account of other existing audits such as; Port health, Port Marine Safety code, Environmental Health Office, Food Hygiene, Buyers and Sellers and BRC (voluntary) and MSC (voluntary). The possibility of the RFPS reducing the frequency of existing audits was highlighted as a potential benefit for participating ports and harbours.
- There was a need to consider the frequency of the auditing process and implications of non-compliance to ensure that the developed RFPS would have the credibility and robustness required by the supply chain.

## **7.0 Afternoon discussion – main points**

**Scope/ extent of standard:** The RFPS would apply from the point of landing (which is where the RFS standard ends) to when fish leaves the premises. This will need further consideration by the Technical Committee to ensure that all possible scenarios that may occur within this sector are reviewed and considered.

**Legal considerations:** Marine legislation (and bylaws) dictate that vessels have the right to enter ports/harbours, so there is a requirement to reconcile the need to balance legal right to land fish with the requirements of the RFPS (i.e. no conflict with maritime law), especially for ports with landing-only facilities.

**Reputational damage:** The issue of a possible certified port’s inability to exercise any control over vessels not complying with RFPS but still being able to land fish destined for onward transportation was highlighted as a significant reputational risk to the standard, and that without careful handling could be difficult to address.

**Module components:** It was agreed that provisions within the standard should exceed the legal requirements. In addition to supporting some of the core components contained in the scoping study, the Group proposed four others – traceability, food security/protection, food authenticity and worker welfare, see table below. The ‘Food Security/Protection’ component would seek to protect fish from malicious damage and extraneous factors (e.g. fouling by dogs) and the welfare component would address concerns over the health and safety of workers. Traceability was seen as an essential, especially in the context of the landing of Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fish (including those under MCRS and not destined for direct human consumption arising from the landing obligation). It was suggested that aspects of food authenticity (provenance) and provisions within International Port Security Measures should be considered. It was suggested, as far as possible, that the RFPS should complement modules that are currently reviewed within the RFS scheme.

Agreed Modules	Modular components	Type
Structural Integrity	Hygiene levels – inside and out	Core
	Structural Condition - inside and out	Core
	Temperature Insulation/Control	Core
Port and the Working Environment	Due Diligence and Compliance with Legislation	Core
	Improve Skills and Knowledge, Training Provision	Core
	Health and safety, and welfare of port operatives (welfare)	Core
Care of Environment	Waste management	Core
	Recycling	Core
	Environmental controls	Core
Care of the catch – Fish is Food	Grading	Possible
	Quality Maintenance - temp control (Ice / chilled)	Possible
	Food protection - site security, protection from malicious damage, and extraneous factors (e.g. dog fouling)	Core
Traceability	Traceability systems in place	Core
	Food Authenticity	Possible

**Technical Committee/working Groups:** The formation of a single Technical Committee was proposed from which individual members would agree to work on developing specific modules/components.

**Election of RFPS Chair:** Martyn Boyers was elected chairman.

**Actions:**

- Seafish to circulate draft minutes.
- OB members to nominate themselves for membership of the Oversight board or Technical Committees. Names were provided on the day.

- OB members to provide Marcus Jacklin with names of other possible members of Technical Committee.
- OB to revisit the strategic direction and key objectives of the standard. Marcus Jacklin to liaise with OB members to determine whether this is to be achieved through direct meeting or remotely.
- OB members need to sign and return the Confidentiality agreement and the Oversight Board Terms of Reference. M Jacklin to contact OB members and arrange.