

SSC Steering Group Meeting

Date: 15th April 2024 11:00-13:30 (BST)

Attendees: 10 attendees (7 Steering Group, 3 Secretariat).

Notes and decisions

1. Governance and membership

Governance: Following the results of the Q1 2024 ballot, the 2024-26 SG members were confirmed as: Sea Farms (new SG member), Joseph Robertson, Direct Seafoods, New England Seafood, and Whitby Seafoods.

Membership: Fish4Ever has been onboarded and will participate in the focus session for new members in April. The SG discussed how to recruit new members. Food service was highlighted as a key sector.

- The Secretariat will continue to follow up with five expressions of interest.

2. Working Group Updates

Accountability Working Group (WG): There have been three online meetings to date, with a fourth scheduled in May. The Accountability Mechanism Proposal was circulated as a pre-read for SG decision and feedback. Members agreed that a key challenge is the need to deliver a robust process with limited resource. There was support for the proposal including the aggregated public reporting element, with minor revisions.

- The Accountability Mechanism Proposal was signed off with minor revisions to highlight continuous improvement and WG to consider timing and frequency to mitigate survey fatigue (biennial suggested).
- The WG will draft the survey, trial with WG members and update the SG, before finalising and launching.
- The accountability mechanism should be introduced at the all-member July meeting. It should be clear that completion is a requirement and that the survey is based on current Codes and the revised Codes in the future.

Codes WG: There have been two online meetings and one in person meeting, with a fourth scheduled in May. The WG updated on proposed revisions to the Codes thus far. The SG suggested the WG could plan for major revisions to be undertaken on a rolling basis rather than committing to a full Code update by Q4 2024. SG members advised to anticipate significant feedback through stakeholder consultation and consider timings and resource needs accordingly.

- The SG requested the WG consider where legal advice or CMA advice may be warranted and report back.
- The SG will meet in June to review the first draft of the Codes, before this is shared with all members in July.
- The Codes WG will continue to discuss with the SG regarding timelines and resource needs. The timelines for the public consultation will be revisited in June.

Implementation WG: There have been two online meetings to date. Work has focused on developing a glossary and onboarding materials for new members/new contacts within member companies. A focus group in April will gather feedback on the application and onboarding process, and how to better support new members. Findings will be presented to the Implementation WG. Work on the Guidance will be the focus of H2 pending progress of Codes WG.

3. Budget

It was suggested that the scope/deadline for the Codes WG could be amended if resource becomes challenging. Looking ahead to 2025, a fee increase will be proposed as highlighted to members in 2024 as a possibility.

- The Secretariat will create a proposal for 2025 fee structure and budget for SG consideration in June.
- It was agreed that the Secretariat will discuss options for funding with other organisations.

4. Stakeholder engagement

Codes WG members are in discussion with multiple stakeholders as part of work on the Codes review. The Secretariat spoke briefly about the Codes review at a Seafish CLG event on sustainability claims in response to stakeholder interest.

- The Secretariat will attend the Barcelona Seafood Expo, provide a summary to all members and arrange to meet members and key stakeholders during the event.

5. Communication

The finalised infographic was sent to members and published online. The SG suggested that in future additional text could be developed to accompany the infographic.

- Communications will be sent before the July all-member meeting updating on WG progress.