

**Note of Common Language Group (CLG) meeting held at Friends House, London.
Wednesday 11 November 2015**

For the CLG minutes and meeting presentations see:

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

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Mike Kaiser welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Adam Green	Lyons Seafoods
Alan Steele	Traceall Global Ltd
Alex Olsen	Esperson
Alma Cardenas	Joseph Robertson Ltd.
Andrew Jackson	IFFO
Andrew Kuyk	Food and Drink Federation
Andrew Smith	Iceland Seafood Barraclough Ltd
Andy Matchett	Coombe Fisheries
Barry Harland	Whitby Seafoods
Becky Tasker	Morrisons
Blake Lee Harwood	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Caitlin Schindler	Lovering Foods
Carl O'Brien	Cefas
Chris Leftwich	Fishmongers' Company
Claire Pescod	Marine Stewardship Council
Clare Dodgson	Seafish Board
Clarus Chu	World Wildlife Fund
Dale Rodmell	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation
Dan Lee	Global Aquaculture Alliance
Daniel Whittle	Whitby Seafoods
David Parker	Young's Seafoods
Edward Whittle	Whitby Seafoods
Estelle Brennan	Lyons Seafoods
Holly Drage	Aldi
Jeremy Langley	Waitrose
Jess Sparks	Seafood Scotland
Jim Portus	South West Fish Producers Organisation
Joanna Toole	World Animal Protection
Joe Heard	WWF
Johnathan Napier	Rothamsted Research
Jonathan Shepherd	Consultant, Seafish Board
Jon Harman	Cleugh Maritime
Karen Green	Seafish (Minutes)
Katie Miller	ClientEarth
Klaas de Vos	Environmental Defense Fund

Laky Zervudachi	Direct Seafoods
Libby Woodhatch	Seafish
Mary Beaver	Five Star Fish
Max Goulden	MacAlister Elliott & Partners Ltd
Mel Groundsell	Seafish
Mike Berthet	M&J Seafoods
Mike Kaiser	Bangor University (Chair)
Mike Short	Food and Drink Federation
Natasha Hill	Fishmongers' Company
Nathan de Rozarieux	Tegen Mor Fisheries Consultants
Neil Auchterlonie	IFFO
Nicki Holmyard	Consultant
Nigel Edwards	Icelandic Seachill
Nigel Williams	Five Star Fish
Peter Andrews	British Retail Consortium
Richard Stansfield	Flatfish
Robert Wakeford	MRAG
Ross Jolliffe	Cefas
Steve Cunningham	IDDDRA
Stuart Smith	Co-op
Toby Middleton	Marine Stewardship Council
Walter Crozier	Independent member Science Advisory Group
Youssef Jaridi	Lovering Foods

Apologies

Ally Dingwall	Sainsburys
Chris Lamb	Seafish Board
Chris Williams	New Economics Foundation
Emi Katoh	MRAG
Huw Thomas	Morrisons
John Butler	Oscar Mayer Group
John Hooper	Marine & Fisheries Management Solutions
Martin Jaffa	Callander McDowell
Mike Brummitt	Regal Fish
Mike Mitchell	Young's Seafoods
Mike Park	SWFPA, Seafish Board
Paul Leonard	MMO Appointee to Sussex IFCA
Suzanne Clift	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
Peter Stagg	Le Lien Ltd
Phil MacMullen	Seafish
Sam Stone	Marine Conservation Society
Stefan Asmundsson	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
Steve Simpson	University of Exeter
Tracy Cambridge	WWF

2. Minutes from the last meeting held on 29 June 2015.

The final minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting and have been added to the CLG web page. There was a special thanks for the minutes. 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.

Papers were sent round and tabled covering the activities of the other Seafish groups (Aquaculture, Discards, Ethics and Skates and Rays) and a list of forthcoming seafood events. A full list can be found on the Seafish website: <http://www.seafish.org/about-seafish/news-and-events/events>

Matters arising covered the circulation of various links which were sent round in the CLG meeting follow-up email. All the presentations were added to the website. There was a request to look at GM and its role in future feed production as a possible CLG topic. This is on the agenda today.

Fish Stock Status and the Landing Obligation

3. Overview: The state of North East Atlantic stocks: the alignment of CFP, MSFD, and MSY; the December Council and the setting of TACs and quotas for 2016 in light of the implementation of the Landing Obligation (LO) for demersal stocks. Carl O'Brien, Cefas.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1464310/clg_nov2015_cefas_fishstocks.pdf

Carl summarised, stock by stock, the TAC agreed for 2015, the scientific recommendation for 2016 and the percentage change from 2015 and specifically commented that for the Irish Sea there did seem to be a decline in demersal species overall. The bid debate for 2016 is how to calculate the quote uplift for stocks subject to the landing obligation (LO) (Reg. 1380/2013). There are 17 stocks (of UK interest) subject to the LO. The uplift needs to be based on available science (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea/Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) and easy to understand. How quota uplifts will be calculated is not finalised and a number of proposals have been made.

Discussion

- **Comment.** There was a specific discussion about North Atlantic halibut stocks which is on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list. It was reported the last scientific survey was in 1996. There needs to be traction from the industry to stop the sale of this fish and there was a question over the Seafish stance on this. **A.** It would be necessary to find out who did the last survey and look at why it had not been repeated. The assumption is that it was not done by the UK so it would be necessary to convince other authorities, which is clearly proving difficult.
- **Comment.** In response the next step would be to submit a question to the IUCN but thought needs to be given as to what that question should be. In the event that it shows a stock at a low level there needs to be a commitment to a long-term management plan. IUCN has specialist groups and within the IUCN there are opportunities to assess individual species, or groups of species, but contact needs to be made with the group secretary. There does however need to be coordination between ICES and the IUCN.
- **Q.** What is the impact of litter and micro plastics getting into the base of the food chain? Is there a view on the impact on human health? **A.** This is a fairly new issue but ICES has been asked about this and there is sufficient interest to warrant further research. It is too early to make predictions.
- **Q.** What will it take for the North Sea to move to a management regime based on functional units? **A.** The biggest driver will be industry wanting functional unit quotas, but in the past industry has not wanted this as it limited flexibility to move between functional units.

4. Impacts of the Landing Obligation (LO) on the UK supply chain: headline implications – Seafish project. Nathan de Rozarieux, Tegen Mor Fisheries Consultants.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1464313/clg_nov2015_lo_suppychain.pdf

The aims of the work were to: understand the possible impacts across the supply chain, from economic, legal, operational, reputational and market perspectives; explore the range of potential changes in behaviour of one sector in response to changed behaviours of other; understand supply chain capacity issues and limitations; and identify gaps in information and, where possible/appropriate, make recommendations for further work. This looked at the catching sector, ports and harbours, logistics/transport, processing sector, foodservice, retailers, fishmeal and the pot bait sector.

It concluded that: there were many unknowns - make accurate predictions v difficult; change will be driven by restrictive access to quota at individual vessel which will intensify towards 2019; seafood supply chain dynamic, flexible and adaptive; increases un-certainty and introduces greater risk; severity of potential impacts / risks appear to decrease through supply-chain (will consumers notice at all?); solutions to handling <Minimum Conservation Reference Size discards (MCRS) (and/or small fish) exist at larger ports but ownership, engagement and management needed at port level; there is a strong case for small ports to be exempt based on grounds of disproportionate costs. A number of recommendations were made.

Discussion

- **Q.** Exemptions can be made on the basis of disproportionate cost. How is this going to work? **Answer.** Exemptions can be applied for on the basis of disproportionate cost but it is not evident that the devolved administrations have looked at ports and harbours on this basis. The ports have been asking the right questions but have been told a 'light touch' will be applied initially, however what they really want is clarity in law.
- **Q.** The pelagic landing obligation has been in place for a year. What lessons have been learnt? **Answer.** Ian Gatt gave a presentation at the Discard Action Group meeting in July which looked at the implementation of the pelagic LO across the Member States.
http://www.seafish.org/media/1411282/dag_july2015_pelac.pdf
Pelagic fisheries are mostly single species fisheries. The demersal LO will be very different because it is mostly mixed fisheries.
- **Comment.** There was a situation with sprat where fishermen had to rent quota from mackerel. Any benefit to the fishermen was completely nullified.
- **Comment.** At one extreme we have very selective fisheries with no discards, and on the other side fish that would have been discarded being brought ashore, potentially in quantity, and in between all the variables. There is a tipping point where the market will be affected. There are also issues over levels of enforcement and comments over little to incentivise the fishermen.
- **Comment.** There was some discussion over gear modification and the Technical Conservation Regulation, and the process by which gear modification works best. Ideally the idea should come from industry; the impact of the change should be proven by scientists before submission to ICES/STECF; this then goes through Commission Services before any change to the Tech Con Reg can be considered. This is a long process.

- **Q.** What would be the logic of not allowing a larger mesh size? **Answer.** The Tech Con Reg stipulates a maximum not minimum mesh size but in a multi species fishery it is very difficult to determine an optimum mesh size.
- **Q.** Can fish under the MCRS be sold? **Answer.** The important thing is not to incentivise or create a new market. There has been a recent change, but this is mostly to do with handling. It can be sold but this will be for fishmeal or pot bait, not human consumption, and it cannot create a market. Those fish above the MCRS can be sold for human consumption.

Watching brief - How GM could affect the seafood industry

5. GM farmed fish: latest developments and prospects. Dan Lee, GAA.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1464316/clg_nov2015_gmfarmedfish.pdf

This focused on genetically modified salmon and explained the views of the different sectors of the industry including: existing salmon farmers (antagonistic - keen to actively dissociate themselves from it); the aquaculture industry (general concern about impact of negative publicity on farmed products); consumers (generally negative, some very strong opposition); retailers/foodservice (mostly keen to actively dissociate themselves from it and not stock it); eNGOs (ready to launch campaigns and stir up fear and opposition); fishers (some concern, especially in wild salmon fisheries, about negative publicity reflecting on all salmon and seafood).

6. Making fish oils in (GM) plants – transgenic camelina engineered to accumulate omega-3 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids. Prof Johnathan Napier, Rothamsted Research.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1464334/clg_nov2015_rothamsted_camelina.pdf

Rothamsted has successfully demonstrated the potential of GM plants to produce non-native omega-3 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids to levels equivalent to fish oils. The next steps are to: stack the “fish oil” trait with other relevant traits; better understand and optimise the transgenic oil profile; demonstrate that their novel oils can substitute for fish oil in dietary intervention studies; carry out full lifecycle analysis for salmon feed on GM oils.

Overall discussion

- Comment. GM salmon is a hot topic. There is not such an obvious benefit as there is with GM crops, where there are now Government laboratories and trials.
- **Q.** The camelina trials look very exciting. This is much needed. There is a chronic shortage of fish oils which are not only being used by the aquaculture sector, but are also going to fish oil capsules. Do you have a commercial partner? **Answer.** This is approved as a new novel feed but we need approval to grow at a commercial scale in the EU and this could take two to three years. It could be grown in North or South America. It is unlikely that Rothamsted could take this forward. An industry partner would be needed and it is likely it could take up to five years to progress.
- **Q.** What is the impediment to growing micro-algae? **Answer.** It is not cost-effective in large quantities.
- There are some important messages here and camelina could offer some potential answers to help increase omega-3 levels in diets (and this is not just about salmon). This could be a game-changer. There needs to be positive

messaging about omega-3, and better consumer education which is crucial. There are positive health messages that could be reinforced.

- There is the potential here for cross-industry communication and a more joined-up approach with three possible messages. 1. To sell the benefits of omega-3. 2. Address how the public feel about GM as a whole. 3. Address what consumers feel about aquaculture.
- The omega-3 message is complex because of the differentiation between short and long chain. There was a suggestion that Seafish could stimulate a discussion group on this.
- **Q.** Can camelina be eaten directly? **Answer.** It is possible but our focus has been aquaculture and Government advice re fish consumption. We focus on eating oily fish, and all the other associated benefits of eating fish, and not consuming a fish oil capsule.
- **Q.** Retailers are being pushed to take a stand against GM fish. Are retailers in the UK considering this? **Answer.** It is likely this issue is being monitored and reviewed by UK fish buyers.

What is a robust Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)?

The approaches of the key protagonists to FIPs - how aligned they are and what differences, if any, there are in their approaches.

7. Sustainable Fisheries Partnership. Blake Lee Harwood, SFP.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1464319/clg_nov2015_fips_sfp.pdf

SFP catalyse FIPs through supplier roundtables, they train the supply chain in creating FIPs, provide tools for running FIPs, publicise the FIP model and promote FIPs, measure FIPs and give public status reports and advise their partners on the FIPs that meet their procurement specifications. There is also a FIP directory and guidelines on what constitutes a basic FIP and a Comprehensive FIP.

Action: Circulate link to FIP Directory <http://fisheryimprovementprojects.org/> and the Seafood Industry Guide to FIPs <http://fisheryimprovementprojects.org/>

8. World Wildlife Fund. Clarus Chu, WWF

http://www.seafish.org/media/1464374/clg_nov2015_fips_wwf.pdf

Explained the difference between a Fishery Conservation Project (FCP) which is a step towards a FIP or Marine Stewardship Council process and which aims to improve one or more environmental /sustainability issue(s) of a fishery, and a FIP which aims to improve the overall performance of a fishery to have a goal so that it is able to enter MSC full assessment, meet MSC Standards and is the step before entering MSC full assessment

Action: Circulate link to WWF FIP guidelines.

http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/smart_fishing/how_we_do_this/sustainable_markets_new/fip_and_fcps/

9. Marine Stewardship Council definition of a credible FIP. Claire Pescod, MSC

http://www.seafish.org/media/1464325/clg_nov2015_fips_msc.pdf

The MSC definition of a credible FIP is: undertake MSC standard pre assessment; develop and action plan designed to close gaps in the performance of the fishery linked to MSC Performance indicators and scoring guideposts and capable of delivering an unconditional pass - including activities, budgets, roles and responsibilities; implement actions and track progress with regular reporting of progress against the action plan;

verification/assurance of progress; pre-determined limit to amount of time spent as a FIP; upfront commitment to enter MSC full assessment.

Action: Circulate link to MSC FIP guidelines. <https://www.msc.org/about-us/credibility/all-fisheries/tools-for-fisheries-improving-towards-msc-certification>

10. A FIP(s) in practice - supply chain support. Youssef Jaridi, Lovering Foods

http://www.seafish.org/media/1464328/clg_nov2015_fips_lovering.pdf

Covered Lovering Food work on the Moroccan sardine FIP where a need for improvement was identified due to: increased demand for sustainably caught fish; little information on practices in the Moroccan fishery; limited options: MSC or non-MSC sardines; and commitments to improving the Moroccan fishery. The progress to date includes: scientific observers on Moroccan RSW trawlers to evaluate discards and interactions with endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species; conversation started with government about need for a more robust harvest control rule; and exponential improvement in communication and trust between industry and government. Successes include: preliminary data on discards and ETP species suggest that the fishery is clean (sampling is ongoing); the need to improve the management plans for each zone is understood (this is complex because it is a mixed fishery); and the government is much more willing to communicate its activities and problems to the industry (and the outside world).

Action: Circulate link to Lovering Food FIP information guidelines.

<http://fisheryimprovementprojects.org/fip/moroccan-sardine-2/>

11. Vessel Improvement Project. Libby Woodhatch, Seafish

http://www.seafish.org/media/1464331/clg_nov2015_fips_vips.pdf

The Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme is a global standard that audits compliance on board fishing vessels, including safety and welfare criteria, it complements existing standards in the fisheries and seafood supply chain. There is also a 'Vessel Improver Programme' to enable developing regions to be supported through continuous improvement. The aim is to develop a programme, allied to RFS, to implement continual improvements leading to eventual compliance while buyers continue to source. The RFS VIP will use a structured framework of tools and processes designed to improve vessel fleet operations. It will use the RFS standard to measure and set the requirements and will be comparable and complementary with other improvement programmes within the seafood industry such as Fishery Improvement Projects (FIP) and Aquaculture Improvement Projects (AIPs). Going forward the aim is for RFS VIP pilots starting 2016, focussing on feed fisheries (existing FIPs) in the Gulf of Thailand and Ben Tre. Some funding has already been secured from GAA, IDH and industry. Seafish is now scoping out other potential pilots. The time frame is a five year maximum.

Action: Circulate link to Seafish RFS VIP information

<http://www.seafish.org/rfs/index.php/whats-new/rfs-improver/>

Discussion

- **Q.** Is there a time limit between an MSC pre-assessment and starting a FIP with the aim of achieving MSC full assessment? **Answer.** A FIP should last no more than five years. The pre-assessment needs to be as up-to-date as possible but there is no set timetable and it has to be conducted by someone with experience of the MSC guidelines to be considered a good benchmark. It is also necessary to be aware that MSC has revised its guidelines.
- **Q.** The costs of FIPs and the cost of certification is an issue for the industry and there really needs to be investment by Government or the fisheries management

authorities if long-term sustainability is to be achieved. We need examples of models that really work. Is this likely to happen? **Answer.** It is important that FIPs deliver economic benefits and offer access to higher value markets. Funding for FIPs should be finite and a five-year timeline is realistic. A FIP that works will deliver core benefits.

- **Q.** How are FIPs evaluated? **Answer.** SFP does have a decision-tree where an A to B grading shows some progress, a C grading no improvement in two years and a D to E grading no improvement at all. This is all on the FishSource website and the methodology is available on request.
- **Q.** In a UK context it would be useful to have information on where FIPs are located, how many there are and the prospects. What the drivers are for developing FIPs such as the one for Orkney crab. Is there an argument for using UK/EU fishery management tools and Multi-Annual Plans instead of FIPs? **Answer.** There is the Orkney FIP and another on the East Coast of Scotland. FIPs should be seen as one of many fishery management tools, alongside MAPs, that could in the future be used together. Project Inshore has pre-assessed 450 fisheries around the UK coast to the MSC standard and this is a step in the right direction. Participants involved in the Orkney FIP include Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd (OSF), Orkney Fishermen's Society (OFS), M&S, WWF, Marine Scotland, Scottish National Heritage, Crown Estate, Orkney Islands Council, MSC and local fishermen. The goal was for the FIP to support the Orkney brown crab fishery to improve its demonstrable sustainability as measured by the standards of Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification by 2016. This was also linked to a much bigger project on renewable energy.
- **Q.** There has been a lot of talk about credible FIPs and this is all good for single species fisheries, but what does a multi-species fishery do, where there is no hope of MSC accreditation? **Answer.** In a mixed fishery all species don't have to be assessed across the board in one go. Single species could be assessed one by one. Improvements to one fishery do tend to drive improvements to others. The Orkney FIP is an example where lobster was added at a later date. However it needs to be recognised this is not easy or straight-forward and all the interactions do have to be addressed.

12. Date of next meeting

The date for the next meeting was not discussed but was later confirmed as Tuesday 22 March 2016 at Friends House, London. The CLG Steering Group will meet to discuss the agenda for the next meeting. Any ideas for agenda items should be sent to k_green@seafish.co.uk