

Responsible Fishing Scheme Standard



Version 1 Issue 2 Requirements for Certification

Purpose

This document is the Responsible Fishing Scheme Standard. It lays out the requirements of the Responsible Fishing Scheme, and the level of performance that applicants are certified against in order to become a member of the RFS.

RFS Standard Holder

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Foreword

The Responsible Fishing Scheme

The Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS) is a voluntary vessel-based programme certifying high standards of crew welfare and responsible catching practices on board fishing vessels. The RFS is a 'business-to-business' tool to help fishermen showcase industry-agreed best practice through independent, third-party auditing. The RFS is applicable to all types of commercial fishing vessels and fisheries.

The overall objective of the RFS is to promote a responsible fishing industry assuring good practice from sea to quayside and contribute to its long term viability.

The RFS objective is underpinned by the five core principles:

- Core Principle 1** Safety, health and welfare (reduce accidents, injuries & fatalities; promote decent working conditions; promote respect & integrity)
- Core Principle 2** Training and professional development (improve skills, knowledge and understanding; raise standards and open up new opportunities)
- Core Principle 3** The vessel and its mission (demonstrate due diligence and compliance)
- Core Principle 4** Treating fish as food (supply of safe, high quality, wholesome product with known provenance)
- Core Principle 5** Care for the environment (behave responsibly, respecting the environment)

Applicants will be certified to the RFS scheme by a certification programme that has been designed to allow it to meet the requirements of ISO 17065 - conformity assessment requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services. The structure of the 'on-vessel' audit of an applicant will be conducted so that it is in compliance with ISO 17021 standard requirements on how to conduct an audit. This will ensure that all RFS certifications are conducted to impartial, credible and transparent requirements.

A unique RFS Certification Mark has been developed which can only be used by certified members of the RFS. The RFS Certification Mark and the statement 'Responsible Fishing Scheme' are registered with UKIPO to protect the use of the mark and this statement within the UK.

Introduction

This document sets out the requirements that shall need to be achieved by all applicants that wish to attain certification to the RFS. The unit of certification for the RFS is the vessel and its skipper(s).

The RFS has a robust governance structure designed to ensure that the RFS Standard is fit for purpose and meets the key objective:

The **Seafish Board** acts as the owner of the RFS Standard and the scheme in general. The Seafish Board consists of nine non-executive roles and four executive board members. The non-executive roles include five industry representatives and four members independent of the UK seafood industry. The executive members are appointed by the UK's four government fisheries administrations. The full list of Seafish Board members is available from the Seafish website www.seafish.org

The RFS **Oversight Board** has been delegated responsibility by the Seafish Board and is responsible for agreeing the strategic direction and objectives of the RFS. The Oversight Board consists of representatives from all sectors of the seafood supply chain plus NGOs. Membership of the Oversight Board was initially selected by Seafish and is governed by a bespoke set of terms of reference. The full list of Oversight Board members is available on the RFS website www.seafish.org/rfs.

The RFS **Technical Committee** is overseen by the Oversight Board and is delegated the responsibility to maintain, develop and update the RFS Standard criteria to ensure that these requirements continue to meet the objectives of the scheme, following direction by the Oversight Board. The Technical Committee is comprised of seafood industry experts and includes representation by a full range of stakeholders including fishermen, fishing organisations, seafood processors, safety experts, retailers, food service specialists, and NGOs. The Technical Committee is responsible for the review of the RFS Compliance Support Guides to ensure that they remain in alignment with industry best practice and meet the requirements of current legislation. Membership of the Technical Committee was initially selected by Seafish and is governed by a bespoke set of terms of reference. The full list of Technical Committee members is available on the RFS website www.seafish.org/rfs.

RFS Standard Scope and Applicability

The RFS is currently open to any UK registered commercial fishing vessel, with designated skipper or skippers. There are two types of commercial fishing vessel that can be certified to the RFS Standard:

Single-Handed Vessels These vessels are defined as fishing vessels operated by only one fisher and will be assessed to the core and single-handed vessel clauses.

Crewed Vessels These vessels are defined as fishing vessels operated by a skipper plus one or more employed crew or share fisherman and will be assessed to the core and crewed vessel clauses.

The RFS Certification Process

To become certified members to the RFS Standard the applicant will be assessed by an approved third-party Certification Body (CB) that will follow the certification process highlighted below and ensure that it is completed to be in full compliance with ISO 17065 accreditation requirements. This will ensure that the certification is impartial, credible and transparent.

The frequency of the assessment for RFS certified members to maintain their certified status has been set by the RFS Oversight Board; the certificate will last for 2 years and will be subject to an annual surveillance audit. This will be managed as follows:

Year 1 The vessel, skipper(s) and catch are assessed by the CB through a vessel audit, a catch audit and an office based review of commitments and policies.

Year 2 The member will have to have an annual surveillance audit by the approved CB to ensure compliance with the requirements of the RFS Standard can still be demonstrated. The annual surveillance audit may not usually require an on vessel audit and catches will be randomly sampled across the RFS fleet.

Year 3 RFS Certificate expires, so the member must re-apply for RFS certification to an approved CB.

Step 1: Application Process



Step 2: Audit Process



Audit Cycle



Audit Verification Requirements

The 'on vessel' audit of an applicant will take place in the applicant's usual port of landing and will be conducted by reviewing records and physical assessment of the vessel structural condition and of the landed catch, to determine if the applicant is in compliance with the RFS Standard.

The RFS Standard requires that an applicant will ensure that requirements are adhered to whilst the vessel is out at sea during fishing operations. These areas of the RFS Standard are assessed as part of the pre-assessment phase of the certification process and are composed of a series of policy commitments that must be signed by the skipper(s) that operate the vessel.

Certified members shall at all times comply with the requirements of the RFS Standard. Failure to comply with any RFS Standard requirements will result in the withdrawal of the Certificate of Approval.

Recognition of Existing Industry Standards

The RFS Standard recognises that some industry specific standards for welfare, safety and fishing practices already exist. The intention of the scheme is not to add an increased audit burden on the applicant, but to acknowledge what has already been achieved. To this end, areas already assessed as part of another programme will be taken into account by the approved CB. If these areas are deemed to be of **equivalence to the requirements** of the RFS standard, the applicant's evidence used to provide assurance to these other programmes will be accepted as being in compliance with the relevant sections of the RFS Standard by the approved RFS CB, and will not be assessed again as a requirement for RFS certification.

Unit of Certification

The vessel **plus** its skipper(s) shall be the unit of certification. If a vessel should change its skipper(s) the following options shall apply:

- New skipper or relief skipper on an existing RFS certified vessel - the vessel's new skipper or relief skipper will need to be made fully aware and will need to commit to all the requirements of the RFS. The certification body must be informed by the certified member so that they can instigate a new on site vessel audit to ensure compliance.

- New skipper or relief skipper with previous RFS experience on an existing certified vessel - the vessel's new skipper or relief skipper must sign all the prerequisite commitments and this shall be held on the vessel's applicant certification file. The certification body must be informed and need not conduct an extra vessel audit to continue the certification status of the applicant.
- Skipper with previous RFS experience on a new vessel - the certification body will treat this as a new RFS application for the new vessel and skipper.
- Skipper with no RFS experience on new vessel - the certification body will treat this as a new RFS application for the new vessel and skipper.
- Skippers who are employed by an owner to operate on a single-handed vessel will be deemed to be an employed fisherman and will have to comply with the core and crewed vessel standard clauses, if this applicant is to be certified to the RFS.
- For vessels that have multiple skippers it is a requirement that all skippers read, agree and sign up to all scheme policy commitments and requirements before the applicant can be certified by the certification body. If a skipper leaves the vessel and a new skipper joins, the certification body must be informed so that an assessment can be made whether a further on-site vessel audit is required. If the skipper has been previously assessed on another certified vessel then all the certification body will be required to undertake is that this new skipper will need to read and sign the RFS policies for this new vessel. If the skipper has no RFS experience, a further on-site vessel audit with this skipper in charge will need to be conducted to ensure that the RFS requirements are being maintained while this skipper is in control of the vessel.

Legal References

To be considered for certification, applicants must fully meet all legal obligations in place for the jurisdiction(s) where they operate. Certification of an applicant does not place any liability on Seafish - or any associated body involved in the development, implementation, auditing or issuing of certificates for the RFS Standard - through failure of an applicant to meet their legal obligations.

Recognised Best Practice

For the purposes of complying with clauses within this Standard referencing recognised best practice guidance or sector best practice guidance, within the UK this shall mean reference to Seafish RFS Compliance Support Guides (CSGs), which can be found on the RFS website and undergo an annual review to ensure accuracy of content is maintained.

Further Information

For further information on the Responsible Fishing Scheme, contact

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RFS Standard Clauses

Core Principle 1: Safety, health and welfare (reduce accidents, injuries & fatalities; promote decent working conditions, promote respect & integrity)

- Health and Safety is a paramount concern and is core to the RFS.
- Demonstrate commitment to culture of integrity and respect (e.g. no forced labour).
- The RFS Compliance Support Guides (CSGs) draw on other relevant safety management and welfare initiatives.

Nominal References

The specific performance indicators in this module of the standard will be based on internationally recognised universal standards, including:

- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its Protocols.
- United Nations Convention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- United Nations Convention International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998 (in particular the eight core conventions of the ILO).
- The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.
- ILO Work in Fishing Convention (ILO 188).
- Merchant Shipping Act 1995.
- The Merchant Shipping (accident, investigation and reporting) Regulations 2012.
- The Merchant Shipping (Seaman's Wages and Accounts) (Fishing Vessels) Regulations 1972.
- The Merchant shipping and Fishing Vessel (Health and safety at work) regulations 1997.
- Directive 89/391/EEC – OSH & Directive 93/103.
- Fishing vessels less than 15 metres in length are covered by the safety regulations explained in the MCA's Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) 1813 (F).
- MGN 501 large vessel safety and 502 small vessel safety.
- Fishing vessels from 15m to less than 24m in length must be built, maintained and operated according to the provisions of the code set out in MCA document MSN 1770 (F).
- For vessels of 24m registered length and over, built after 1 Jan 1999, construction and operating standards are set out in the Fishing Vessels (EC Directive on Harmonised Safety Regime) Regulations 1999 - as amended in 2003 ('the 2003 regulations'). These Regulations

also apply Chapters VIII and X of the 1993 Torremolinos Protocol to all 24m and over fishing vessels, regardless of date of build. The 2003 regulations apply only to vessels built after Jan 2003.

- For vessels built before 1 Jan 1999, the Fishing Vessel (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975, as amended, still apply. It should be noted that Rules 16A, 20A, 54A, 54B, 65A, 65B, 72A, 125A, 125B and 125C also apply to new vessels.

The Labour Practices Indicators also draw upon the two instruments directly addressing the social responsibilities of business enterprises:

- The ILO Tripartite Declaration Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

The scope of the audit will take into consideration all Labour agencies / temporary employment service providers that have a direct influence on the Vessel organisations, on the basis that the rights and responsibilities of workers provided through these channels are no less important than self-employed or employed fisherman and so the practices around their recruitment and management should be no different

RFS Standard Criteria - Specific Performance Indicators

Health and Safety

1.1 The vessel applicant shall provide a safe working environment for the skipper(s), all employed crew or share fishermen (if relevant) by agreeing to comply with recognised best practice in relation to health and safety.

1.2 The applicant shall have a signed Health and Safety Policy Statement under the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 1997 or to an equivalent International Standard.

1.2.1 This health and safety policy shall extend to cover all crew contracted to the vessel from external labour/recruitment agencies. ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

1.3 The applicant's fishing vessel, its machinery, and associated equipment shall be in compliance with current national requirements for the intended purpose.

1.3.1 The applicant shall conduct an annual self-assessment to meet the national requirements as stated in clause 1.3.

1.3.1.1 The applicant shall keep a record of this annual self-assessment

1.3.2 The applicant shall have an effective action plan on safety improvements, with specific timeframes, that is the result of this annual self-assessment and/or official national safety inspection.

1.4 The applicant shall provide evidence that it has current insurance for the vessel and machinery.

Vessel Safety

1.5 In the interest of safety the applicant shall ensure that the design and outfitting of the vessel shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1.5.1 The vessel shall be watertight and have weather tight integrity to comply with current MCA requirement as applicable.

1.5.2 The applicant shall provide evidence that ensures the stability factors that may affect the vessel have been checked following either any structural modifications on the vessel or fishing operation changes.

1.5.3 The applicant shall have a documented record of all equipment that are covered by the LOLER and PUWER regulations or a national equivalent.

1.5.3.1 The applicant shall record any changes to this equipment covered by the LOLER and PUWER regulations on their documented record.

Fisherman Safety

1.6 The applicant shall have a documented procedure to manage the health and safety policy on board the vessel that shall include but is not limited to the following: ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

1.6.1 A detailed risk assessment shall have been conducted for the vessel covering, all catching operations, the vessel's structural condition, and shall include the crew boarding and disembarking requirements from the vessel.

1.6.1.1 The applicant shall have conducted a 'duty of care' risk assessment covering all contractors and visitors, that board, their time on board and their disembarking from the vessel.

1.7 The applicant shall log all crew accidents and any injuries incurred and shall conduct a risk analysis with written evidence to ascertain possible root causes. ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

1.7.1 The applicant shall implement accident prevention measures that arise as a result of the accident analysis. ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

1.7.2 The applicant shall report all reportable accidents and incidents to their national regulatory authority

Safety Equipment

1.8 An applicant's dedicated safety equipment shall be accessible at all times

1.8.1 The applicant's safety equipment shall be operational and be correctly maintained/serviced for its effective use.

1.9 The applicant's remote detection equipment, if vessel applicable, shall be positioned and maintained to maximise effective use e.g. smoke, carbon monoxide (CO), fire, water ingress.

1.9.1 The applicant shall ensure that these safety detectors are operational when the vessel is in port on shore based electrical power supplies.

1.10 All the identified hazardous machinery from the clause 1.6.1 risk assessment shall be fitted with applicable emergency cut off or stop buttons or guards that are operational and within reach of the operating crew.

1.10.1 If the vessel is powered by an outboard motor it shall be fitted with an accessible 'kill' cord, if applicable. ***(Single handed vessel requirement only)***

1.11 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shall be available as identified in the vessel's risk assessment covered by clause 1.6.1 for fishers (safety boots, hats, ear protectors, safety glasses) and for visitors observing the vessel's fishing operations.

1.12 The applicant shall (in addition to LSA requirements) ensure that all fishers (and visitors) wear Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) when in areas of risk of falling overboard, and they shall always be worn when on open decks out at sea by the signing of a commitment policy.

1.12.1 The applicant shall provide enough PFDs for all persons on board the vessel.

1.12.2 Every PFD shall be inspected, maintained, checked regularly and have documented records to ensure they are functional.

1.13 The applicant shall have signed policy document to the use of a personal distress/locator device every time they embark on a fishing trip. ***(Single handed Vessel Requirement Only)***

1.13.1 The personal distress/locator devices shall be operational and fully maintained and is registered with the MCA. ***(Single Handed Vessel Requirement Only)***

Vessel Safety Maintenance

1.14. The applicant shall have a plan to maintain all the associated equipment that is used as a direct part of the fishing operation.

1.14.1 The applicant shall maintain records to ensure that all equipment used in the fishing operation has been maintained as required by the maintenance plan.

1.15 The applicant shall have a specific engine propulsion maintenance plan in place.

1.15.1 The applicant shall have records to ensure that the engine has been maintained in accordance with the maintenance plan.

1.16 The applicant shall have a specific maintenance plan in place for the catch preservation equipment.

1.16.1 The applicant shall have records to ensure that the catch preservation equipment has been maintained in accordance with the plan.

1.17 The applicant shall have records to ensure that all the electrical systems on the vessel have been checked and maintained.

1.18. All areas used by the fishers that have been highlighted in the vessel risk assessment (clause 1.6.1) as requiring repair should have been completed.

Crew Welfare and Integrity

The following clauses 1.19 to 1.32.1 are only applicable for compliance with by crewed fishing vessels

1.19 The applicant shall provide a Culture of Integrity and Respect for both employed and share (self-employed) fisherman.

1.19.1 A sign/poster/notice depicting the commitment of the applicant to providing a Culture of Integrity and Respect shall be written in a common language that all the crew understand and be on display in a prominent place in the crew's rest/accommodation area.

1.19.2 The applicant shall have a policy and process in place to ensure that all crew members (both employed and share fishermen) are practically permitted freedom of movement on and off the vessel when it is in port. In particular, that all crew have access to recreational and welfare services.

1.20 The applicant shall be in possession of all employed crew members contracts provided to the vessel by a Labour Provider.

1.21 The applicant shall be in possession of all employed crew member contracts and an agreement statements for all share fishermen.

Entitlement to Work

1.22 The applicant shall only employ or recruit crew with a legal right to work and with the correct certification, documentation/visa in the country they are employed or contracted in.

Human Rights

1.23 The applicant shall have an accessible Human Rights policy statement committing them to state that the decision of all the crew to join or leave their vessel is freely made by any employed or share crew member to mitigate the risk of forced or trafficked labour being employed or recruited.

1.23.1 The applicant shall demonstrate by documented recruitment records or employment contracts that no forced, bonded, or involuntary prison labour is used on the vessel.

1.23.2 The applicant shall commit in this policy that they shall respect the rights of any employed and share crew to be able to have 'Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining' or have a policy in place whereby at least one crew member shall be elected by the crew to represent them to the applicant.

1.24 The applicant shall be capable of verifying that no employed or share crew member shall be required to lodge 'deposits' e.g. money or benefits in kind or their identity papers, with the skipper and all crew members are free to leave their employment after notice period, as stated in a contract of employment or self-employed fisherman agreement.

1.25 No crew under the age of 16 years old or child labour age as determined by national legislation shall be employed or recruited for work by an applicant.

1.26 The applicant shall conduct a risk assessment as part of clause 1.6.1 to verify that young crew members between the ages of 16 to 18 years old or any crew members that may be pregnant, are not working unsupervised in hazardous conditions or on hazardous machinery as defined in the vessel's health and safety risk assessment.

1.27 For all non EEA crew members, the applicant shall adopt and sign up to the requirements as stated in the MGN 413 Code of Practice for Employment of Non EEA Fishing Crew or to an equivalent national policy.

Living Remuneration

1.28 The applicant shall be able to demonstrate how wages/share/pay/reward are paid and communicated to each type of crew member in the form of a signed contract of employment for employed fisherman or in an agreement with share fishermen.

1.29.1 The applicant shall stipulate in an employed fisherman's contract and in a share fisherman's agreement that they shall not take deductions from a crew's remuneration or share of the catch as a disciplinary measure, without the express agreement of the crew member concerned.

1.29.2 The applicant shall ensure that all crew understand the information within the contract of employment or share agreement and it is in a language they understand prior to signing in the case of employed fishermen or agreeing to by share fishermen.

Working hours

1.30 The applicant shall conduct a risk assessment as part of clause 1.6.1 to ensure that:

1.30.1 It has sufficient crew to conduct the fishing operation effectively.

1.30.2 All the crew have an appropriate rest period allocated to them every fishing trip.

1.31 The applicant shall have a signed commitment stating that all crew will be entitled to a period of rest related activity during the duration of the fishing trip that will be in compliance with current national legislation.

Crew Discrimination

1.32 The vessel applicant shall have a policy to verify that there is no discrimination in hiring, termination or retirement of the crew based on race, caste, national origin, religion, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, sexual disease status, union membership or political affiliation.

1.32.1 The applicant shall have in this policy that it is prohibited to bully, physically abuse, or discipline crew with the threat of mental, verbal and/or physical abuse, sexual or other harassment.

Life on board

1.33 The applicant shall ensure the functionality and comfort of the spaces utilised by persons on the vessel is fit for purpose and includes the following:

1.33.1 Vessel applicable: there shall be designated areas where the crew can smoke or where they cannot smoke. ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

1.33.2 Crew living accommodation, galley and recreational areas inclusive of equipment and fixtures used within those areas shall be maintained such that their use and condition enable compliance with the following:

Fire Prevention

1.33.2.1.1 All fire exits/escapes are accessible, operational and do not have mechanisms that shall allow them to be left permanently open.

1.33.2.1.2 All fire extinguishers are functional and serviced within manufacturer's recommended time frames.

1.33.2.1.3 The fire alarms shall be audible from the crew sleeping quarters.

Air Ventilation

1.33.2.2.1 Air ventilation ducts/systems shall be present in all accommodation areas.

1.33.2.2.2 Air ventilation ducts/systems shall be operational and not sealed/blocked.

Sleeping Area

1.33.2.3.1 Means of escape to an open deck area shall be unobstructed at all times.

1.33.2.3.2 The sleeping area shall not directly open onto either the engine room or fish room.

Galley Area

1.33.2.4.1 All cooking appliances used on the vessel shall be structurally in good condition.

1.33.3 Vessel applicable: there shall be suitable living quarters that are equipped to ensure that all fishers have access to a designated bunk to ensure that good habitation requirements are provided.

1.33.4 Vessel applicable: there shall be suitable sanitation and washing facilities made available to all persons on board.

1.33.5 Vessel applicable: all crew that are designated cooks are capable of safe handling, storage and preparation of food stuffs for on board consumption, consistent with recognised best practice for food preparation and production and in demonstration of that:

(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)

1.33.5.1 Food shall be stored correctly to avoid possible risks of cross-contamination.

1.33.5.2 The galley area shall have a suitably equipped hand washing facilities.

1.33.5.3 The galley area shall have access to potable water.

1.33.5.4 The galley food production area shall be maintained in a structurally good condition.

1.33.5.5 The galley food production area shall be maintained in a clean condition.

1.33.5.6 For vessels operating on trips of 24 hours or more shall be equipped with a suitable refrigerated storage.

1.33.5.7 The crew shall have access to food safety information.

1.34 All fishers shall sign a declaration and be prohibited from using alcohol and or illegal drugs whilst on duty on board the vessel.

Core Principle 2: Training and professional development (improve skills, knowledge & understanding; raise standards and open up new opportunities)

- Covers accessible training for the key priority areas, especially on Safety.
- Professional development focused on improvement (innovation; efficiency; value).
- Learn from other standards (complement not duplicate experience, e.g. oil and gas).
- Cooperate with management authorities so that RFS becomes a channel of influence

Nominal References

The specific performance indicators in this module of the standard will be based on internationally recognized universal standards, including:

- MGN411.
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency A guide to safe working practices and emergency procedures for fishermen.
- IMO Code of Safety for fishing vessels parts A & B.
- SOLAS Chapter 5.
- STCW-F.
- IMO Training and certification of fishing vessel personnel.

RFS Vessel Standard Criteria - Specific Performance Indicators

Induction Training (*Crewed Vessel Requirement Only*)

2.1 The applicant shall ensure that all new members of the crew are given appropriate induction training.

Mandatory Safety Training

2.2. The applicant shall ensure that (for every trip) all crew have current certification in place to meet the statutory requirements for Mandatory Safety Training which shall include the following:

2.2.1 Basic Sea Survival.

2.2.2 Basic Fire Fighting and Prevention.

2.2.3 Basic First Aid.

2.2.4 Basic Health and Safety.

2.2.5 Safety Awareness.

Additional Training

2.3 The skipper shall undertake additional training in each of the following:

2.3.1 Fishing vessel stability

2.3.2 Navigation / bridge watch keeping (level appropriate to size of vessel and area of operation)

2.3.3 Marine engineering / engine room watch keeping (level appropriate to engine power and area of operation)

2.3.4 GMDSS Radio operation (level appropriate to the radio equipment carried and area of operation)

2.4. At least one crew member on the vessel shall complete training in Navigation /bridge Watchkeeping as stipulated in clause 2.3.2 (or STCW equivalent) ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

Environmental and Welfare Training

2.5 Applicant's skipper and/or crew shall actively commit to participating in training or industry initiatives designed to enhance the management of the environment and/or resource/ product creation /crew safety and welfare by signing up to an environmental and welfare training policy. ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

2.6 Applicant's shall actively commit to participating in training or industry initiatives designed to enhance the management of the environment and/or resource/ product creation / by signing up to an environmental training policy. ***(Single Handed Vessel Requirement Only)***

Care of the Catch Training

2.7 Applicant's skipper and/or crew shall actively commit to attend training initiatives that will enhance the preservation of the catch to maintain freshness and quality by signing up to a 'Treat Fish as Food' training policy.

2.8 Applicant's skipper shall ensure that they and their crew are fully aware and trained on how to effectively clean and use the cleaning chemicals provided on board.

Training Drills

The following clauses 2.9 to 2.9.5 are only applicable for compliance with by crewed fishing vessels

2.9 The Applicant shall deliver on-board training to each crew member, in the form of monthly drills, and shall have safety procedures specific to their vessel available that shall cover the following activities:

2.9.1 Muster station procedures.

2.9.2 Anchor procedures.

2.9.3 Abandon ship requirements.

2.9.4 Fire drill practices.

2.9.5 Man overboard exercises

Refresher Training

2.10 The applicant shall actively commit to update their mandatory safety skills and training every five years covering Sea Survival, Fire Fighting, First Aid and Safety Awareness and review requirements on an annual basis by the signing up to a "Refresher" training policy covering emergency procedures and engine failure.

Record-keeping

2.11 The applicant shall maintain the safety training records in the form of a logbook for all crew members, including the skipper, to cover:

2.11.1 Induction Training of New Crew members. **(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)**

2.11.2 Mandatory Safety training.

2.11.3 Additional Safety training.

2.11.4 Monthly drills conducted. **(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)**

2.11.5 Training for additional Environmental issues.

2.11.6 Training for additional welfare issues. **(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)**

2.11.7 Training for Care of the Catch e.g. Hygiene, catch processing and temperature stowage requirements.

2.12 Maintain an up to date record of all skipper, the crew etc. with correct contact details that cover but are not limited to the following:

2.12.1 Employed or Share Fishermen Status **(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)**

2.12.2 Next of kin.

2.12.3 Medical conditions/medication.

2.12.4 Medical certificate/questionnaire. **(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)**

2.12.5 Medical conditions/medication/self-certification. **(Single-Handed Vessel Requirement Only)**

2.12.6 Emergency contact details.

2.12.7 All records required as evidence for compliance with the RFS standard shall be retained for a minimum time period of three years.

Self-Assessment

2.13 The applicant shall ensure that all records required for compliance with the RFS standard are up dated and checked on a regular basis at least once per month or after any changes to the vessel's operations or after a change in Skipper or Crew.

Core Principle 3: The vessel and its mission (demonstrate due diligence & compliance)

- Statement detailing vessel's mission (e.g. fishing area; catch focus; gear type.)
- The vessel and its gear are in compliance with current legislation.
- Is it all legal with the right documentation in place?
- Fully co-operates with Voluntary Agreements in existence in the fishery.

Nominal References

The specific performance indicators in this module of the standard will be based on all relevant national and EU legislation as well as subsidiary and connect legislation in relation to fisheries and the environment and amendments thereto , including:

- Common Fisheries Policy (Regulation 1380/2013/EU and related legislation); Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC); Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC); Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC); Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) 2009.
- Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009; The Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967; The Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- Local, Regional or National level byelaws & statutory instruments/orders - secondary enacting legislation.

RFS Vessel Standard Criteria - Specific Performance Indicators

3.1 The applicant shall have a compliance policy that commits it to operate legally within the relevant EU, Local, National and International Fishery Management measures legislation.

3.2 The applicant shall maintain the relevant permissions e.g. PLN, Registration documents to operate legally within the fishery.

3.3. Where there are voluntary agreements in place within the fishery or for the species concerned, the applicant shall have a compliant policy committing to comply with these relevant agreements in place.

Core Principle 4: Treating fish as food (supply of safe, high quality, wholesome product with known provenance)

- Care of catch: hygienic handling and storage.
- Fully traceable from catch to quayside.
- Responsible capture and landing of live products.
- Confirm commitment to maintaining the value of the catch.

High Quality Product, traceability and proof of provenance are the cornerstones of an assurance to buyers and consumers that products are responsibly sourced from a Certified RFS vessel.

Nominal References

The specific performance indicators in this module of the standard will be based on internationally recognized universal standards, including:

- General Principles and the general prescriptions of foodstuff legislation and setting out procedures in relation to food safety EC No 178/2002.
- Guidance Notes for Food Business Operators on Food Safety, Traceability, Product Withdrawal and Recall. A guide to compliance with Articles 14, 16, 18 and 19 of General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002- FSA.

RFS Vessel Standard Criteria - Specific Performance Indicators

Care of the Catch

4.1 The applicant shall commit to a policy stating their adherence to:

4.1.1 Recognised best practice for cleaning, and disinfection of all areas in the vessel, for use in fish storage and processing areas.

4.1.2 Temperature control of the catch as stated in recognised sector specific best practice guidance to maintain the catch quality.

4.1.3 Implementation of best catch handling practices on board to optimise the quality and freshness of the landed catch.

4.1.4 Commitment to continuous improvement by acting on any enquiries, complaints, and any incidents associated with the vessel's activities, practices, and seafood products that are landed.

Food Hygiene and Cleanliness

4.2 The applicant shall implement and be in compliance with recognised best practices for the maintenance of a hygienic vessel and shall ensure the following clauses are complied with:

4.2.1. The areas, containers, and equipment that come in to direct contact with the catch shall be cleaned in accordance with a cleaning schedule designed for the vessel.

4.2.2 Records to prove compliance to the vessel's cleaning schedule shall be maintained.

4.3 The applicant shall have COSHH assessment Data Sheet requirements for the cleaning, disinfection and processing chemicals used on board to ensure that it has food grade credentials.

4.4 The applicant shall ensure that the skipper/ crew comply with the requirements to clean effectively all surfaces, tools and processing machinery that come into direct contact with the catch by complying with a cleaning schedule.

4.4.1 The cleaning breach log shall be completed and actioned if appropriate following a visual assessment of the vessel by the skipper or appointed member of the crew.

4.5 The applicant shall review the Cleaning, COSHH, Stowage temperature documentation and procedures on an annual basis or after any changes in the vessel's operation, to maintain their compliance with the recognised best practice guidance.

4.5.1 All areas of non-compliance resulting from the annual review of the Cleaning, COSHH, and stowage temperature documentation shall be recorded with specified time frames highlighted as to when these areas will be corrected and what actions were taken.

4.6 All equipment used to monitor temperature compliance, if present, shall be in an operational state.

4.6.1 Temperature monitoring recording devices shall have annual calibration checks conducted and recorded.

Fish Handling

4.7 The landed catch shall be submitted to the mandatory requirements in the catching sector annexes for the preservation, segregation and storage practices.

4.8 The applicant shall review their handling practices on an annual basis or after any changes in the vessel's operation.

4.9 The applicant shall instigate a documented monitoring regime to record any issues that deviate from recognised best practice guidance for their fishing operations ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

4.9.1 Where deviations from recognised best practice arise the corrective actions instigated to maintain the quality of the landed seafood product shall be recorded. ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

Vessel Condition

4.10 The vessel's construction shall allow for the minimisation of contamination risks to the catch by the adoption of, but not limited to, the following requirements:

4.10.1 The layout of fish handling areas shall be constructed and designed to prevent the contamination of the catch from e.g. fuel, non-food safe lubricants, bilge water, sewage, harbour seawater, smoke, foreign bodies and food or any other contamination sources.

4.10.2 The catch handling areas shall be constructed to facilitate effective cleaning and maintenance of cleaning.

4.10.3 The structural design of the vessel, if applicable, shall minimise the risk of adverse temperature fluctuations created by the engine, from affecting the temperature of the stored catch.

4.10.4 All vessel surfaces and processing equipment coming into direct contact with the catch shall be made from, easy to clean, durable, and non-toxic material.

4.10.5 All vessel surfaces and processing equipment coming into direct contact with the catch shall be maintained in a good structural and clean condition.

Traceability

4.11. The applicant shall have the capability to be able to supply the following information for their catch at the point of landing:

4.11.1 Date of capture to within a tolerance of 48 hours.

4.11.2 Species name and declared quantity in box, batch or tank.

4.11.3 ICES Sea Area Code of capture.

4.11.4 Fishing method.

Continuous Improvement

4.12 The applicant shall record or log any enquiries, complaints, and any incidents associated with the vessel's activities, practices, and seafood products that are landed.

4.12.1 The applicant shall record any action taken as a result of clause 4.12.

Core Principle 5: Care for the environment (behave responsibly, respecting the environment)

- Responsible practice (managing litter, wildlife interaction records).
- Supporting fishery science (e.g. observers, science partnerships).
- Tie-in with other voluntary schemes.

This core principle is not designed to replicate existing standards that are currently used to assess the environmental impact of the fishery on their ecosystem. The RFS standard will support and help to influence all fisheries that RFS certified vessels operate within, by ensuring that they operate in a responsible manner. Certified RFS vessels will assist in the gathering of biological data of a particular fish stock that can be used to generate a better view on how a stock is performing, which will hopefully lead to improvements to fishery management practices that will mitigate the environmental impact on the ecosystem in which the RFS vessels operate.

Nominal References

The specific performance indicators in this module of the standard will be based on internationally recognized universal standards, including:

- 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- FAO Guidelines for the Eco labelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries adopted in 2005 and amended/extended in 2009.
- 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement.
- In 1996, Parties adopted a Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (known as the London Protocol) which entered into force in 2006.
- The Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol)
- AIPCE-CEP Principles for Environmentally Responsible Fish Sourcing.
- FAO Private Standards and Certification in Fisheries and Aquaculture.
- FAO Product Certification and Eco-labelling for Fisheries Sustainability.
- All relevant environmental legislation, including those referenced in Core Principle 3.

RFS Vessel Standard Criteria - Specific Performance Indicators

Waste Management

5.1 The applicant shall adopt and commit to a Waste and Pollution Management plan specific to their operational requirements, which shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

5.1.1 The disposal of any inorganic rubbish generated by the vessel at sea is prohibited. All solid waste shall be collected and returned to port, to be recycled, where possible.

5.1.2 The applicant shall have a procedure on how it will dispose through recycling, where possible, any waste material generated from its activities both at sea and whilst in port.

5.1.3 The applicant shall either participate in waste collection programmes where in operation, or have a commitment policy to the collection of waste during the course of their fishing operation where safe and possible to do so.

5.1.4 The vessel shall ensure that it has the capabilities to handle and store, if safe to do so, recovered waste material for the duration of the fishing trip until it can be correctly disposed of when back in port.

Vessel Maintenance

5.2 Management of waste associated with vessel maintenance shall be controlled by the applicant by adherence to the following criteria:

5.2.1 The applicant shall ensure that during engine maintenance and during its operation there is an oil retention system in place, to avoid any pollution of the surrounding environment.

5.2.2 All vessel refitting and cleaning operations shall be documented to ensure that they are in compliance with their port standards. ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

5.2.3 The applicant shall only utilise products for use in cleaning operations that are not harmful to the marine environment.

5.2.4 The applicant shall only use Anti-Fouling agents that are permitted for use within the marine environment.

Engine Management

5.3. The applicant shall, adopt and commit to a plan to improve fuel efficiency for their method of fishing.

5.3.1 The applicant shall, if applicable, have measures in place to be able to demonstrate methods of how to maintain optimum engine performance.

Recovery of lost fishing gear

5.4 The applicant shall have a procedure on how it will recover lost fishing gear that shall include, but is not limited to, the following: ***(Crewed Vessel Requirement Only)***

5.4.1 The applicant shall have access to, appropriate equipment to assist in the recovery of lost fishing gear.

5.4.2 The applicant shall record the last known position of lost gear and inform the relevant authorities where appropriate.

5.4.3 The applicant shall commit within a procedure to the recovery and salvage of lost fishing gear from other vessel operators and to recycle damaged or found fishing gear, where appropriate and is practically possible.

Scientific Engagement

5.5 The applicant shall have a policy that commits them to co-operate with scientists in the acquisition and sharing of resource knowledge that will include, but is not limited to, the following:

5.5.1 The applicant shall commit to participating in fishery data collection programmes by agencies or government research bodies relevant to the fishery, or non-target fish species, when requested.

5.5.2 If requested, the applicant shall, where possible and safe, co-operate and participate in observer programmes by agencies or government research bodies.

5.5.3 The applicant shall record and document all types of interactions including the deaths of threatened, endangered or protected species and other non-target species that are encountered in the course of their fishing activities.

5.5.4. The applicant shall commit that at all times during the fishing operations it shall take appropriate steps to minimise harm to, and accidental capture of, such species referred to in 5.5.3.

Catching Method Specific Annexes

6 - Demersal Species

The following clauses are the generic requirements to maintain the quality of demersal species.

Care of the Catch

6.1 Catch shall be sorted with care to prevent bruising, damage, and reduced quality.

6.2 Gutting operations shall remove the entire gut and liver material.

6.3 Guts shall be stored separately for further sorting (roes/livers) so that they do not contaminate the stored fish.

6.4 Fillets and fins shall not be damaged as a result of gutting.

6.5 Gutted fish shall be boxed in neat rows, belly cavity down or in a position that shall allow the belly cavity to drain fully, with ice at the bottom, middle and top layers.

6.6 Boxes must not be overfilled and should be iced to a level below the rim to prevent the catch from being crushed when stacked.

6.7 Elasmobranches and Cephalopods shall be stored separately, e.g. not above, to whitefish.

Fish Processing Operations (*e.g. filleting, tailing and freezing*)

6.8.1 All processed products shall be stored in clean, drainable boxes, protected with food grade liners and iced.

6.8.3 Products for freezing shall be placed in cardboard boxes or freezer trays for blast freezing and protected with food grade liners or frozen and packed in accordance to the specification required by the purchaser.

6.8.4 Blast freezing equipment shall be capable of the lowering the temperature rapidly so as to achieve a core temperature of not more than -18°C within a period four hours.

Cold Chain Management specific to sector

6.9.1 All fish sold in the fresh state from a trip vessel that has been out of port for more than 24 hours shall be landed iced and/or refrigerated to keep the core temperature as close to the range of 0°C to $+2^{\circ}\text{C}$ as possible.

6.9.2 All fish sold in the fresh state from a day vessel shall be kept in an insulated container whilst at sea.

6.9.3 Frozen storage facilities shall be able to hold product at temperatures of not more than -18°C .

7 - Pelagic Species

The following clauses are the generic requirements to maintain the quality of pelagic species.

Care of the Catch

Handling and Storage

7.1.1 Documented handling processes and procedures shall be available to demonstrate that the risk of product contamination and physical damage is kept to a minimum during the fishing operation.

7.1.2 Measures to ensure that the target species is stored and maintained in hygienic conditions shall be demonstrated.

7.1.3 Storage records shall be available to establish that fish caught more than 24hrs apart is not mixed and is stored separately in fish holding areas and containments (e.g. RSW holds, chilled holds, bins).

Fish Processing Operations (*e.g. filleting, tailing and freezing*)

7.2.1 All processed products shall be stored in clean, drainable boxes, protected with food grade liners and iced.

7.2.2 Products for freezing shall be placed in cardboard boxes or freezer trays for blast freezing and protected with food grade liners or frozen and packed in accordance to the specification required by the purchaser.

7.2.3 Blast freezing equipment shall be capable of the lowering the temperature rapidly so as to achieve a core temperature of not more than -18°C within a period four hours.

Cold Chain Management

7.3. A temperature recording system (e.g. temperature probe, loggers, electronic system) shall be used on a vessel with either CSW tanks and/or RSW tanks to record the tank temperatures

On vessels designed and equipped to preserve fresh fishery products for more than 24 hours:

CSW/RSW

7.4.1 The temperature recording system shall be able to demonstrate that the temperature of the tank (e.g. RSW tank) is not more than +3°C, six hours after loading and not more than 0°C after sixteen hours.

7.4.2 The fish shall not be discharged where the temperature of the tank (e.g. RSW tank) is in excess of +2°C.

Other Storage Systems

7.5.1 All fish sold in the fresh state from a trip vessel that has been out of port for more than 1 day shall be landed iced and/or refrigerated to keep the core temperature as close to the range of 0°C to + 2°C as possible.

7.5.2 All fish sold in the fresh state from a day vessel shall be kept in an insulated container whilst at sea.

7.5.3 Frozen storage facilities shall be able to hold product at temperatures of not more than -18°C.

8 - Shellfish Species

The following clauses are the generic requirements to maintain the quality of shellfish species

Handling and Storage

8.1 Shellfish shall be placed in a clean container and orientated correctly for the species in question.

8.2. Where aggression can cause injury and fatalities, procedures for packing or claw restraining e.g. banding, nicking, shall be in place to prevent damage to the shellfish.

Live Storage in Vivier Vessels

8.3.1 The vivier tanks shall be designed to protect the stored shellfish from possible sources of heat and extreme temperature fluctuations.

8.3.2 Vivier tanks shall be purpose designed to avoid contamination and maintain the health of the shellfish.

8.3.3 A record of the landed rejects and mortalities (number or percentage) from shellfish sales shall be available.

Live Storage on Deck

8.4.1 The vessel shall have a method to protect the shellfish from heat sources, wind and direct sun light.

8.4.2 The shellfish shall be landed in a cool, moist condition appropriate for the species in question.

Live Storage in Keep Boxes/Storage Pots

8.5.1 Keep boxes/store pots shall be located in good quality seawater not near potential sources of contamination.

Cold Chain Management specific to sector

8.6.1 All dead shellfish sold in the fresh state from a trip vessel that has been out of port for more than 24 hours shall be landed iced and/or refrigerated to keep the core temperature as close to the range of 0°C to + 2°C as possible .

8.6.2 All dead shellfish sold in the fresh state from a day vessel shall be kept in an insulated container whilst at sea.

8.6.3 Frozen storage facilities shall be able to hold product at temperatures of not more than -18°C.

APPENDIX 1: RFS Compliance Support Guides

The RFS Compliance Support Guides (CSGs) underpin the RFS Standard. They highlight recognised best practice which, if followed, will ensure compliance with the RFS Standard. The CSGs are revised as required to reflect good industry practice and changes in national and international legislation.

The CSGs are split into two categories: 'sector specific' CSGs which lay out required practices for the catching and handling of seafood in five specific sectors; and one 'cross Sector' CSG which lays out required practices for all applicants.

Sector Specific CSGs

- Demersal species
- Pelagic species
- Shellfish species
- Nephrops
- Scallops

Cross Sector CSG subject areas

- Food Hygiene
- Environmental
- Health and safety
- Welfare
- Common operational practices

Appendix 2: Key Definitions

Applicant: A vessel and skipper that together will formally apply to the RFS Standard using the RFS application form. If a skipper leaves a vessel, the newly appointed skipper will need to reapply for RFS certification.

Certified Member: An applicant vessel and skipper that will formally be certified by the Certification Body as meeting the RFS Standard.

Employed Fishermen: A crew member who has been employed by the vessel owner under a contract of service to crew the vessel and has statutory rights of an employed mariner under national legislation.

Share Fishermen: A share fisherman is self-employed and has been classified by the UK HM Revenue and Customs as someone who:

- is not employed under a contract of service;
- is skipper or a crew-member of a British fishing boat manned by more than one person; or
- used to work on a British fishing boat but is now too old or infirm and is working ashore in Great Britain making and mending gear or doing any other work for a British fishing boat;
- and gets all or part of their pay by sharing the profits or gross earnings of the fishing boat.

The Standard: The list of requirements that the RFS applicant will need to meet to claim certification to the RFS and /or use the certified claim.

Single Handed Vessel: These vessels are defined as fishing vessels that are operated by only one fisher and will be assessed to the core and single handed vessel clauses.

Crewed Vessel: These vessels are defined as fishing vessels that are operated by a skipper plus one or more employed crew or share fisher and will be assessed to the core and crewed vessel clauses.

RFS CSG: Industry agreed codes of practice that applicants can refer to to ensure that they are compliant with best practice.

Certification Body: This organisation operates the certification programme to assess and certify applicants to the RFS Standard and is completely independent to make these certification decisions from the RFS Standard holder.

Certified Claim: A claim made by a certified applicant vessel approved for use and licensed by the Standards Owner.

Identification Number: A certificate number issued to each certified applicant vessel.

APPENDIX 3: Acronym Glossary

Acronym	Long name
AIPCE -CEP	European Union Fish Processors and Traders Association
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GHG	Green House Gas Protocol
GMDSS	Global Maritime Distress and Safety System
CSG	RFS Compliance Support Guide
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LOLER	Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations
LSA	Life Saving Appliance
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MGN	Marine Guidance Note
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSN	Merchant Shipping Notice
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PFD	Personal Floatation Device
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PUWER	Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations
SOLAS	Safety of Life at Sea
SOPEP	Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan
STCW	Standards of Training Certification and Watch keeping