



March 2018

**Seafood Ethics Common Language Group e-alert
(amalgamation of news alerts issued to SECLG circulation list by email in March 2018)**

Seafood Ethics Common Language Group

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

Seafish news

[Update on the Responsible Fishing Scheme. March 2018 newsletter.](#)

[Annual review of the RFS Standard. 13 February 2018. Deadline extended to 26 March 2018.](#)

Seafish is welcoming feedback on the Responsible Fishing Scheme as part of the annual review of the [RFS Standard](#). The annual review process allows for minor amendments to the RFS Standard to ensure that the scheme is meeting its overall objective to 'promote a responsible fishing industry, assuring good practice from sea to quayside, and contribute to its long term viability'. All feedback must be submitted by Monday 26 March, using the official RFS Public Comments form available on the [RFS website](#). In addition to this annual review, planning is underway for a more in-depth review of the strategic direction of the scheme to help inform the development of Version 2 of the RFS Standard. This review, which will follow later in 2018, will require Seafish to run a formal process including further public consultation. For more information, contact E: [Kara Brydson](#).

New initiatives

[Seafood Ethics Action Alliance. March 2018.](#)

The Seafood Ethics Action Alliance (SEAA) has been established by the seafood industry to provide a platform for collective engagement, to share information on emerging issues, agree best practice solutions, and provide a forum for collective pre-competitive action where it is not better fulfilled by an existing organisation. The SEAA will co-ordinate pre-competitive ethics work for the UK seafood industry and prioritise and address key ethical issues in shared supply chains, as identified within the Seafish Seafood Ethics Common Language Group (SECLG). It will do this via scheduled meetings, collaborative information sharing between members, and where necessary, the setting up and co-ordination of working groups to implement required actions. Engagement will be aligned with the PAS 1550:2017 Code of Practice on Exercising due diligence in establishing the legal origin of seafood products and marine ingredients, and the BRC IUU Advisory Note (2015). Participation in the alliance is open to any commercial market facing organisation based in the UK which source seafood nationally or internationally. Participation requires a commitment to positively engage in pre-competitive collaborative action, adhering to competition law and to maintain the confidentiality of discussions. If you are interested in engaging with the group please contact [Karen Green](#).

LOOK AT [TESS](#) FOR MORE INFORMATION: record for [Seafood Ethics Action Alliance](#)

[Consumer Goods Forum Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative. March 2018.](#)

The Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI) is the newest initiative developed by The Consumer Goods Forum. Compliance with social and environmental policies throughout the supply chain is a key challenge for the industry. The Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative will provide buyers and suppliers with clear guidance on which third-party auditing and certification schemes cover key sustainability requirements and apply robust verification practices. By undergoing benchmarking and achieving SSCI recognition, scheme owners signal a strong commitment to raising the bar while driving harmonisation. Following a public consultation, the official launch is expected to be in autumn 2018. The SSCI will also build on elements of the work achieved by the Global Social

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Compliance Programme (GSCP), which has accomplished its mandate by delivering a suite of good practice Reference tools for environmental and social compliance. They will remain available for interested parties to download and benefit from. The existing benchmarking of schemes through the Equivalence Process will now enter its next phase through the Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative.

LOOK AT [TESS FOR MORE INFORMATION: record for Consumer Goods Forum Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative.](#)

[Better Retail Better World. BRC launch. 13 March 2018.](#)

Better Retail Better World is new collective action from the retail industry to meet the biggest global challenges of the coming decades, including modern slavery and decent work, sustainable economic growth, inequalities, climate change and responsible consumption and production. Using the widely recognised United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework, clear, transparent and measurable goals developed with businesses and campaigners are at the heart of Better Retail Better World. This is the start of our journey to 2030, supporting the SDGs achieve global development. Our actions will be revised every two years. Under SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth the commitments are to collaborate to enhance employment and recruitment best practices through the BRC Retail 2020 campaign. For the supply chain, we will embed a policy that no worker should pay for a job, and identify other human rights issues so that by 2022 action to address these can be demonstrated.

[SAFE Seas project. November 2017 – December 2021.](#)

The SAFE Seas project will combat forced labour and human trafficking on fishing vessels in Indonesia and the Philippines. By strengthening government enforcement capacity and deepening engagement among fishers, the private sector and civil society, SAFE Seas will help promote supply chains free of exploitative labour and a fair playing field for workers in the U.S. and around the world. Working with relevant government ministries and agencies, including labour, maritime/agriculture, anti-trafficking police and coast guard/defence, SAFE Seas will improve coordination and raise the profile of labour issues within government interagency structures. It will also encourage the use of multi-disciplinary inspection models that integrate checks for forced labour, human trafficking and other exploitative practices into searches for illegal activity on fishing vessels.

[Learning Lessons in Tackling Slavery and Human Trafficking in Seafood Supply Chains: Applying Solutions for UK and Other Businesses Sourcing from Indonesia.](#)

Funded by the British Academy in partnership with the UK Department of International Development, this project aims to produce robust evidence-driven recommendations to help the brand-owners, buyers and suppliers which source from the fishing industry in Indonesia to understand where and how they can address similar risks within their seafood supply chains in Indonesia. They will also produce policy recommendations for the Government of Indonesia who have made this issue a priority. The project will be led by Dr. Katharine Jones at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, in partnership with the Issara Institute and in collaboration with IOM and the University of Indonesia. The project will run between December 2017 and April 2019.

Risk assessment and certification

[MSC labour standards provisions open for public consultation. 15 March 2018.](#)

In recognition of widespread concern about labour abuses in the global seafood supply chain, the MSC is working to extend our existing provisions on forced labour and provide greater assurance that forced and child labour violations are not taking place in fisheries and supply chain companies that hold MSC certificates. Following the MSC Board approval in June 2016, the MSC intends to work with, and learn from current social standards and initiatives, as well as our fishery and supply chain

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contacts, to understand their needs and expectations. There will be one more round of public consultation for new fisheries and at-sea supply chain requirements opening from 15 March-15 April 2018. There will also be one more round of public consultation for new on-shore supply chain requirements opening later in August/September 2018 before a final solution is selected. To view the consultations [see](#)

[Seafood Watch changes Australian toothfish slavery rating. 28 February 2018.](#)

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch switched its Slavery Risk Tool rating on the Australian toothfish industry from 'high risk' of slavery to 'low risk'. Seafood Watch revised its earlier ratings following input from Seafood Industry Australia, Australian toothfish industry members, and others. Seafood Watch changed its results once it was made aware of existing Australian legislation to ensure there is no forced labor, human trafficking, or hazardous child labor allowed on Australian toothfish fishing vessels, nor in the Australian fishing industry more broadly, according to a statement from Austral Fisheries.

Thailand and Asia

[EJF film: Exploitation and Lawlessness: The Dark Side of Taiwan's Fishing Fleet. 13 March 2018.](#)

Beatings at gunpoint, slavery, dangerous working conditions and squalid living conditions. These are just a few of the findings from a new investigative film by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) telling the harrowing stories of migrant fishermen working aboard Taiwanese-owned fishing vessels. The film shows that although some new rules have been introduced in Taipei, out at sea human rights abuses and illegal fishing practices continue.

[Taiwan under Pressure over Illegal Fishing, Human Rights as EU Takes Stock. 15 March 2018.](#)

Taiwan's Fishing Agency (FA) faces potential embarrassment and the possible imposition of a "red card" from visiting European Commission (EC) fisheries inspectors amid the release of an eye-opening video on illegal fishing by Taiwanese vessels and the abuse of migrant workers employed on board. EC officials are in Taiwan for a week to review measures to curb illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities following the imposition of a "yellow card" warning for Taiwan in October 2015. The warning does not affect fisheries trade between Taiwan and the European Union but obliges Taiwan to report on its progress improving illegal fishing monitoring and prevention activities every six months. The government has taken steps since its warning in 2015 to tighten oversight of illegal fishing, including employing more than 100 observers aboard vessels and satellite tracking to monitor ships' whereabouts. "[The observers] have to perform duties ... such as the collection of fishing information, filling in records, taking photos of catch and bycatch species, assistance in carrying out international cooperative projects, and reporting catch data weekly on real time basis," according to a FA press release. In July 2016, Taiwan implemented various new laws to bring its legal framework into line with international fisheries best practice, passing the Distant Water Fisheries Act and the Act to Govern Investment in the Operation of Foreign Flag Fishing Vessels, as well as various amendments to the Fisheries Act. However, not enough has been done to protect the human rights of those aboard, according to various nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

[Ship to Shore Rights launches working conditions report. 7 March 2018.](#)

The ILO Ship to Shore Rights Project (funded by the EU) has launched its newest findings on working conditions in Thailand's seafood and fishing industry. The report is available in English and Thai on the [project's new multi-lingual website](#). The report on labour conditions of fishers and seafood workers in Thailand provides an overview of the latest progress and remaining challenges. The survey includes the result of interviews conducted in 2017 with 434 workers —predominantly migrant workers— from a mix of large and smaller employers across 11 provinces from Thailand. It covers recruitment practices, wages, hours, safety and health, support services, complaint

mechanisms, living conditions, forced labour indicators, and legal compliance levels. While not designed to be representative, the study reveals a mix of progress and remaining challenges among workers surveyed, and ends with specific recommendations for more effective enforcement of Thai law to prevent and end unsatisfactory labour practices for migrant workers. **Key findings:** The evidence of progress includes: fewer reports of physical violence; few workers (less than one per cent) under 18 years old; 43% of fishers reported having written contracts, up from four years ago; and higher average real monthly wages (before deductions) for some fishers. The persistent unsatisfactory labour practices include: 34% of workers reported being paid less than the minimum wage (before deductions); a wide gender pay gap with 52% of women reporting pay below the legal minimum; 24% of fishers saw their pay withheld by vessel owners, some for 12 or more months; and 34% reportedly did not have access to their identity documents. The ILO report concludes with specific recommendations for the Royal Thai Government, employer organizations, unions, civil society organizations, and global seafood buyers designed to turn recent and promised changes in Thai law into effective enforcement actions and an industry moving towards decent work.

[Nestle and Thai Union inaugurate demonstration boat to promote human and labour rights in fishing industry.](#) 28 February 2018.

Nestle S.A. and Thai Union Group PCL have officially inaugurated a demonstration boat to promote and raise understanding of human and labour rights of workers in the Thai fishing industry. Both companies, in collaboration with Verite, refurbished a traditional Thai fishing boat, transforming it into a vessel demonstrating good living and working conditions. This includes adequate and clean food and drinking water, appropriate rest, dining and leisure areas on board, first-aid kit, and toilet facilities with proper sanitation standards. The first-of-its-kind demonstration boat launched in December 2017. Since then, 83 boat owners, captains and crews have taken part in training sessions in the Thailand's provinces of Trat and Pattani.

General news

[Film: True North.](#) 5 March 2018.

It brings to life the human side of what working in the fishing industry is like and touches on some of the issues we face in the fishing industry (non-UK labour).

[Seafood industry's workforce exposure to hard Brexit 'worse than earlier thought'.](#) 22 February 2018.

A third of workers in the area's seafood industry are from Europe, new research has shown, a far higher reliance than an earlier snapshot had suggested. A seminar outlined the potential impact should it be a hard Brexit with restrictions on working and movement freedoms, but how recruiting domestically will become vital to retain the processing sector built on the town's fishing legacy.

[CNBC to Broadcast 'Oceans of Crime' Program Slamming the Seafood Industry.](#) 8 February 2018.

The documentary 'Oceans of Crime' looks at IUU fishing and human trafficking.

[Article: Labour rights in the fisheries sector 'Freedom From Modern Slavery'.](#) January 2018.

It is a comprehensive overview of the current state of play for fishermen's rights, particularly in regard to modern slavery concern that sheds lights onto the working conditions of migrant fishers on board foreign fishing vessels.

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