

TERMS OF REFERENCE ROUND 1 FIPs

July 2020

Version 1.1

Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference cover procedures and commitments across the six Project UK Round 1 Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs). These are North Sea plaice; North Sea lemon sole; Channel scallops; Western & Channel monkfish; Southern crab; and Southwest lobster (pots). This document includes background and details on: (1) governance and decision-making; (2) Steering Groups; (3) Advisory Board; (4) meetings; (5) membership; and (6) communications.

Background

Project UK is a collaborative, pre-competitive partnership working towards an environmentally sustainable future for UK fisheries. The project consists of Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) that were informed by a pre-assessment of 450 English fisheries during Project Inshore. The selected fisheries were chosen by the supply chain based on several factors including their commercial significance to the UK seafood market.

The project is facilitated by the MSC to support the adoption of sustainable fishing behaviour with an aim to move these fisheries to a point where they could meet the MSC standard. The process aligns with the MSC's definition of a credible FIP¹ and uses the MSC pre-assessment process as a framework to develop Action Plans. Once the FIP is established and in progress, Project UK then uses the MSC Bench-Marking and Tracking tool, together with annual reviews, to evaluate the fisheries' progress in the implementation of agreed upon improvements. The FIPs run for a pre-determined timeline set by the Steering Group based on the draft Action Plan and benchmarking and tracking tool, generally up to a maximum of five years. This timeline begins with a formal agreement of the Action Plan by the relevant Steering Group.

1. Governance and decision-making

1.1. Secretariat

The MSC is the Secretariat and facilitator of the FIPs. The Secretariat will:

- 1.1.1 Plan and host Steering Group and Advisory Board meetings, and generally support the project in an effective, efficient and proactive manner including by organising meeting dates in advance, providing relevant and timely updates to members, and preparing meeting content.
- 1.1.2 Keep an updated record of all Steering Group and Advisory Board member organisations.
- 1.1.3 Draft the meeting minutes, seek feedback from meeting participants and publish the final agreed minutes online (in line with 4.1.7).
- 1.1.4 Coordinate actions between Steering Group and sub-group meetings and identify opportunities for cross-FIP engagement.
- 1.1.5 Provide information and guidance on how Steering Group members can communicate on Project UK, the MSC process and FIP process and tools. Provide promotional and other marketing and communication tools, where appropriate, in line with the Branding Guidelines.

¹ [MSC definition of a credible FIP](#)

- 1.1.6 Maintain the website ensuring all agreed minutes are available online within six weeks of the meeting, and that relevant project developments are publicly available and up to date.
- 1.1.7 Manage the membership process in line with Section 5 and collect and manage funding.
- 1.1.8 Coordinate and secure additional funding for Project UK, where possible, to ensure improvements and actions are tracked forward with sufficient funding to support their progress.
- 1.1.9 Act as the main point of contact for any queries in relation to Project UK and coordinate appropriate responses (in line with Section 6 on communications).
- 1.1.10 Provide an annual financial report to funders in May each year.

1.2. Steering Groups (roles and responsibilities in Section 2)

Each FIP has an associated Steering Group comprised of representatives from the fishing industry, supply chain, management authorities and other relevant stakeholders. These representatives are involved in the relevant fishery and interested in the development, improvement and promotion of sustainable fisheries. The role of the Steering Group is to inform, support and contribute to the success of the FIP by providing information, expertise and other support that is identified and needed to progress actions in the FIP Action Plan. Decisions in relation to the FIP are made by the group.

A list of Steering Groups and participants is available on the Project UK website². Most Steering Group meetings are attended by an independent consultant, along with the representative stakeholders relevant to progressing the actions and supporting each FIP by way of funding or in-kind contribution. The independent auditors are paid for by Project UK funding to provide advice on how to meet the MSC standard. The MSC cannot provide advice on how to meet the MSC Fishery Standard directly. Further detail on the status of each FIP is available on the Project UK website³ and FisheryProgress⁴.

1.3. Advisory Board (roles and responsibilities in Section 3)

This group is called on an ad-hoc basis to deal with cross-cutting high level strategic issues beyond the scope of the Terms of Reference (e.g. for an issue that might: affect all Steering Groups; cause conflict; draw media attention, or other issues that have cross-cutting nature such as communication strategies and funding opportunities). These meetings will mostly be held remotely (online; by phone) at a convenient time for as many participants as possible. If one or two members cannot attend, the Secretariat can arrange for individual updates as soon as possible afterwards, and note their vote within the timeframe set out below. The final advice and recommendation of the Advisory Board will then be shared with all relevant Steering Groups by email for comment and final agreement.

The selection process for the Advisory Board requires members of Steering Groups to volunteer to fill a relevant position, as outlined in section 3.5. The Secretariat will organise this process. Advisory Board participation commitments are for a rotation of four meetings, after which a different member can take the role. Where there is more than one volunteer for the same position, the existing members of the Advisory Board will decide as to which member should participate initially. The second member will be invited to replace the first after four meetings if they still wish to participate. The Secretariat will keep a record of participation.

² www.projectukfisheries.co.uk (due September 2020)

³ www.projectukfisheries.co.uk (due September 2020)

⁴ www.fisheryprogress.org

1.4. Decision-making and voting

Members of the Steering Groups and Advisory Board should act collectively wherever possible to genuinely represent the advancement and promotion of sustainable fisheries management and success of the relevant FIP. There is a presumption in favour of decisions being made through consensus. Where there is no consensus, items will be resolved by a vote with a quorum of two-thirds of the entire group (Steering Group or Advisory Board) voting in agreement, as defined below. Each member organisation of the group will have one vote, except for the Secretariat, which does not have voting rights.

- 1.4.1. This process will be organised by the Secretariat. Each organisation has one vote, even if there is more than one representative of the organisation in the meeting.
- 1.4.2. The Secretariat will notify all members in advance of a vote, if it is pre-planned, with two weeks' notice.
- 1.4.3. Within each group (Steering Group or Advisory Board), if consensus cannot be reached, the vote will be open to input from all members of the group, including those not present, with a time limit of five working days to respond. Votes can be made by proxy if the member confirms to the Secretariat in writing who will make the vote on their behalf.
- 1.4.4. Members can choose to abstain from a vote but must inform the Secretariat in writing that this is the case.
- 1.4.5. Members that are eligible to vote but have not engaged in the Steering Group in the last 12 months will be invited and entitled to vote but if they do not respond it will be considered as an abstention.

2. Steering Groups

Steering Group members agree to be bound by these Terms of Reference and commit to:

- 2.1 Inform, support and contribute to the work required to progress the relevant FIP, and provide information and expertise where appropriate to the independent consultant(s) and Secretariat.
- 2.2 Attend Steering Group meetings and relevant sub-group meetings. In-person attendance is a priority; however, conference call facilities will be available on request where possible.
- 2.3 Help identify and deliver actions in the Action Plans through the provision of information and advice on specific topics in their field of expertise and contribute to the development of appropriate and achievable timelines for any actions.
- 2.4 Review papers that have been circulated in advance of Steering Group meetings and participate in the discussions proactively to progress the actions identified in the Action Plan.
- 2.5 Provide information in a respectful, pragmatic and constructive way at mutually pre-agreed times within the FIP timeline to contribute to effective and meaningful progress.
- 2.6 Lead on, or help drive, the implementation of the Action Plans, where appropriate.
- 2.7 Promote and share information about the aims and progress of the FIP(s) and the MSC process and FIP tools, for example through newsletters, at annual meetings, or in discussion with other organisations, where appropriate.
- 2.8 Provide input to specific requests from the Secretariat and independent consultant(s). For example, requests to contribute to the delivery of: pre-assessment reports; draft Action Plans

based on pre-assessments; Action Plans in areas of expertise; statements to support funding bids; annual progress or general project reports; project communications; external presentations; and any other actions to progress the FIP towards sustainability.

- 2.9 Show willingness to volunteer to as chair or vice-chair in meetings (see Section 4.2).

3. Project Advisory Board

Advisory Board members agree to be bound by these Terms of Reference and commit to:

- 3.1. Show willingness to volunteer to act as the chair or vice-chair (see Section 4.2)
- 3.2. Seek to represent views of their sector, where possible.
- 3.3. Members can resign from the Advisory Board by giving written notice to the chair and Secretariat.
- 3.4. Members should act within the scope of their organisation and in the best interests of Project UK and the Advisory Board.
- 3.5. The membership shall comprise of no more than 20 advisory places:
 - 3.5.1. Optional chair from each Steering Group
 - 3.5.2. Industry representative (catching sector; two people)
 - 3.5.3. Industry representative (retail / supply chain; two people)
 - 3.5.4. Industry representative (retail / supply chain *or* catching sector; one person)
 - 3.5.5. Marine Stewardship Council⁵ (one person)
 - 3.5.6. NGO (one person)
 - 3.5.7. Public authority (two people)
 - 3.5.8. Scientist or academic (one person)
 - 3.5.9. Seafish⁶ (one person)
- 3.6. In addition, up to one additional place can be filled by core funders that are not already sitting on the Advisory Board on a first come first served basis, for a four-meeting commitment time.
- 3.7. External experts can be invited to provide further insight, but they do not have voting rights.

⁵ As a founding member, the MSC contributes substantial staff time and in-kind contributions to the success of Project UK and therefore is a critical stakeholder in the Advisory Board process.

⁶ As the primary non-departmental public body designed to represent industry, and funded through a levy on the first sale of seafood products in the UK, Seafish is a critical stakeholder in the Advisory Board process.

4. Meetings

4.1. Procedure and frequency

- 4.1.1. The project aims to be fully transparent, therefore all Steering Group, sub-group and Advisory Board meetings are minuted. Members may request that specific comments they make during meetings are confidential or unattributed. In these cases, other participants must not share or attribute, respectively, the information outside of the group.
- 4.1.2. Meeting dates will be structured around deadlines and/or milestones to ensure maximum benefit to the progression of the project.
- 4.1.3. The Secretariat will send out the agenda and any preparatory items at least one working week before the meeting, where possible. Steering Group members may add items to the agenda of meetings in advance by discussing with the Secretariat and providing the items in writing.
- 4.1.4. External experts may be invited to attend Steering Group meetings, or sub-group meetings if requested by members and/or the Secretariat. These experts should be identified and agreed by the relevant group and invited by the Secretariat.
- 4.1.5. External observers may join the meetings but may not participate in the discussion. This may be a request directly from the observer, or if requested by members and/or the Secretariat. The group must be notified by the Secretariat beforehand, either in a meeting or by writing. External observers will only be invited if there are no objections from members within one week of being notified by the Secretariat.
- 4.1.6. Steering Groups can establish sub-groups to tackle specific actions or issues. Each sub-group will identify its objective and will follow the same Terms of Reference for the Steering Group. The Secretariat will support these meetings, record the objective of the group, and keep a list of participants. Decisions will not be taken in sub-groups. Sub-groups will report back to the relevant Steering Group on the work undertaken and any recommendations developed.
- 4.1.7. The Secretariat will share draft minutes with attendees, usually within two weeks of the meeting, and members will have two further weeks to comment or make amendments. Once signed off by all those present, the Secretariat will publish them on the Project UK website and arrange for the relevant pages on FisheryProgress.org to be updated.
- 4.1.8. Steering Group meetings shall take place approximately every four to six months and Advisory Board meetings will be ad-hoc and called for when necessary.

4.2. Chairing meetings

- 4.2.1. Any member of the Steering Group or Advisory Board is invited to chair meetings, and the Secretariat will provide support for any preparatory work in relation to this. The same individual can chair more than one meeting if agreed by the relevant group.
- 4.2.2. The Chair and/or co-chair must be available for a preparatory meeting in the week running up to the Steering Group or Advisory Board meetings. The Secretariat will arrange this and provide support to highlight key issues and topics.
- 4.2.3. Chair and co-chair of the Steering Groups and Advisory Board will be reviewed every fourth meeting to secure a volunteer for the next meeting. The person fulfilling these duties may continue in the same role for more than four meetings if the group agrees. The Secretariat will support this process.

- 4.2.4. When no other member has volunteered to do so, the Secretariat will chair meetings. If MSC staff chair meetings, their role will be facilitatory rather than advisory and they will remain neutral to avoid any conflict of interest

5. Membership of Steering Groups

Membership requirements to the Steering Groups are as follows:

- 5.1. Membership decisions are made by the relevant Steering Group.
- 5.2. Member organisations must represent stakeholder interest in the FIP area, fishery and/or associated supply chain.
- 5.3. Members must contribute in-kind and/or financial support to the project and sign these Terms of Reference by confirmation in writing to the Secretariat. Financial contribution can be as a core project funder or through the provision of funds to deliver actions. Financial contributions cannot be reimbursed and will continue to support Project UK deliverables. Examples of in-kind funding include provision of vessel use for project associated work; leading and delivering an action; and practical involvement in work to deliver actions.
- 5.4. Members must be committed to using the MSC process and MSC definition of a credible FIP to help deliver the project objectives. The overall aim is that by the time the FIP reaches the end of its five-year timeline, it will be performing at a level that is able to enter and achieve MSC certification
- 5.5. Existing members can put forward organisations for Steering Group membership. Organisations can also submit a request directly to the Chair and Secretariat to be a Steering Group member.
- 5.6. Members provide the Secretariat with a high-resolution copy of their logo and any logo guidelines for the Project UK website and any communications uses outlined in Section 6.
- 5.7. Members can resign from the group by notice in writing to the Chair and Secretariat.
- 5.8. Members that do actively engage over a 12-month period will be invited to review their membership and organisational aims in a meeting with the Secretariat.
- 5.9. Where members have been found to be acting in a way that contravenes these Terms of Reference, a formal process will be put in motion. Initially the Secretariat and member will discuss the incident. In controversial situations the Advisory Board will meet to discuss the situation and make a decision about the continued involvement of that member.

6. Communications

Communications about Project UK is encouraged and can be undertaken by the Secretariat, members and other participants. This outlines how to communicate about Project UK.

- 6.1. The Secretariat will act as the main point for general Project UK-related communications in line with the Brand Guidelines and any confidentiality agreements.
- 6.2. The Secretariat will provide Brand Guidelines and messaging or additional guidance around Project UK to support members in their communications.
- 6.3. Members will, where appropriate, share communications and project materials amongst their own membership groups, both internally and externally.
- 6.4. The Secretariat will develop and maintain a dedicated Project UK website that includes information about the FIPs, member organisations, governance structure, objectives, progress on action plans, and any other content agreed by members.
- 6.5. The Project UK may be used only by members in alignment with the Brand Guidelines.
- 6.6. Members' logos will only be used by the Secretariat with agreement of the member to share on the Project UK website, or to show membership where the Project UK logo is not sufficient (e.g. in a presentation).