# **Project UK Fisheries Improvements**

# **Southwest crab & lobster FIP Steering Group minutes**

Tuesday 17th May 2016

Devon & Severn IFCA, Brixham Laboratory, Freshwater Quarry, Devon, TQ5 8BA

10.00 – 14.00

**Attendees:**

Claire Pescod (CP)

Chloe North (CN)

Andy Hickman (AH)

Beshlie Pool (BP)

Colin Trundle (CT)

Daisy Kelly-Fletcher (DK) via Skype

Estelle Brenan (EB)

Ewan Bell (EBe)

Gus Caslake (GC)

Laky Zervudachi (LZ)

Michelle Hackett (MH)

Neville Pittman (NP)

Sarah Clark (SC)

William Harvey (WH)

MSC, Chair

MSC

Tesco

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

Cornwall IFCA

Scilly Isles IFCA

Lyons Seafood

Cefas

Seafish

Direct Seafoods

Defra

Seafood & Eat It

Devon & Severn IFCA

W Harvey & Sons

**Apologies:**

Alan Steer

John Balls

Nathan De Rozariuex

Trevor Bartlett

SD&CS

North Devon Fishermen’s Association

Falfish Ltd

Blue Seafood Company

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

CP welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the SW crab and lobster Steering Group and thanked Devon and Severn IFCA for providing the room. CP explained that the MSC has tried to get all necessary stakeholders in the room and that if any of the attendees could think of others who would be useful to have there, then let us know as the group is not closed.

1. Recap of Project UK Fisheries Improvements

Project UK Fisheries Improvements (PUKFI) is a collaborative, pre competitive partnership be led by the Marine Stewardship Council and Seafish, working towards an environmentally sustainable future for UK fisheries. PUKFI builds on the successful and innovative Project Inshore which identified a number of commercially relevant fisheries that the supply chain were interested in seeing move towards MSC certification.

PUKFI will do this through strategic use of the MSC process to develop credible Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs), giving the fishery the tools to implement changes and to ensure their sustainable future. It will use the MSC Pre-Assessment process as a gap analysis to determine current status and inform development of an Action Plan linked to MSC Performance Indicators, and identify improvements designed to close the gaps in the performance of the fishery.

The project then aims to implement actions set out in the Action Plan and track progress consistently and transparently through the use of the MSC’s Bench-Marking and Tracking tool (BMT). Validation of the sustainability of the fishery will be through the comprehensive, transparent and independent MSC assessment process.

PUKFI is one work-stream of a larger project, Project UK. This project aims to complete large-scale MSC Pre-Assessments on many commercial fisheries that have also been prioritised by the UK supply chain and retailers, and will incorporate fisheries from the whole of the UK. The Pre-Assessments should then feed into further improvements in those fisheries where gaps are identified.

CP reminded the group that Project Inshore was developed at a time when there was a lot of discussion in the media about underutilised species with celebratory chefs like Huw Fearnley-Whittingstall and Jamie Oliver advocating consumers choose underutilised species and move away from the ‘big five’ and commonly eaten species like cod, haddock, tuna and prawns. At the time the question was asked how these underutilised species measure up against the MSC standard and if not, was this push not just transferring pressure from relatively well managed stocks with a lot of data, onto species not managed through Europe and where data was likely limiting and management less. The idea for Project Inshore was then developed to use the MSC process as a gap analysis of the then current state of fisheries in the English Inshore using the MSC standard as a proxy for sustainability, to inform strategic sustainability reviews to feed into management.

PUKFI is funded by a number of supply chain and retailer funding partners (logos can be seen at the top of the page) and facilitated by MSC. Funding is for the development and facilitation of the FIPs for 6 species including updating of the Project Inshore PAs, development of action plans and annual reviews and use of the MSC Benchmarking and Tracking Tool. Funding for improvement work identified by the FIP is to be part of wider PUK bid to EMFF.

The FIPs will be compliant with the MSC’s definition of a credible FIP and will use the MSC’s FIP tool to demonstrate progress and transparency. This may allow the fisheries to take advantage of being in a FIP by getting market benefits on their journey towards sustainability.

1. Why Project UK?

CP invited AH from Tesco and LZ from Direct Seafoods to describe their interest in PUK and PUKFI in particular from a retailer and foodservice supply chain perspective. Tesco first stated to the group their reasons for supporting the MSC and then their support for Project UK Fisheries Improvements.

AH, Tesco - Tesco’s new sourcing policy coming from top levels of the business is that all Tesco’s seafood sources will be sustainable. They have gone from 16 to 80 MSC certified lines this year and are aiming to switch their sourcing to MSC products for as many lines as they can. They have just achieved Chain of Custody certification of all of their 635 wet fish counters. Their sourcing policy does not state a blanket rule that everything must be certified as there is not certified supply of all species so Tesco recognises the importance working with fisheries and of FIPs to move uncertified fisheries closer to certification.

LZ, Direct Seafoods - LZ spoke about Direct Seafoods’ reasons to get involved with Project UK Fisheries Improvements. The CEO of Direct has always been committed to sustainability, which is how they differentiate themselves within the food-service business. They aim to increase understanding within their customers. Half of the seafood in UK is consumed via food service. MSC is credible and a good story. Soon MSC will be a condition of the market – if you’re not MSC certified you can’t sell you fish or shellfish.

EL from Lyons Seafood also stated their commitment to MSC and improving fisheries towards it.

1. The FIP Process

CN presented to the group on the FIP process, the [MSC’s definition of a credible FIP](https://www.msc.org/documents/developing-world/msc-accessibility-tools/credible-fip-infographic/view?searchterm=FIP) (Appendix 1), the suggested timelines for the SW Crab and lobster FIP, the outputs from the FIP and presented the Orkney crab FIP as a case study on how the MSC tools have been used to run a FIP and work towards MSC assessment and certification.For details of this FIP see [here](http://www.orkneysustainablefisheries.co.uk/?page_id=142).

The presentation can be found in Appendix 2.

1. Focus on crab & lobster – Steering Group Membership & Project Inshore Pre-Assessment results

There are two projects, one on crab and another on lobster which need to be separate as the data requirements and management for the two species is different. However, all members of the steering group were interested in both species therefor it was agreed to continue with one steering group.

It was noted that there were no industry members in the room aside from South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen, although they had been invited, however it was discussed that BP represents a large number, approximately 100, of wide ranging fishermen and their different opinions. CP explained that with Project Inshore the PI Advisory Group members fed back information from the meetings to their own members and that she requested the same be done with PUKFI. She reminded the group that a number of the IFCAs had used their regular communications (e.g. newsletters) to disseminate information to fishermen and that they could act as a conduit for information with a two way info flow. BP suggested info could be circulated through Facebook, Association websites, e-updates and SC suggested information could be included in emails to permit holders. It was suggested that the timing of the meeting was not ideal if the group wanted working fishermen to attend. The group discussed different meeting times (and locations) and it was thought that an evening meeting may encourage fishermen to come along, although it was noted that it may not suit those travelling from London and other areas. The possibility of some of the Steering Group being available in the evening after a Steering Group meeting to enable a ‘drop in’ session for industry was considered – some members thought that industry would prefer to attend the actual meeting but that in the past when evening meetings had been held there had still be low attendance.

**Action 1:** CN to explore the options of meeting at different times of day.

**Action 2**: All members to consider ways they will be able to disseminate info on the project as it moves forward.

**Action 3:** CN to explore additional outreach around future meetings to increase the input from industry and provide updates direct to fishermen, such as drop-in sessions.

CN presented the Project Inshore Pre Assessment results to the group to show how the 2 fisheries measured up against the MSC standard when the PI PA was carried out in March 2013. This was to give the group an idea of the type of improvement work that may be required under PUKFI. It was highlighted that the PI PAs were carried out on the MSC Certification Requirements version 1.3 and that the new CR2.0 was now available and would be used for PUKFI.

There was discussion on the name of project as some members did not like the word ‘improvements’ in the name of the project. CP pointed out that a Fishery Improvement Project or FIP is a globally recognised term and field of work. Many companies have FIPs written into their sourcing policies and fisheries in a FIP can potentially gain market benefits. In order for the industry to access any potential market benefit from this project then it needed to be designed around the FIP process and adhere to the MSC definition of a credible FIP. However certain parties felt the term ‘improvement’ has negative connotations. It was highlighted that while the project must use the FIP process and definition there was scope not to use the word improvement in the project name. CP highlighted that considerable discussion had been had in the Project UK Advisory Group as well as with individual organisations to find an alternative project name which captured the work of the project, linked it to fisheries, showed a connection to Project Inshore and the wider Project UK. It was agreed that there was scope to find a new project title and that members unsure of the current name should provide CN with alternative suggestions and with agreement from other FIP Steering Groups, the PUKFI Advisory Group and PUK the name could be changed. It was agreed that the project would still refer to the work as being a FIP, adhere to the MSC definition of a credible FIP and Steering Groups still be FIP Steering Groups. Names could include Project UK Fisheries Initiative, Project UK Fish Initiative. CP reminded the group that while the name could be changed PUKFI had been used for a while and had developed a certain amount of understanding already in the supply chain and with stakeholders.

**Action 4:** All members of the group unsure of the name Project UK Fisheries Improvements, in particular SD&CS, to suggest alternative project names.

**Action 5**: CN to put a possible new project name to the other FIP Steering Groups, PUKFI Advisory Group and PUK for discussion.

There was discussion around other countries that fish on the same stock. The MSC assessment looks at the whole stock but only the vessels that the client group wants certified, will be under the certification. Therefore if the certification does not cover all vessels fishing a fishery, the uncertified vessels could overfish and have no incentive to put extra management in place. This overfishing could put the certification at risk for those certified vessels through no fault of their own. This is why it is best to engage others fishing the same stock to engage from the beginning. It was agreed to inform the other countries of our plans and gauge interest.

**Action 6:** CN with the group to explore how to inform and engage the French and Irish

It was suggested that Le Comité national des pêches maritimes et des élevages marins (CPNMEM) should be invited to the next meeting.

**Action 7:** CN to consider inviting CPNMEM to the next meeting.

1. Defra & Cefas update

Cefas stated that the SW crab and lobster stock assessments showed them at or close to MSY, still a bit above but not much above MSY, but that the assessments needed more data. It was suggested that this is something the project could potentially look at addressing. There is still uncertainty of fMSY. Currently using length info from catch sampling which needs improving.

They are working on a new set of assessments to be released in 2017.

Defra gave an update of their work which is aimed at creating management plans for all crab and lobster stocks around the English coast. Stock assessments were released in 2012 and again in 2015. Most of the 10 stocks are not at MSY (although there are some uncertainties with the data). Seeing as the stock assessments indicate that the SW stock is in the best shape, they are starting with other English stocks – particularly in the NE as this is where it is needed most. They are doing a stock specific approach. MH mentioned an additional complexity with managing the crab stocks in the SW is that the Western Waters effort limit isn’t based on scientific evidence and it’s difficult to relate effort days to the state of the stock. This project could create a management plan for this stock that is acceptable to industry, and take to Defra for approval.

Lobster – they are exploring a national ban on landing berried (egg-bearing) lobsters in England.

1. Focus on crab & lobster continued - extent of FIP: area, gears

W Harvey and Sons stated that 90% of their product goes to France and the continent. Their French buyers have enquired about MSC product and shown an interest in buying it. Seafood and Eat It stated that the UK retailer they supply has asked for MSC certification too.

There were three stocks of brown crab discussed: the Eastern channel, Western channel, and the Celtic Sea stocks. It was agreed to proceed with an update of the pre-assessments for the Western channel and Celtic Sea stocks for crab pots. For lobster is was agreed to proceed to pre-assessment for the Southwest stock but not South east or Southern.

There was mention of the Inshore Potting Agreement area and the fact that there is different management here\*. The group decided that it would be useful to explore if the IPA area could be used as the management area.

**Action 8:** CN to make sure the Pre-Assessments take into account the IPA and include specific information about the IPA.

It was thought that including the Eastern Channel crab stock would require a number of additional stakeholders, but that the Eastern Channel could be included in the future under PUK Work Stream 1 if members and PUK members thought appropriate. Also the funding for the project as a whole is limited and adding an additional stock may take costs above the funding budgeted for the FIP. CP explained that other Steering Groups had wanted to include a number of new species and/or new gears above the original project description and that while it would be great to expand and add new species there may not be resource to do so at the current time. However these additional suggested species and gears would be put forward for PUK work stream 1 prioritisation.

**Action 9:** CN to progress Pre-Assessment updates for Celtic Sea and Western channel crab pots and for SW lobster.

*\*CN edit: The IPA was also brought up at the South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen’s monthly meeting when CN presented the project. It was suggested by industry that just focussing on the IPA was one option as this was thought to be a possible way to limit the area assessed and/or move towards MSC assessment as many of the inshore boats are signed up to this and it would be a good way to focus in on management.*

1. Next steps

CP suggested that the group run through some of the key actions from the meeting to ensure everyone was clear what had been agreed.

CP asked the group if they agreed to be a Steering Group for both crab and lobster under the project PUKFI – the group agreed to be a Steering Group and to take the project as far as the Pre Assessment updates and draft Action Plan stage. It was agreed that the group would then reconvene to hear the results and then individual organisations would decide whether they wanted to sign up to the FIP process.

CP asked for confirmation that the group was happy for the PAs to be updated and draft action plans developed to inform the next meeting and next stages of the project. The group agreed.

**Action 10:** Confirmation of Action 9.

The original Pre-Assessments were carried out under Project Inshore - the updates will include new information and data, as well as moving the Pre-Assessments on to the new version of the MSC Standard (CR V2.0). The consultant will also draft possible actions that could be incorporated in to an Action Plan to fill in any gaps the fishery has against the MSC standard. With the aim of increasing the scores to a level by which the fishery could pass a Full Assessment.

**Action 11**: CN/CP to tender this work for consultants and commission it, before convening a meeting to discuss the results

CP suggested that an MoU be developed and signed by the Steering Group members to set out its roles and responsibilities. It was discussed if this should be based on the Project Inshore Advisory Group Mou/ToR but updated for the new project and to reflect the FIP process – then circulated and signed off by email.

The group agreed to develop and sign up to an MoU.

**Action 12:** CN and CP to develop a draft MoU and CN to circulate if for discussion and input by email.

**Action 13:** All members to input to MoU development once received by email.

1. AOB

EL expressed an interested in the Scallop and Monkfish Steering Group.

**Action 14:** CN to add EB to the Scallop & Monkfish Steering Group.

1. Date & location of next meeting

CP and CN suggested that the next meeting could be once the PA results and draft Action Plans had been received from the consultants so that the group could be presented with the results and have a chance to discuss them. This meeting was the last of the 3 Steering Groups to meet which meant the tender process could be started by CN very soon and after ensuring sufficient time for the tender process, receiving and considering quotes and then commissioning the work on the PAs it is likely that the next meeting will be in approximately late November or December 2016. Once the tender process was underway and CN had a better idea of the date for delivery of the work, she would circulate a Doodle Poll to find a suitable date. The consultant(s) would attend the next meeting and present the results directly to the group.

**Action 15:** CN to circulate link to Doodle Poll for next meeting.

CP asked the group if Brixham was a good location for everyone and asked if an alternative location should be found for the next Steering Group meeting. It was thought that Brixham was a good location and suggestions for other locations included Plymouth or Ivybridge or to again hold the meeting in Brixham. It was acknowledged that members were travelling from London, the airport and the SW so the location needed to be convenient for all.

1. Summary of Action points

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action point number | Steering group member | Action | Status |
| 1 | CN | To explore the options of meeting at different times of day | Completed |
| 2 | All | Members to consider ways they will be able to disseminate info on the project as it moves forward | Completed |
| 3 | CN | To explore additional outreach around future meetings to increase the input from industry and provide updates direct to fishermen such as drop-in sessions | Completed |
| 4 | SD&CS + All | Members of the group unsure of the name Project UK Fisheries Improvements to suggest alternative project names | Completed |
| 5 | CN | A new project name to be put to the other FIP Steering Groups, PUKFI Advisory Group and PUK | Completed |
| 6 | CN + All | To explore how to inform and engage the French and Irish | Ongoing |
| 7 | CN | To invite CPNMEM to the next meeting | Ongoing |
| 8 | CN | To include specific information about the IPA area in the specification of services that the consultants will work off | Complete |
| 9 | CN | To progress PA updates for Celtic Sea and Western channel crab pots and for SW lobster | Completed |
| 10 | CN | Confirmation of Action 9. | Completed |
| 11 | CN/CP | To tender this work for consultants and commission it, before convening a meeting to discuss the results | Completed |
| 12 | CN/CP | To develop a draft MoU and CN to circulate if for discussion and input by email | Ongoing |
| 13 | All | To input to MoU development once received by email | Ongoing |
| 14 | CN | To add EB to the Scallop & Monkfish Steering Group | Complete |
| 15 | CN | To circulate link to Doodle Poll for next meeting | Complete |

## Appendix 1. MSC’s definition of a credible FIP

Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs)

Background

As market demand grows for sustainable seafood, an increasing number of fisheries around the world are becoming interested in making the necessary improvements to become recognised as sustainable and access these markets. This has led to considerable growth in organised multi-stakeholder efforts to improve fisheries towards sustainability, often called ‘Fishery Improvement Projects’ (FIPs).

The MSC definition of a credible FIP

The MSC recognises the important contribution that credible FIPs can make to improving overall fisheries health and in promoting sustainable seafood. However, the MSC believes that it is important that they are operated in a manner that is credible: that their actions are transparent; that they clearly show improvement in fishery performance; and that these fisheries ultimately demonstrate their sustainability through a robust, independent assessment process.

In July 2015, following deliberations by a Board/Stakeholder Council working group, the MSC Board of Trustees approved an MSC definition of credible FIPs. The definition advocates that a credible FIP should be characterised by:

• An initial gap analysis against the MSC Standard (**MSC pre-assessment**)

• An **action plan** inclusive of activities, budgets, roles and responsibilities, that is linked to the MSC performance indicators and scoring guideposts and is ultimately capable of delivering an unconditional pass against the MSC Standard

• Regular **reporting of progress** against the action plan

• Presence of a mechanism to **verify and provide assurance** about the robustness of the **process and progress** being made in the FIP (i.e. pre-assessment and progress reports prepared or reviewed by an MSC assessor or an independent technical consultant)

• A **pre-determined limit** to the amount of time spent as a FIP, which should generally be no longer than five years

• An **upfront commitment to enter full MSC assessment** and achieve MSC certification through a transparent, third party process, to verify the success of the FIP

The above guidance is intended to be used as a roadmap to sustainability, and to provide clarity to FIP providers, fisheries, retailers and stakeholders on what constitutes a credible FIP. The MSC recommends that partners apply it to the development of effective and time-bound fishery improvement projects, and encourages retailers to use these criteria to assess the credibility of a FIP, should they take the independent decision to include FIPs in their sourcing policies.

Further information and support tools

The MSC has a range of tools available to support the development of credible FIPs and to help FIPs stakeholders address each of the elements outlined above.

These include:

• Pre-assessment Template

• Action Plan Template

• Benchmarking and Tracking Tool

• List of technical consultants

• Capacity building program

• Partnering for Sustainable Fisheries

• Get certified! A guide to the MSC assessment process

# Appendix 2. Presentation





























