

SSC Sourcing Policies W.G. Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Total of 13, including members and non-member advisors.

Facilitator and Secretariat: ClientEarth

Location: [Food and Drink Federation](#), 6 Catherine Street, London, WC2B 5JJ.

Date & time: 1st May 2012, 10.45am – 3.30pm.

Summary:

Seafood Choices Alliance/Seaweb presentation (minutes item 5)

Agreed

- It was agreed that the principles of the GoodCatch 5 steps for seafood sustainability apply across all sectors. These are: 1. Gather information, 2. Source sustainably, 3. State your commitment, 4. Communicate clearly, 5. Influence wider progress.

Action points

- ClientEarth to forward slides to members.

Seafish presentation (minutes item 6)

Agreed

- The SSC will not seek to duplicate mapping and benchmarking studies. There was general agreement that a high level code on sourcing policies will add value to the current landscape.

Action points

- ClientEarth to forward slides to members.
- At the next working group the contents of the AIPCE-CEP code should be compared with the outcomes of today's working group.
- GSSI engagement to be discussed at members meeting 02.05.12

Expectations of different sectors (minutes item 7)

Agreed

- The code, containing top level principles, will apply to all sectors and to businesses of all sizes.
- Separate guidance documents will/may set out more specific mechanisms on how top-

level principles are to apply in different sectors.

What needs to be covered by the code? (minutes item 8)

Agreed

- The code will relate more generally to 'responsible' sourcing rather than strictly 'sustainable' sourcing, as it will concern behaviours and decision-making processes.
- A suitable structure for the code could include high-level commitments, followed by considerations for each commitment and examples of how members consider the commitment has been/is being met.
- A number of issues/concepts to be included in the code were unanimously agreed upon (see section 8 for list)

Further discussion on specific issues/concepts (minutes item 9)

Issues/concepts which were not originally unanimously agreed upon were discussed further, with outcomes listed below:

Agreed

- Farming method and area: should be considered in the context of traceability and information gathering.
- Seasonality and fish size: should not be in the code as commitments but in guidance as illustrative examples of what might be considered if a stock is data deficient (among other factors to be considered).
- Labelling: Cross-references should be made to the labelling code/other codes, but without creating too much complexity through such cross-references (e.g. use hyperlink on website versions to other codes).
- AIPCE-CEP as delivery mechanism: This may be considered with reference to collaboration, but should not be the only mechanism considered. It should be included as an 'illustrative example'. The AIPCE-CEP principles should be built on: for example we will also need to consider communication, wider influence etc.
- Waste: The principles of minimising and utilising waste should be included, with illustrative examples in guidance (e.g discards and fish efficiency). This could be under a heading of 'environmental impact' or similar.
- Water use: This should be included under a heading of 'environmental impact' or similar. Illustrative examples could relate to consideration of freshwater usage in aquaculture, proportional to the size of the business/operation.
- Contaminants in the environment (e.g. pollutants): should be included under a heading

of 'environmental impact' or similar.

- Scope (own branding vs. wider): Members should explicitly state the scope of the application of the code – i.e. whether it covers just own brand or wider. The issue of scope should be included under a heading of 'influencing', with suggestions such as encouraging suppliers to join the SSC or not sourcing from suppliers if they consistently fail to show improvement.
- Staff training/communications: A commitment to the training of a member's own relevant staff will be included.
- Ethics (including work safety, ethics of country of origin, fairtrade): To be discussed at the members' meeting. This could instead be included as part of the SSC's vision; and there could be stated intention that the SSC will revisit this as it is an important issue.
- Welfare of farmed fish: This should be included, as it is an issue of duty of care.
- Welfare of wild fish: It was felt that this is a more difficult area, but could be included as an aspiration.
- Energy: Will not be included.
- Food miles: Will not be included.
- Greenhouse gases: Will not be included.
- Packaging: Will not be included.

Action points

- AIPCE-CEP principles: Relevant members to find out whether there are copyright issues with building on the AIPCE-CEP principles, or whether the SSC can say that is building on them/incorporating them. Similarly there is a need to know whether each SSC member would need to sign up.
- Ethics: Find out what work is being done by ETI (Ethical Trading Initiative)

Format of the code (minutes item 10)

This section was not discussed in detail due to time constraints but the following was agreed upon in earlier discussions during the day:

Agreed

- The code, containing top-level principles, will apply to all sectors and to businesses of all sizes (see minutes item 7).
- Separate guidance documents will/may set out more specific mechanisms on how top-level principles are to apply in different sectors (see minutes item 7).
- A suitable structure for the code could include high level commitments, followed by considerations relevant to the commitment and examples of how members consider the

commitment has been/is being met (see minutes item 8).

Next steps (minutes item 11)

Action points

- CE to draft sourcing policies code for next working group.

1: Introduction

1. Housekeeping, apologies

2: Purpose of the working group

2. To discuss whether we may need different codes/versions for different sectors.
3. To identify what should be covered in the code and discuss these in more detail.
4. To agree on a format for the code, so a first draft can be produced.

3: Other concerns not on agenda

5. No other concerns were raised.

4: Why a code on sourcing?

6. It was suggested to members that, as with the labelling code, harmonisation is a key issue.
 - For example, currently some sourcing policies are easy to access (e.g. 1 click from homepage) while others are less so.
 - Some policies cover farmed species, others apparently do not.
 - There are therefore differences in the level of information and detail provided to consumers.
7. Members were presented with some ways in which the SSC can address these issues:
 - Outline minimum criteria for sourcing policies that all members can commit to,
 - Suggest further steps beyond minimum requirements (e.g. a 'gold standard'),
 - Improve consumer understanding of sourcing policies,
 - Improve availability of information.

5: Seafood Choices Alliance/Seaweb presentation:

8. Seafood Choices Alliance outlined 2 current projects with a main focus on the food service/restaurant sector: Goodcatch and Sustainable Fish City.
9. Goodcatch: A five step process gives a clear path for businesses (whether or not in the catering industry) to source their fish. These were adapted from the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions common vision (a coalition based in the USA, see <http://www.solutionsforseafood.org/>).
 - i. Gather information
 - ii. Source sustainably
 - iii. State your commitment
 - iv. Communicate clearly
 - v. Influence wider progress
10. It was pointed out to members that restaurants may be starting from a very different baseline to the retail/processing sector.
11. Sustainable Fish in the City: A concept following on from work on the London 2012 Olympics sustainable sourcing policy, the aim is now to get other businesses to sign up to the Sustainable Fish City Pledge. Step 4 of the pledge differs to take into account business size, so either '*consider* investing in MSC chain of custody certification' if a small businesses or 'invest in MSC chain of custody certification' for larger businesses.
12. A member commented that there is complete read-across at the top-line/framework level of the 5 steps, from catering to other sectors.
13. It was noted that traceability and provenance in the catering sectoring is lagging behind the retail sector.
14. A non-member advisor pointed out that the catering sector often try to make a point of supporting inshore UK fisheries, however there can be a conflict between this and trying to support MCS ratings, which are often on a very macro level.

Outcomes

Agreed

- It was agreed that the principles of the GoodCatch 5 steps apply across all sectors

Action points

- ClientEarth to forward slides to members

6: Seafish presentation

15. The Seafish presentation gave some background on certification and fish lists, including key certification schemes for wild capture and aquaculture.
16. It also provided information on the Seafish Seafood Certification Network and benchmarking studies. Feedback given to Seafish suggested that they should look at 'mapping' the current certification landscape and identifying the role and place for each scheme.
17. It then posed the questions 'is a code the way forward/what will it do?'. The presenter asked how the code will fit in with what is already out there, and what the purpose of the code is.
18. A comment was made that the code could add value at the top-line level, for example one page of broad principles about what a responsible seafood policy should contain, including avoiding the worst, working with industry/other stakeholders, a commitment to work towards sustainability etc.
19. The aim of the SSC is not to go into the mapping of various schemes against each other as this will duplicate work already being done and lead to the code becoming too prescriptive. However, it was also noted that the SSC should still be part of the mapping process; this may be through the engagement of individual members or the SSC if appropriate.
20. A number of members cited the AIPCE-CEP principles for environmentally responsible fish sourcing as a possible foundation for a framework on sourcing policies.
21. A member proposed that ClientEarth could consider engagement with GSSI (Global Seafood Sustainability Initiative) at the secretariat level, in relation to. It was decided that this should be discussed at the members meeting in the context of the labelling code.

Outcomes

Agreed

- The SSC will not seek to duplicate mapping and benchmarking studies. There was general agreement that a high level code on sourcing policies will add value to the current landscape.

Action points

- ClientEarth to forward slides to members.
- At the next working group the contents of the AIPCE-CEP code should be compared with the outcomes of today's working group.
- GSSI engagement to be discussed at members meeting 02.05.12

7: Expectations of different sectors

22. Two questions were posed to members:
 - i. Should there be different expectations for different sectors (e.g. retail and foodservice)
 - ii. If so, how can the code(s) be structured?
 - Separate codes
 - Sector differentiation
23. Foodservices and wholesalers might be starting from a very different baseline, e.g. they might not have an official sourcing policy document, restaurants might rely on their wholesaler for information about sustainability.
24. It was noted that this will also be an issue with other codes, so the outcomes of today will be discussed at the members meeting.
25. A member commented that the broad principles/top-line should apply across the board and there should be a level playing field in this regard. Another noted that the macro approach i.e. general principles for a framework of what 'good' looks like are the same, but the micro details for application will vary between sectors and also potentially within sectors, depending on size. There was general agreement with these viewpoints.
26. A non-member advisor noted that in foodservices there may be logistical problems with traceability. Although this is being addressed, it is still quite far behind the retail sector.
27. It was felt that work on the code should continue in relation to retail, but this can be revisited as the membership grows. Given the current membership, it was also felt that it will be important to not be too prescriptive so that members can reach their own USP.

Outcomes

Agreed

- The code, containing top-level principles, will apply to all sectors and to businesses of all sizes.
- Separate guidance documents will/may set out more specific mechanisms on how top-level principles are to apply in different sectors.
- Today we hope to lay down some non-negotiable principles which will not need to be revisited.

8: What needs to be covered by the code?

28. A brainstorming session was held to identify key issues/concepts, which should be covered by the code, including ideas for criteria, scope, and communication.
29. Members agreed that the code will relate more generally to 'responsible' sourcing rather than strictly 'sustainable' sourcing, as it will concern behaviours and decision making processes.
30. It was suggested that we should not just focus on the AIPCE-CEP code as this does not go beyond sourcing responsibly to issues such as communication and influencing wider progress. Therefore rather than constituting the principles of this code, the AIPCE-CEP process could be a delivery mechanism.
31. A query was raised about the relationship between SSC codes. It was agreed that the labelling and sourcing codes are intended to dovetail, but that the labelling code cascades from the sourcing code, as sourcing is a wider commitment by members, whereas providing voluntary information in labelling is something that members can choose to do or choose not to.
32. It was felt that it is important for individual businesses to have a vision of what they're working towards and to give ideas about how they might get there, but it is not for the SSC to prescribe the specific mechanisms.
33. The point was also raised that we will need to agree whether the code is
 - (a) a list of factors to be considered (e.g. stock health)
 - (b) a list of factors to be considered and an idea of what the end point looks like (e.g. stock health and to only source from healthy stocks).
34. Initially the discussion moved towards just including considerations rather than commitments. However, a member also pointed out that there could be some high level commitments if they are not too detailed, with just considerations for other points.
35. Members could say they will commit to a certain point and give *examples* (not necessarily every detail) about how they will fulfil that commitment. This could go on the public facing website.
36. A suitable structure for the code could include high-level commitments, followed by considerations for each commitment and examples of how members consider the commitment has been/is being met.
37. A brainstorm session produced the following ideas under the headings of environmental, social and other. Once all items had been recorded, members were asked to indicate which they felt should certainly be covered in the code, which they were unsure about and which they felt should certainly not be included in the code. See Annex 1 for full outcomes.

Outcomes

Agreed

- The code will relate more generally to 'responsible' sourcing rather than strictly 'sustainable' sourcing, as it will concern behaviours and decision-making processes.
- A suitable structure for the code could include high-level commitments, followed by considerations regarding this commitment and examples of how members consider the commitment has been/is being met.
- The following issues/concepts to be included in the code were unanimously agreed upon:
 - Farmed species
 - Environmental impact
 - Meaning of sustainable
 - Ecosystem impacts
 - Wild fish stock
 - Wild fish species
 - Wild fish capture method
 - Habitat impacts
 - By-catch
 - Discards
 - Red lists
 - Non-transgenic fish
 - Certification
 - Transparency
 - Legality
 - Traceability
 - SSC code coherence
 - Influencing policy and progress/improvements
 - Cooperation
 - Collaboration
 - Communication to consumer
 - Vision
 - Reassessment
 - Scientific advice
- The issue of GM feed will not be included in the code.

9: Further discussion on specific issues/concepts

37. Issues/concepts that were not originally unanimously agreed upon were discussed further, with outcomes listed below:

Agreed

- Farming method and area: should be considered in the context of traceability and information gathering.
- Seasonality and fish size: should not be in the code as commitments but in guidance as an illustrative example of what might be considered if a stock is data deficient (among other factors to be considered).
- Labelling: The labelling code will be referenced in the first draft, but this must not be complex. It could involve a hyperlink on website versions to other codes.
- AIPCE-CEP as delivery mechanism: This may be considered under the heading of collaboration. It should not be the only mechanism considered, and should be included as an 'illustrative example'. The AIPCE-CEP principles should be built on; for example the SSC will also need to consider communication, wider influence etc.

- Waste: The principles of minimising and utilising should be included, with illustrative examples in guidance (e.g discards and fish efficiency). This could be under a heading of 'environmental impact' or similar.
- Water use: This should be included under a heading of 'environmental impact' or similar. Illustrative examples could relate to consideration of freshwater usage in aquaculture, proportional to the size of the business/operation
- Contaminants in the environment (e.g. pollutants): These should be included under a heading of 'environmental impact' or similar.
- Scope (own branding vs. wider): Members should explicitly state the scope of the application of the code – i.e. whether it covers just own brand or wider. The issue of scope should be included under a heading of 'influencing"', with suggestions, for example to encourage suppliers to join the SSC, or not to source from suppliers if they consistently do not show improvement.
- Staff training/communications: A commitment to training of a member's own, relevant staff will be included.
- Ethics (including work safety, ethics of country of origin, fairtrade): To be discussed at the members meeting. This could instead be included as part of the SSC's vision and the inclusion of a stated intention for the SSC to revisit as it is an important issue.
- Welfare of farmed fish: should be included, as it is an issue of duty of care.
- Welfare of wild fish: it was felt that this is a more difficult area, but could be included as an aspiration.
- Energy: will not be included.
- Food miles: will not be included.
- Greenhouse gases: will not be included.
- Packaging: will not be included.

Action points

- AIPCE-CEP principles: Relevant members to find out whether there are copyright issues with building on the AIPCE-CEP principles, or whether SSC can say that it is building on them/incorporating them. Similarly there is a need to know whether each SSC member would need to sign up.
- Ethics: find out what work is being done by ETI (Ethical Trading Initiative)

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10: Code format

38. This topic was not discussed in detail due to time constraints and therefore will need to be revisited. However, during earlier discussions the following points were agreed upon:

Agreed

- The code containing top-level principles will apply to all sectors and to businesses of all sizes (see minutes item 7).
- Separate guidance documents will/may set out more specific mechanisms on how top-level principles are to apply in different sectors (see minutes item 7).
- A suitable structure for the code could include high-level commitments, followed by considerations for each commitment and examples of how members consider the commitment has been/is being met.

11: Recap and next steps

39. See summary of conclusions and outcomes

Action points

40. CE to draft sourcing policies code for next working group

Annex 1 (see minutes item 8)

	Unanimous: should be included in code	Disagreement/uncertainty	Unanimous: should not be included in code
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farmed species• Environmental impact• Meaning of sustainable• Ecosystem impacts• Wild fish stock• Wild fish species• Wild fish capture method• Habitat• By-catch• Discards• Red lists• Non-transgenic fish• Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where farmed• How farmed• Contaminants• Energy• Greenhouse gases• Food miles• Water use• Waste reduction• Packaging• Life cycle analysis• Diversification• Seasonality• Size of fish (beyond MLS)• Labelling• AIPCE-CEP as delivery mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GM feed

Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics • Worker safety • Ethics of country of origin (e.g. human rights, whaling) • Food safety • Fair trade • Fish welfare (aquaculture and wild) 	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legality • Traceability • SSC code coherence • Influencing policy and progress/improvements • Cooperation • Collaboration • Communication to consumer • Vision • Reassessment • Scientific advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training staff/communications 	