

## **Note of Seafood Ethics Common Language Group (SECLG) meeting held at Friends House, London. Wednesday 24 January 2018**

For the Seafood Ethics CLG minutes and meeting presentations see:

<http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/discussion-forums/the-seafood-ethics-common-language-group>

### **1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

Estelle Brennan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **Attendees**

Aisla Jones	Co-op
Alan McCulla	SeaSource/ANIFPO
Alex Olsen	Esperson
Alice Miller	International Pole and Line Foundation
Alicia de Vries	Department of Transport
Ally Dingwall	Sainsburys
Amali Bunter	Lidl UK
Andrew Nicholson	2 Sisters Food Group
Andy Hickman	Tesco
Anna Shepherd	Anti Slavery International
Annika Mackensen	GIZ
Aoife Martin	Seafish
Barry Harland	Whitby Seafoods
Birgitte Poulsen	Consultant
Bjørge Nøstvold	Nofima
Caitlin Schindler	Lovering Foods Ltd
Chloe Bailey	Freedom Fund
Chris Shearlock	Princes
Claire Sammons	Lovering Foods Ltd
Colin McKerracher	BSI Group
Colleen Theron	Ardea International
Dan Lee	Global Aquaculture Alliance
Daniel Whittle	Whitby Seafoods
David Camp	Stronger Together
David Glenister	SGS United Kingdom Limited
Dominique Gautier	Seafarms
Edward Whittle	Whitby Seafoods
Elena Piana	Seafarms
Emi Katoh	MRAG
Emily Pearce	Co-op
Estelle Brennan	Lyons Seafoods (Chair)
Estelle Jones	Marine Scotland
Hannah Newcomb	Consultant
Helen Duggan	Seafish
Huw Thomas	Pew Trusts
Iain Pollard	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
James Robertson	Joseph Robertson Ltd
James Young	University of Stirling
Jemima Jewell	Waitrose
Jim Portus	South Western Fish Producers Organisation
Joe Prosho	Morrisons
Jon Whitlow	International Transport Federation

Julia Seewald	Marine Stewardship Council
Kara Brydson	Seafish
Karen Green	Seafish (Minutes)
Katherine Bryant	Walk Free Foundation
Kevin Powell	Icelandic Seachill
Laky Zervudachi	Direct Seafoods
Libby Woodhatch	Seafish
Louise Herring	Food Network for Ethical Trade
Louise Unsworth	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Lucy Blow	New England Seafood
Malcolm Morrison	Scottish Fishermens Federation
Mark McCombe	Caterers Choice
Martin Foley	Apostleship of the Sea
Matt Owens	Tri Marine
Michaela Archer	Seafish
Mick Duthie	Santa Marta Group
Mike Park	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
Mike Short	Seafood Industry Alliance
Nick Kightley	Ethical Trading Initiative
Oliver Tanqueray	ClientEarth
Paul Williams	Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority
Robert Greenwood	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
Ruth Hoban	New England Seafood
Sam Peacock	RS Standards Ltd
Sarah Eames	World Wise Foods
Sarah Hussey	Seafarms
Scott Johnston	Youngs Seafood
Steve Farrer	Liberty Asia
Tania Woodcock	Consultant
Tom Davies	FoodBuy
Tom Phillips	Ethical Trading Initiative
Tracy Cambridge	Thai Union
Victoria Dodman	Marks & Spencer
Yemi Oloruntuyi	Marine Stewardship Council

**Apologies were received from**

Alma Bonilla	Joseph Robertson Ltd
Ana Nicula	Ocado
Audrey Guichon	Freedom Fund
David Dickens	Fishermen's Mission
Emily Kenway	Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner
Gabriella Bittante	British Hospitality Association
John Cousley	Department of Transport
Lynn Gilmore	Seafish
Marlene Calderon	Southampton Solent University
Martin Exel	Austral Fisheries
Matthew Cox	North Atlantic (Holdings) Limited
Mike Mitchell	Fair Seas
Neil Auchterlonie	IFFO
Nigel Edwards	Icelandic Seachill
Paulien Prent	Visfederatie
Peter Andrews	British Retail Consortium
Phoebe Prendergast	Santa Marta Group
Pirjo Honkanen	Nofima
Sarah Pilgrim	McDuff Shellfish
Simon Potten	Seafish

## **2. Minutes of the previous meeting on 11 July 2017 and outstanding actions. Estelle Brennan, Lyons Seafood, SECLG Chair.**

The final minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting and have been added to the Seafish web page. Attendees were asked to take note of the meeting guidelines. In the following minutes Seafish will provide a link to the various presentations given at the meeting but not summarise the whole presentation. In the main we do not attribute the comments made at the meeting. Outstanding actions were all about circulating links. All the presentations were added to the website and the links circulated in the SECLG follow-up email. There were a number of requests for future topics, from these we are covering the following today: changing research in fishing sector linked to human rights; the standards perspective; quick updates on other initiatives and developments of relevance to the audience; Responsible Fishing Scheme update.

### **UK fisheries**

#### **3. The recruitment pathway. Mike Park, Scottish White Fish Producers Association.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740797/seclg\\_jan2018\\_swfpa.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740797/seclg_jan2018_swfpa.pdf)

Mike explained the drivers behind the move to non-EEA crew; the recruitment pathway; the treatment of non-EEA crew; engagement; and moves to reverse the trend. In essence there are 4,000 full time fishermen in Scotland, of which 1,200 come from outside the UK and of those 800 are from non-EEA countries, mainly the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Ghana. The intention in the future is to link with the International Transport Federation and their intelligence network to illuminate bad practice as and where it exists. The SWFPA is very keen to ensure standardisation of contracts aligned to ILO 188 and liberalisation of legislation regarding the employment of non-EEA crew. On a positive note vessels are actively encouraged to join the Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme and SWFPA is in the process of recruiting an RFS 'Buddy'. Crews are now being actively encouraged to log their own work periods – cross checked with the skipper. A pan UK group is now looking to solve issues in a collective way rather than in isolation.

#### **Discussion**

- **Question.** You mentioned a shift to paying crew members directly rather than through an agency, when did this come into effect? **Answer.** This started with crew recruited from the Philippines probably four to five years ago. There is obviously competition between the various recruitment agencies and they have had to accept the UK office will pay the Agent a fee each month for the duration of the fishers' employment and the crew are paid directly.
- **Q.** Has there been any crossover with the oil industry in terms of recruitment practices? **A.** There has been a significant reduction in the number of jobs in the oil sector with a lot of people looking for jobs. In fact there have been moves from the oil sector into the fishing sector.
- **Q.** Please explain the issues over shore leave. **A.** This is an issue with the current system of Transit Visas that is in place which do not permit shore-based leave, but merely accommodate vessels and crew coming in for a rest. Crews are now being actively encouraged to log their own work periods (cross checked with the skipper) and this is helping to ensure there are proper rest periods but we would like a complete readjustment of the regulations to allow proper shore-based rest periods.
- **Q.** Could RFS provide a means to gain more visibility of vessel-based practices and how rest periods are being recorded and monitored? **A.** The SWFPA is seriously committed to RFS and we do want to do more to emphasise this.
- **Q.** How do you select recruitment agents, are they audited and how are crew selected? **A.** We visit the Philippines and always meet the agents in the Embassy and always ask about any changes that have occurred. We do now intend to link with the International Transport Federation and their intelligence network. The recruitment agent acts a filter for recruitment. As a basic pre-requisite crew must have

experience and must be able to speak English. There are instances of personal recommendation of crew members i.e. family and recruitment here might be handled slightly differently.

- **Q.** Is there a difference in the wage paid to domestic crew and non-EEA crew? Is there enough flexibility in a vessel's business model to allow non-EEA crew to be paid the same as domestic crew? **A.** Obviously the bottom line is crucial and each vessel will be different. There is a graduated pay structure. Generally the average pay for non-EEA is \$1,400 to \$1,450 a month (and their food, accommodation and flight costs are covered) and it is likely they will receive a bonus.
- **Q.** What upfront costs are there, if any, for crew to go through agents? **A.** We are not aware of any upfront costs. A lot of our crew return year after year. To our knowledge the crew do not at any point become indebted.
- **Q.** Who covers repatriation costs if they finish their contract early? **A.** If it is their decision to terminate their contract early they will cover the repatriation costs themselves but if the decision has to be taken for other reasons i.e. medical the vessel owner would cover the costs.

**Action:** Provide link to the SWFPA website.

#### **4. An independent research project into non-EEA nationals working in the Northern Irish fishing industry. Alan McCulla, Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers' Organisation.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740800/seclg\\_jan2018\\_seasource.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740800/seclg_jan2018_seasource.pdf)

Alan explained the development of the Northern Ireland fishing industry and the decision by SeaSource to commission Human Rights at Sea (HRAS) to conduct independent research over a four month period in Kilkeel into non-EEA nationals working in the Northern Irish (NI) fishing industry. SeaSource challenged the report. It did raise a number of issues particularly over the national living wage and contractual terms and the improvements that were needed. SeaSource is actively working with Government departments, Unions and NGOs to look at the complex rules and regulations that are in place. In the same way as the SWFPA we actively encourage engagement. The main concern of the non-EEA fishers we employ is that once their current contract finishes they will not be allowed back to the UK to work again. HRAS are back in NI again this week as we want this assessment process to continue.

##### Discussion

- **Question.** What can fishers do to safeguard their continued employment? **Answer.** We need a clarification of the rules and how they are interpreted. We feel that Border Force are not consistent and we want clear legislation and consistent application of the rules.
- **Q.** How did SeaSource respond to the HRAS recommendation surrounding the living wage? **A.** We will always comply with the law but there is confusion surrounding entitlement and the 12nm rule however we do anticipate there will be some clarification over this to come.
- **Q.** Do Producer Organisations work together to address issues or do they tend to work in silos? **A.** There are no silos and information is shared. The recruitment pathway described by SWFPA is the same pathway followed in NI. The big area we want to follow up on after the HRAS report is enabling a proper feedback mechanism to ensure that crew can speak with confidence about any issues they are having.

**Action:** Provide link to the SeaSource website.

#### **5. UK implementation of ILO 188. Louise Unsworth, Maritime and Coastguard Agency.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740803/seclg\\_jan2018\\_ilo188.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740803/seclg_jan2018_ilo188.pdf)

ILO Convention 188 will establish an international minimum standard regulating living and working conditions on board fishing vessels. It is based on tripartite agreement reflecting the needs of the fishing industry. It came into force internationally on 16 November 2017. The MCA has conducted an eight week Public Consultation, which closed on 12 January 2018, seeking views on UK implementation. This is seen as a health and safety issue. It will

improve the living and working conditions for all fishermen working on board UK fishing vessels, or in UK waters. It will be necessary to update UK existing legislation to comply fully with the international minimum standard. So far the convention has been ratified by 10 countries however a lot of governments are very keen on ILO 188 and UK Government is confident this will receive far more universal endorsement. The MCA has received a lot of feedback and a number of comments have focussed on: medical fitness; hours of rest; and how is this going to be monitored and enforced. The aim is to have the regulation in place by May 2018 but this does not indicate the implementation date which will be under a phased introduction.

**Action:** Provide link to the ILO 188 MCA consultation webpage.

## **Recruitment issues and enforcement**

### **6. New Labour Market Enforcement Introductory Strategy/Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority going forward. Paul Williams, GLAA.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740806/seclg\\_jan2018\\_glaa.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740806/seclg_jan2018_glaa.pdf)

Paul explained how the Gangmasters Licensing Authority had evolved to become the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and the new powers it has now acquired. They work in partnership to protect vulnerable and exploited workers. Whilst regulatory and licensing is still crucial new labour market enforcement powers allow the opportunity to search premises, seize property, detain and question. In addition for the first time, a prison sentence can ultimately result from some key labour market offences which currently only attract a civil penalty or criminal fine. A two year custodial penalty and/or unlimited fine is available. There have not been many prosecutions to date, mainly because the victims' safety and welfare is always put first, but it is hoped this will increase. Paul paid tribute to the work and massive legacy of Paul Broadbent, Chief Executive of the GLAA who had passed away over the Christmas period.

**Action:** Provide link to the GLAA website.

### **7. Driving Responsible Recruitment in Supply Chains – Clearview Certification for Labour Recruiters. David Camp, Association of Labour Providers/Stronger Together.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740809/seclg\\_jan2018\\_clearview.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740809/seclg_jan2018_clearview.pdf)

Clearview was created due to the growing awareness that labour provision often presents the greatest worker exploitation risk in supply chains for a number of reasons. There has been a developing focus on recruitment practices by many bodies including the ILO, IOM, IHRB, CGF and the RLI, as well as growing global media awareness and civil law actions. Existing global labour standards were not deemed to be fit for purpose because they are geared to direct employment and fixed sites and do not account for the diverse nature of labour provision. Clearview claims to be 'a pioneering global social compliance certification scheme aligned to global labour standards which covers all the sourcing and supply activities of labour recruiters and providers operating within or across borders'. The three sections cover all elements of labour provision including 30 Technical Standards and 161 Audit Control Points. Pilots have been run to demonstrate that the scheme works for all the players in the supply chain. The Scheme will be formally launched on 20 February 2018. It is a commercial Scheme to create transparency.

#### **Discussion**

- **Question.** How is the Scheme funded? **Answer.** The development of the Scheme has been self-funded by the Association of Labour Providers (ALP) and the NSF (the Public Health and Safety Organization). Ongoing there will be a registration fee, auditing fees and fees for certification according to the size of the business. There is already a big auditing burden on labour providers so it is hoped that once in place this Scheme could reduce duplication.
- **Q.** Could this be adopted outside of the UK? **A.** On an international level this requires a clear understanding of national laws and a partner in that country with enough clout to make it happen, which could be a retailer or an NGO.

- **Q.** Could this be used to assess labour providers in other countries, say the Philippines? **A.** The Scheme is designed to be flexible and there are a lot of touchpoints to help with this.

**Action:** Provide link to the Clearview website.

### **8. Eliminating Recruitment and Employment Fees Charged to Workers in Supply Chains' Toolkit. Hannah Newcomb, Consultant.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740812/seclg\\_jan2018\\_responsiblerecruitment.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740812/seclg_jan2018_responsiblerecruitment.pdf)

The IOM, IHRB, ETI and Verité have all claimed that the costs associated with the recruitment process carry the greatest risk of exploitation to workers (recruitment costs are taken to mean transportation and interim lodging costs (including all taxes and fees) from the migrant workers' home in the origin country to the work place in the destination country. To address this the remedy should be that if it is discovered that workers have paid recruitment fees, the full cost of those fees should be reimbursed to the worker by the party that is responsible for the violation, including for any sub-agents in the recruitment supply chain where this was within their reasonable due diligence control. Business should have policies and procedures in place to address this. The Responsible Recruitment Toolkit launched in the October 2017 and the website will launch in full in early 2018, providing practical, interactive guidance for brands, retailers, employers and labour providers across the breadth of responsible recruitment good practice.

**Action:** Provide link to the Responsible Recruitment Toolkit website.

### **Evidence and risk assessment**

### **9. Walk Free Foundation evidence on the fishing industry. Katherine Bryant, Walk Free Foundation.**

The Walk Free Foundation produces the Global Slavery Index (GSI) which provides a map, country by country, of the estimated prevalence of modern slavery, together with information about the steps each government has taken to respond to this issue. This information allows an objective comparison and assessment of both the problem and adequacy of the response in 167 countries. The Global Slavery Index is a tool for citizens, non-government organisations (NGOs), businesses, and governments to understand the size of the problem, existing responses, and contributing factors so that they can advocate for and build sound policies that will eradicate modern slavery. Up until now this has been at nation state level but now they are starting to look at specific sectors, including fishing, in their next edition which is due out in May 2018. The Sea Around Us Project (University of Western Australia and University of British Columbia) and Walk Free Foundation aims to give a better understanding of the extent of forced labour in the fishing industry; the impact of trade on slavery prevalence; and to investigate highly traded seafood stocks. Stage 1 of the project examined the relationship between IUU fishing practices and national prevalence of modern slavery. The results of Stage 1 will be reported in a scientific article to be submitted for peer-reviewed publication. Stage 2 will target business and consumers and highlights the effects of trade on a country's slavery index. Results of the second stage will be the basis of the fishing thematic study in the 2018 GSI and a standalone report to be released in the next few months.

The research has identified lots of instances of modern slavery throughout the fishing industry. It has shown marine capture fisheries in crisis; serious labour abuses reduce operating costs through exploitation; that modern slavery is most prevalent in poorly regulated and cost driven distant water fleets and these support global supply chains. The 20 fishing 'high risk' countries of most of concern are characterised by: a high proportion of catch taken outside their own waters at a greater distance from home waters than average (i.e., not in waters of neighbouring countries); poor governance (high levels of unreported catch); and by higher than average levels of harmful fishing subsidies. Those countries with primarily domestic fisheries or fishing in the waters of immediate neighbours were

characterised by low levels of fishing outside their own or immediate neighbours' EEZs, low levels of harmful subsidies, but also relatively low GDP per capita and low value fisheries. These countries tend to be source countries for modern slavery aboard fishing vessels, supplying labour to industries that fish in their waters.

#### Discussion

- **Question.** One of the recommendations for how to reduce the risk of modern slavery in the fishing industry was to 'Close the High Seas to fishing'. That is a very bold assertion? **Answer.** We want to be bold in our target but in reality that is probably a 'stretch target'.
- **Q.** Do you use the Global Fishing Watch intel? **A.** We could look at this in the future.
- **Q.** Will the information that has been produced influence the US Trafficking in Persons report, as some of the countries highlighted as high risk are Tier 1? **A.** Obviously the information will be available and it will be interesting to see how the research is received in those countries identified as 'at risk'.

**Action:** Circulate link to the report once published. For further information on the work of the Walk Free Foundation and their look at the fisheries sector E: [Katharine Bryant](mailto:Katharine.Bryant@walkfree.org)

### **10. Progress on the Food Network for Ethical Trade (FNET). Louise Herring, FNET.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740827/seclq\\_jan2018\\_fnet.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740827/seclq_jan2018_fnet.pdf)

The Food Network for Ethical Trade (FNET) is a supplier-led initiative born in 2016 from a desire to cascade ethical trade along global food supply chains, using the collective leverage of suppliers and retailers to bring about change. There are currently 22 supplier members and six retailers. The key focus is on suppliers' supply chains and the mission of FNET is to improve human rights in global food supply chains through a common approach to managing ethical trade. Key work streams have focused on risk assessment, collaboration and supplier engagement. There is a clear opportunity to build in learnings from the seafood industry into the risk assessment tool and to create a pre-competitive space for sharing and collaborating on ethical challenges.

#### Discussion

- **Question.** What have been the key challenges? **Answer.** Mainly trying to find areas where everyone wanted to collaborate and would derive the most benefit.

**Action:** Provide link to further information on FNET.

#### Certification

### **11. Marine Stewardship Council labour policy update. Yemi Oloruntuyi, MSC.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740815/seclq\\_jan2018\\_msc.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740815/seclq_jan2018_msc.pdf)

The MSC is proposing key changes to its certification requirements including strengthening labour requirements and issued a consultation in 2017 on a proposal on self-declaration. As a result of feedback the revised proposal for public consultation in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2018 is:

- In 2018 (Phase 1) – Fisheries and at-sea chain of custody holders will be required to complete a self-disclosure document that reports on the measures, policies and practices that are in place to ensure absence of forced and child labour. There were some suggestions over the self-disclosure template and supporting guidance to integrate the disclosure template within the assessment process
- In 2020 (Phase 2) – Require high-risk fisheries and at sea CoC to undertake certification against a 3rd party credible labour standard when appropriate third party social standards relevant to at-sea operations have been developed. A draft risk template was shown which will be populated with verifiable, publically available information. This is still being worked on. There will be a consultation on this in September 2018.

#### Discussion

- **Question.** You mention a 3rd party credible labour standard. How will this be benchmarked, and by whom? **Answer.** The Consumer Goods Forum has created the

Global Social Compliance Programme (GSCP) to set an international reference on best practices for sustainable supply chain management for all actors to use. They are looking to develop a benchmarking programme and we hope to work with them.

- **Q.** Is the Responsible Fishing Scheme identified in this? **A.** We are not precluding any standard but for us feedback about universal applicability of RFS is currently limited.

**Action:** Circulate link to MSC statement on labour policy.

## **12. Documenting Social Sustainability in the Norwegian Wild Catch fisheries. Bjørg Nøstvold, Nofima.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740818/seclg\\_jan2018\\_nofima.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740818/seclg_jan2018_nofima.pdf)

The aim of the project, which runs until February 2019, is to provide a document, satisfying customers (mainly UK buyers) requirements, detailing how social sustainability might be safeguarded throughout the wild capture fish value chain. This will: identify most important indicators for social sustainability and validate these with Norwegian labour unions, fleet, industry and customers; evaluate the status of social sustainability; compare indicators with Norwegian laws and legislation; Conduct a risk evaluation; document how Norwegian authorities control, act and react when laws are infringed; and finally provide a document prescribing Norwegian social sustainability including enforcement and consequences of non-compliance. The main challenges are:

- Fleet size and structure – there are 6,136 fishing vessels in Norway with more than 3,000 below 10 metres in length. There are 360 larger deep sea vessels.
- The average age of fishers is closing in on 50 years with 11,316 fishers.
- The traditional cod tongue cutters – mainly children.
- The foreign work force in industry and the fleet with a lot of Eastern European working in the industry. Are they aware of their rights? Do they know there is a nationally agreed minimum wage?

### Discussion

- **Question.** Norway has already implemented ILO 188. Are there any lessons to be learnt that the UK could heed? **Answer.** There are challenges with any coastal fleet. There are interesting ways to avoid 14 hour days.
- **Q.** Did you have any issues with migrant workers and meeting ILO 188 requirements? **A.** We have invested in those fishers and ultimately they always knew they had a job to come back to. 2017 has in fact seen an increase in the number of fishers in the fleet – the first increase in a number of years.
- **Q.** Will this project lead to certification? **A.** We hope to avoid this by demonstrating that we are doing the right thing already.

## **13. Seafood certification: moving from assurance to engagement on social issues. Birgitte Poulsen, Consultant.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740821/seclg\\_jan2018\\_seafoodcertification.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740821/seclg_jan2018_seafoodcertification.pdf)

There are question marks over certification, how it is viewed and its development to make sure it stays relevant. Certification cannot be viewed merely as an 'assurance' that 'nothing bad' is taking place. Certification however can be one tool in the tool box to push a labour and social rights agenda and it can help change behaviour. Looking at species, location etc. derived from Aquaculture Stewardship Council and Best Aquaculture Practice audits common issues were:

- Working hours – standard working hours vs peak demand and farming cycles – what is an acceptable working week?
- Freedom of association in environments where this is not allowed/not institutionalised – what can individual operations do?
- Discrimination – this is often insidious and deeply culturally rooted – how to detect it and address it when it is seen as 'the way things are?'

- Young workers – how to make sure they are ‘old enough’ for what they do? When does youth employment turn into child labour?

Going forward we need to understand more about the potential and limitations of certification to induce, support and sustain behaviour change. In 2018, BAP will start a social impact assessment, using data from audits and undertaking consultations with multiple stakeholders to understand what and how BAP certification has done and not done to promote socially responsible production and consumption.

**Action:** Circulate link to forthcoming BAP social impact study.

#### 14. Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS) update. Libby Woodhatch, Seafish.

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1740824/seclg\\_jan2018\\_seafishrfs.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1740824/seclg_jan2018_seafishrfs.pdf)

- RFS currently has 106 certified UK vessels, which collectively account for 27% of landings by UK registered vessels by weight and 19% by value. There is continued growth in interest in RFS internationally. Seafish is about to commence its annual review of the RFS Standard. This is an opportunity for all parties with an interest in the scheme to comment on how the Standard may need to respond to changes in the external environment. Comments can be submitted via the RFS website from next month. Planning is also underway for a more in-depth review of the RFS Standard through a formal process which will include extensive stakeholder consultation.
- **RFS NewOrg.** The public procurement exercise to find a not-for-profit entity to operate, manage and deliver RFS on a global scale has been undertaken. Seafish is currently discussing next steps with the preferred supplier, with the process likely to reach a conclusion in spring 2018. The International Working Group has opted to wait until the new entity is appointed before proceeding further so it can work directly with the new entity.
- **Vessel Improver Programme (VIP).** The draft VIP self-assessment tool, the overview of the Seafish RFS VIP process, and the RFS VIP self-assessment validation and recommendations template, have all been created and are pending VIP Sub-Committee sign-off. External funding is still being sought to complete the RFS VIP Pilot I - Ben Tre mixed trawl fishery, Vietnam trial.

#### Discussion

- **Question.** Will Seafish still look after RFS in the UK? **Answer.** The aspiration for RFS was always to have just one standard. Whilst Seafish will remain the standard holder RFS NewOrg will deliver the standard.
- **Q.** How will/does RFS deliver ILO 188 or work in tangent? **A.** Some of ILO 188 underpins the RFS and in some respects RFS goes beyond ILO 188. RFS is of course much broader in its scope.

**Action:** Circulate link to RFS website.

#### 15. Date of the next meeting.

Estelle thanked all the speakers for their insight, and the Seafish team for pulling this together and commented ‘I cannot be an optimist but I am a prisoner of hope’. She stressed the need to fill in the feedback forms to help us plan the agenda for the next meeting. The date of the next meeting was not set but was later confirmed as Wednesday 11 July 2018.