

Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC)

Social working group minutes

Date: 10 August, 2016

Location: Conference call

Number of attendees: 8 total (including 6 members and 2 ClientEarth staff acting as facilitator and minute taker)

Summary of agreed points

Item 1: Scope

- The scope of social commitments should cover the entire supply chain.
- The addition of social criteria will only apply to the sourcing code. Voluntary claims, as defined in the labelling code, will not change. However, once the sourcing code includes social criteria and is implemented by all members, responsibility claims will cover both social and environmental actions.

Item 3: Social responsibility commitments

- The addition of social criteria into the SSC sourcing code aims to complement existing initiatives. The group proposes to include five commitments in the sourcing code: 1) mapping the supply chain, 2) doing a risk assessment, 3) taking appropriate remedial action, 4) being transparent, and 5) agreeing a sourcing cut-off point if insufficient progress is made. The guidance will provide detail on relevant tools and resources.

Purpose of the working group meeting

At the meeting on 14 June 2016, members agreed to include social criteria in the SSC codes. A subgroup gathered to consider: scope, data availability and gaps, how it would fit with the current risk assessment process, and appropriate actions for medium and high risk outcomes. This call was to clarify members' expectations, gather suggestions, and explore commitments and initiatives to develop social commitments under the SSC codes

Item 1: Scope

The group discussed the scope of including social commitments in the sourcing code: whether it would be at the fishery/aquaculture source level, at the vessel/individual farm level, or also cover land-based facilities (e.g. canneries) across the whole supply chain.

Discussion and comments

- The UK Modern Slavery Act requires companies to prepare a slavery and human trafficking statement for each financial year. As this looks at the entire supply chain, this should also be the benchmark for the SSC.
- One member asked if social criteria would relate to the sourcing code alone, or also to the labelling code. Different 'social' claims could create ambiguity on the use of sustainability claims. Third party certification schemes - which are required by SSC members to back up sustainability claims - do not yet cover social criteria. The group felt it would create confusion, add a layer of complexity, and noted that specific 'social responsibility claims' are not made in other commodities.

Agreed:

- The scope of social commitments should cover the entire supply chain.
- The addition of social criteria will only apply to the sourcing code. Voluntary claims, as defined in the labelling code, will not change. However, once the sourcing code includes social criteria and is implemented by all members, responsibility claims will cover both social and environmental actions.

Item 2: Existing data and tools

Discussion and comments

The group discussed and recorded existing guidelines, initiatives and tools supporting businesses to implement social responsibility commitments, in both seafood and other industries. These will be used to help develop guidance in the SSC.

International conventions, guiding principles and codes of practice

- International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions, in particular the [Work in Fishing Convention](#) (No. 188).
- The [Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code](#), a code of labour practice based on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. As many businesses already use it, one member suggested it could be used as basis for the SSC social criteria.
- The [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), which include guiding principles on corporate responsibility.
- The Food and Agriculture Organisation-organised [Vigo Dialogue on decent work](#) seeks to establish a reference framework on decent work in the seafood sector. The third round will take place on 4 October 2016 in Vigo, Spain.
- A partnership between [Sedex](#), the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange and the [Business Social Compliance Initiative](#) (BSCI), an initiative supporting businesses to improve working conditions in their supply chains, will result in a new code of ethics for businesses by end of 2016.

Tools supporting businesses to implement social commitments

- Sedex provides an [online database](#) enabling buyers and suppliers to share and report information on labour standards, ethics, the environment and health and safety. It also offers a risk assessment tool.
- The [Responsible Sourcing Tool](#) provides several tools to help seafood businesses address social responsibility issues, including risk assessment and supply chain mapping. While focused on the United States, the tools should be widely applicable.
- Seafish, Seafood Watch and Sustainable Fisheries Partnership are also working on a [risk assessment and signposting](#) tool, to be released by end of 2016.
- [Stronger Together](#), a multi-stakeholder initiative in the UK, provides good practice toolkits to address modern slavery in industry supply chains, an incident reporting mechanism and a range of resources, from template policies to workplace posters.

Social criteria in third party certification schemes

- Alongside the Responsible Fishing Scheme, which looks at worker conditions at sea, Seafish is developing a Responsible Fishing Port and Harbour Standard, which will include a module on worker welfare at port.
- Aquaculture certification standards, including Global G.A.P. and the Aquaculture Stewardship Council are also looking at social elements. The Marine Stewardship Council is looking to include social criteria into its standards by 2018.

Item 3: Social responsibility commitments

The group discussed which minimum social responsibility commitments can be included in the sourcing code.

Discussion and comments

- Often, concerns around social issues exist where there is a loss of transparency (e.g. mixed products, during transshipments). One member suggested the first step should be mapping the supply chain to focus resources on areas of higher risk.
- Building on this, one member suggested five minimum commitments: 1) mapping the supply chain, 2) doing a risk assessment, 3) taking appropriate remedial action, 4) being transparent, and 5) agreeing a sourcing cut-off point if insufficient progress is made. Additional guidance would refer members to existing tools or initiatives to implement each step, such as risk assessment tools and risk outcomes, checklists, collaborative initiatives (such as [Project Issara](#) or the [Shrimp Sustainable Supply Chain Task Force](#)) or organisations offering incident reporting mechanisms.
- The group discussed if a time commitment is needed to stop sourcing if insufficient progress is observed. One member stated external pressure often compels businesses to stop sourcing from a supplier if non-compliances are not closed in time. Another member stated it is the business' responsibility to have due diligence processes in place, and report serious incidents to relevant authorities.

- Knowing what to do and who to contact is not always clear, as no unique list exists. One member mentioned Stronger Together's reporting mechanism in the UK. The Ethical Trading Initiative can also contact trade unions if an incident is identified.

Agreed:

- The addition of social criteria into the SSC sourcing code aims to complement existing initiatives. The group proposes to include five commitments (as above) in the sourcing code. The guidance will provide detail on relevant tools and resources.

Actions:

- Secretariat to send draft of agreed sections to working group members.
- Working group members to add content to draft document prior to next meeting.

Item 4: AOB

- The group discussed the detail of the next meeting. The secretariat will organise the next meeting in October/November around other planned meetings so that we can meet in person. This will be chaired by a volunteer member of the SSC and organised and recorded by the secretariat. The group will invite experts at Seafish, both to keep them informed of our progress and to seek their expertise on what should be included in the SSC codes and guidance.

Item 5: Hyperlinks for reference

- ILO Work in Fishing Convention no.188:
http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTUMENT_ID:312333
- Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code: <http://www.ethicaltrade.org/eti-base-code>
- United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights:
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf
- FAO Vigo dialogue on decent work (news article): <http://www.fao.org/in-action/globefish/news-events/details-news/en/c/425535/>
- Sedex (homepage): <http://www.sedexglobal.com/>
- Sedex (tools): <http://www.sedexglobal.com/about-sedex/what-we-do/>
- Business Social Compliance Initiative (homepage):
<http://www.globalgroup.net/certification/bsci/>
- Responsible Sourcing Tool: <http://www.responsiblesourcingtool.org/seafoodindustry>
- Seafish presentation on social responsibility risk assessment tool:
http://www.seafish.org/media/1643049/seclg_july2016_risk_tool_and_supply_chain_mapping.pdf

- Stronger Together (homepage): <http://stronger2gether.org/>
- Project Issara (homepage): <http://www.projectissara.org/>
- Shrimp Sustainable Supply Chain Task Force (homepage): <http://www.shrimptaskforce.global/>