

Green light for revised Responsible Fishing Scheme



Seafish Responsible Fisheries Program logo. (Logo: RFS)

New standards underpinning Seafish's Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS) have been unanimously signed off by the RFS Oversight Board, widening the scope of the scheme to include social responsibility requirements.

The RFS, which was developed by Seafish in 2006, has been fully updated to improve its ability to meet the increasing need for the seafood supply chain to ensure responsible practice and traceability from sea to plate.

The revised scheme will now include five core principles:

- Safety, health and welfare;
- Training and professional development;
- The vessel and its mission;
- Treating fish as food;
- Care for the environment.

Each vessel and crew will be expected to meet the requirements of either the Multiple Crewed or Singled Handed RFS standards. A range of Compliance Support Guides support the standards to outline exactly what is required to achieve the certification.

The scheme's independent certification body Food Certification International Ltd (FCI) will be carrying out pilot RFS audits on vessels over the next few months, with a view to the first vessels being certified to the new standards during summer 2015.

Once the new audit process is finalised FCI will formalise the application for the RFS scheme to be audited by UKAS for ISO17065 accreditation.

The RFS Oversight Board includes members from the catching, processing, wholesale, food service and retail sectors as well as representatives from environmental and safety and welfare groups. The standards have been modified

with feedback following a 60 day public consultation.

In addition to the vessel based standards Seafish is planning a Chain of Custody standard to ensure traceability throughout the whole supply chain. This will ensure all vessel audits carried out by FCI conform to these specified certification standards.

Helen Duggan, Head of Responsible Sourcing at Seafish, said: "Getting the standards signed off by the Oversight Board is a huge step forward to ensure we re-launch a scheme that supports a socially responsible seafood industry."

And added, "For the first time, we can certify vessels which are demonstrating best practice in crew welfare and catching so seafood buyers can be confident that they are sourcing responsibly harvested products."

The new standards are available on Seafish website.

Source : [http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=74504\(10/02/15\)](http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=74504(10/02/15))