Introduction

This document provides background information to inform stakeholders wishing to contribute to the development process of the Responsible Fishing Ports Scheme (RFPS). It should be read together with the draft RFPS Standard before responding using the Response Form spreadsheet.

This consultation runs from the 5 February 2020 to the 8 April 2020. Comments received after the end of this period may not be incorporated. Further guidance on how to respond to this consultation is provided later in this document.

Background

Seafish and the British Ports Association Fishing Ports Group (BPAFPG) have been working since 2015 to develop a certification scheme for commercial fishing ports and harbours in order to improve transparency and raise standards. The objective of the RFPS is to provide assurance to seafood sellers and buyers that all certified fishing ports and harbours are acting in a responsible manner with regards to the seafood landed and/or sold through the port.

In the initial stages of development, Seafish and the BPAFPG consulted a range of fishing ports and the supply chain across the UK to canvass their views and discuss how such a certification scheme could be developed to provide benefits to all sectors.

Recognising that the degree of potential risk at individual ports varies depending on the scale and nature of activities, the first version of the RFPS standard was developed to apply to ports with a selling facility, referred to as ‘Large Ports’, and was launched officially in 2018.

After the launch of the Large Port standard, work began on creating a version of the RFPS which could apply to ‘Small Ports’ – those without market or sales facilities; however, during the development process, it was agreed that a single standard,
applicable to any size or nature of UK fishing port, would be the most appropriate way forward.

In developing the single standard, eight trial port audits were conducted at fishing ports without a selling facility. The results of these trial audits were used to further develop the standard. In addition, the Standard has been developed through close engagement with UK fishing ports and the wider supply chain, and through the guidance of the Oversight and Technical Board and Small Ports Sub-Committee which comprise representatives of both.

This consultation invites stakeholders to comment on the resulting draft RFPS Standard that is applicable to all fishing ports.

Further information on the RFPS is available on Responsible Fishing Ports Scheme webpage on the Seafish website.

The RFPS Standard

The RFPS Standard is based on the same five core principles as the original RFPS Large Ports Standard. It contains the same clauses, and has been designed to ensure that those ports designated previously as ‘Large Ports’ remain subject to an identical set of requirements as previously.

The key innovation is that the Standard includes a modular approach, enabling fishing ports to be assessed only against relevant clauses. In practice, this will mean that while Large Ports continue to be assessed against the full set of RFPS requirements, Small Ports may be able to achieve certification whilst being assessed only against clauses relating to activities that occur on their premises.

Further details are provided within the draft RFPS Standard.

How to Respond to this Consultation Request

Before completing the Response Form, you should read the draft RFPS Standard in full.

All responses should be made through the Response Form excel spreadsheets which can be downloaded from the RFPS Public Consultation webpage.

The purpose of the Response Form is to allow stakeholders and other interested parties to provide input into the development of the RFPS standard.

In particular, we are seeking feedback on the proposed mechanism for allowing smaller fishing ports to apply for RFPS certification. This includes the following aspects of the proposed approach:
• The proposal to apply an identical set of clauses to both ‘Large’ and ‘Small’ ports – in other words, the proposal to have a single RFPS standard.
• The proposal to use a modular approach to render some clauses not applicable to some ports.
• The proposed set of Clause Groupings – Universal; Internal Catch Area; Market/Sales Area; Staff; Vehicles; Catch Handling Area.
• The proposed rules for determining whether a group of clauses can be excluded from the assessment of a specific port.

Any comments relating to these areas should be inserted into the Response Form tab marked ‘General Comments’.

We are also interested in any comments that relate to the clauses themselves, particularly as they may relate to novel or unusual situations at smaller fishing ports. The ‘RFPS Standard clauses comments’ tab of the Response Form lists the clauses of the RFPS Standard and provides an opportunity for stakeholders to respond in any specific areas they wish.

Finally, any comments that do not fall into one of the above categories are also welcomed. Such responses should be included in the ‘Other comments’ tab of the Template.

Please note that the RFPS is live for large ports so we are not able to amend existing clauses or add new clauses for them. A review process enabling revision of these clauses will start in 2021.

Please return the completed Response Form by email to Marcus Jacklin at marcus.jacklin@seafish.co.uk by Wednesday 8 April 2020.