

Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC)

Foodservice members' meeting

Location: **British Retail Consortium**, 21 Dartmouth Street, Westminster, London SW1H 9BP

Date: 22nd November, 2012

Number of attendees: 11 total (including 3 ClientEarth staff: Facilitator, secretariat, minute taker)

Summary of agreed points

Item 1:

- Members agreed secretariat should prioritise invites (or follow ups) to join the SSC to the following businesses: Garrets International, GB chefs, Sodexo, Compass, Mitch Tonks, National Federation of Fish Fryers and British Institute of Innkeepers. Secretariat will not pursue other businesses who did not reply to the original invitation.

Item 2:

- The SSC foodservice members would like to invite the following to the sourcing working groups: Aquaculture Stewardship Council, MCS, Global Aquaculture Alliance and Seafish.

- The SSC foodservice members would like to invite the following to diversification working groups: Mums Net, Great British Chefs, BBC Good Food, Restaurant magazine, Fork magazine, Crumbs magazine, Eat Out magazine, Flavour magazine, Olive magazine, Observer Food Monthly, Jamie Oliver magazine.

- The SSC foodservice members would like to draft a document about the SSC's take on fish guides, explaining how the SSC will ensure that members' sourcing policies are comprehensive and up to date. The document will also explain how the SSC will work with and alongside organisations such as the MCS. This will need agreement from all members of the SSC.

Item 3:

- Appendix 2 will include several sources of credible information for information gathering. These may include a Seafish rating system, when one is in place, scientific bodies, RFMOs and others.

- Further wording relating to by-catch should be inserted in the code, to address or give guidance on situations where, for example, red-listed fish are caught as by-catch. This will be subject to further discussion and agreement from all members.

Item 4:

- Members would like to know more about any relevant initiatives by Seafish.

Purpose of the foodservice working group

1. To discuss other foodservice members to invite to the SSC
2. To discuss representative non-member organisations to invite to Working Group meetings
3. Introduction to the Sourcing Code
4. Update on the Labelling Code

Item 1: Other foodservice members to invite.

Responses from the email poll regarding businesses to prioritise were: Sodexo, Compass, Mitch Tonks and National Federation of Fish Fryers.

Discussion and comments

- Suggestion to invite the British Institute of Innkeepers, as they represent ~ 50% of the non – chain pubs.
- Secretariat reported back to the group on a meeting with Great British Chefs, who were interested acting as a non-member advisor when the SSC starts work on the Diversification Code

Agreed:

Members agreed secretariat should prioritise invites (or follow ups) to join the SSC to the following businesses: Garrets International, Great British chefs, Sodexo, Compass, Mitch Tonks, National Federation of Fish Fryers and British Institute of Innkeepers. Secretariat will not pursue other businesses who did not reply to the original invitation.

Action:

Secretariat will contact the chosen businesses and federations to pursue their involvement with the SSC.

Item 2: Non-member advisors in working groups

The list of non-member advisors which had previously been invited to working groups was presented.

Discussion and comments

- Concerns regarding non member advisors were raised, and it was noted that continuing with caution was preferred.
- Discussion about the role of Seafish, with regard to their funding and the possibility of Seafish producing a ratings fish list. One of the SSC members is on the importer panel for Seafish and will follow this up. General agreement that the members would value the creation of a Seafish fish list but awareness that this is unlikely to happen in time for the production of the SSC Codes of Conduct.
- Concern from some members regarding MCS fish lists – some concerns about the reliability of the fish lists due to limited rating system, limited species represented and slow rate of response to data deficiencies. Many NGOs and businesses follow the MCS fish lists, so it is important that they are accurate.
- Issue brought up that the understanding of some of the members was that the SSC would help to address some of these issues.
- It was expressed that a document drafted by the SSC as to where the MCS fits in with the seafood industry would be desired. This is because it is felt that current fish lists influence the foodservice sector.
- It was suggested that it is valuable to work with a range of organisations with different viewpoints.
- Point raised that for the Diversification Code it would be good to work to target bloggers with children, such as Mums Net.
- General agreement that it will be important to work with magazines for the Diversification Code.

Agreed:

- The SSC foodservice members would like to invite the following to sourcing working groups: MCS, Global Aquaculture Alliance, Aquaculture Stewardship Council and Seafish.
- The foodservice members would like to invite the following to diversification working groups: Mums Net, GB chefs, BBC Good Food, Restaurant magazine, Fork magazine, Crumbs magazine, Eat Out magazine, Flavour magazine, Olive magazine, Observer Food Monthly, Jamie Oliver magazine.
- The SSC foodservice members would like to draft a document about the SSC's take on fish guides explaining how the SSC will ensure that members' sourcing policies are comprehensive and up to date. The document will also explain how the SSC will work with and alongside organisations such as the MCS. This will need agreement from all members of the SSC.

Actions:

- Secretariat to gain feedback from all members on possibility of drafting above document with reference to perspective on fish guides and how the SSC dovetails with these.
- Secretariat will contact the Global Aquaculture Alliance and invite them to future sourcing working group meetings.
- When work on the Diversification Code begins, the secretariat will invite representatives from some or all of the following to join diversification working groups: Mums Net, Great British Chefs, BBC Good Food, Restaurant magazine, Fork magazine, Crumbs magazine, Eat Out magazine, Flavour magazine, Olive magazine, Observer Food Monthly, Jamie Oliver magazine.

Item 3: Introduction to the Sourcing Code – purpose, tone, scope and recent amendments

Discussion and comments

Three issues were highlighted by the members, which were discussed in more detail:

1. In section 2.2 of the Sourcing Code, under Information gathering, reference to sources of credible information for information gathering.

- Appendix 2 will contain suggested sources of credible information. The secretariat suggested that this is not intended to be one source of information and should cover a range of options.
- General agreement that a Seafish rating system (if produced) would be included in Appendix 2 as a credible source of information.
- Discussion about benchmarking studies of seafood rating systems, such as by GSSI and how these may inform the work of the SSC, particularly in relation to the Labelling Code.

2. Considerations for members to carry out a risk assessment for each seafood product.

- There were concerns raised by some of the larger members that it would be an expensive and labour intensive process to perform a risk assessment for each product when they have product lines of several hundred.
- It was suggested that there could be a full working group, with all SSC members, to discuss practicality and ways forward.

3. Timings with regard to implementation.

- Once the code is signed off, the secretariat will work with each member to produce an individual implementation plan. It was clarified that the implementation time of the code would be discussed individually with each member. The timings will be different for each member, but the code will not fully come into effect until every member has implemented the code.

- For section 2.3, appropriate risk assessment, base criteria for wild caught (see Appendix 1 for detailed considerations): An issue was raised with regard to the issue of use of bycatch, as the foodservice sector can receive negative press if using a fish which is endangered e.g. halibut is a red-listed species but often caught as accidental bycatch from a certified fishery.
- It was suggested that a definition of 'appropriate actions' is needed.
- Issue raised that the document is not easy to read for some members of the foodservice industry and that a simplified summary or abstract would help communicate the code to future members with small businesses and little time.
- Issue raised that many restaurateurs will not have time to read the code or guidance document.

Agreed:

- Appendix 2 will include several sources of credible information. These may include a Seafish rating system, when one is in place, scientific bodies, RFMOs and others.

- Further wording relating to by-catch should be inserted in the code, to address or give guidance on situations where, for example, red-listed fish are caught as by-catch. This will be subject to further discussion and agreement from all members.

Actions:

- Secretariat will begin to draft appendix 2, containing potential sources of credible information, for further discussion at working groups. Secretariat to forward a Seafish presentation to the group, as provided by one member.
- Secretariat to raise issues surrounding by-catch of red listed species for further discussion at a future working group.

Item 4: Update on Labelling Code

Discussion and comments

- Query about the guidance document and what stage it is currently at. The secretariat noted that work has begun on it but it may need to be discussed at further working groups, after the code is signed off. The guidance does not necessarily need to be finished at the same time of the code as it only gives suggestions and advice, not minimum requirements.
- Further comments regarding the amount of work it will take to implement the code.
- It was clarified that any item that a member wants to make a claim in relation to a product or dish would need to do so according to the conditions set out in the Labelling Code.
- A member noted that Seafish are working on a risk assessment system which may be of interest.
- Concerns from many about the alternative, non-certified route to making a claim of 'sustainable'. Secretariat noted that this issue was to be discussed at the SSC members meeting 22.11.12.
- It was discussed that it is important that customers know where their fish has come from and that this should be fully traceable and reliable.

Agreed:

Members would like to know more about any relevant initiatives by Seafish.

Actions:

- The relevant member will find out more about the risk assessment system.
- Secretariat will send round the relevant presentation as provided by one member.