**Terms of Reference to deliver report on:**

**Climate (and nature) smart fisheries – UK application**

**Timeframe of contract.**  Feb – April 2021

**Background and context**

In November 2020 Westminster passed the first major piece of fisheries legislation in 40 years – the Fisheries Act 2020.  Of the 8 objectives agreed within this Act, six talk to sustainability.  If the powers provided within the Act are embraced by the governments there is a real opportunity for UK fisheries management to contribute to ocean recovery; delivering healthy oceans which provide a low carbon, low impact source of sustainable protein as part of a UK food strategy; and in turn, support job opportunities in coastal communities and beyond.

WWF, RSPB and MCS are working together to positively influence sustainable fisheries in a post-Brexit UK. A key element of this will be to engage in the development of the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) which is required by the Fisheries Act.  This should set out an agreement between the four fisheries administrations detailing how they intend to achieve the objectives of the Act. Of the eight objectives one in particular – the climate change objective - is a relatively new consideration for fisheries management and we are keen to explore further what this may equate to in practical sustainable management terms as part of a wider ecosystems based approach. The objective requires that “the adverse effects of fish and aquaculture activities in climate change is minimised” and that fish and aquaculture activities adapt to climate change.

Over 120 years of industrial fishing has contributed to the depletion and distortion of the UK’s marine environment, which, combined with the profound effects of climate change, means effective management is needed now more than ever. Marine environments contain large stores of carbon deposited by vegetation and various natural processes evolved over centuries. These ecosystems sequester and store more carbon – often referred to as ‘blue carbon’ – per unit area than terrestrial forests. The ability of these ecosystems to remove carbon dioxide (CO2) from the atmosphere makes them significant net carbon sinks, and they are now being recognised for their role in mitigating climate change. Overfishing has been identified as the biggest non-climate impact on marine biodiversity, but it is also driving climate change by damaging vital marine habitats known to stored carbon, such as seagrass, sea kelp and deep-sea muds, negatively impacting ecosystems and food chains.  Sustainable ecosystems based management of fisheries are vitally needed.

We believe the UK climate change objective could be a world first (but would like clarity of this) and that climate smart fishing  is needed not only to combat climate change but also to recover biodiversity and build resilience of marine ecosystems.  As such we would like to explore what a blueprint for a climate change strategy for UK fisheries management might look like as part of wider ecosystems based fisheries management.  We are keen to seek a contractor to deliver this in the form of a report which can be used as a key advocacy piece for our work over the coming two years and offer practical advice on what action is needed to manage fisheries in a way that will address the nature and climate crises and help bring about ocean recovery.

**The contracted report – what it can deliver**

We would like to commission a consultant(s)  to deliver a report that includes the following elements:

1. **Overview** - Provide a brief context for the report with regard to the objectives of the Fisheries Act and outline other pieces of legislation/policy elsewhere that address climate change in either fisheries or wider marine management.
2. **An outline of available science, including gaps and priorities** - we are aware that the role of our oceans in combating climate is a fast evolving research area and there are inevitably gaps.  It would be good to have an overview of what is available and what key gaps remain.
3. **An outline of a climate change strategy for UK fisheries and marine management -**

Identify the key elements needed to deliver a climate change strategy for UK fisheries.  We believe this will likely have at least three major considerations:

i)What steps the fleet can take to reduce emissions (decarbonising the fleet/promoting lower emission fishing activities) in order to contribute to net zero whilst ensuring activities are compatible with the objectives of the Act;

ii)How fishing can adapt to enable the effective management of key habitats/species that need to be protected for the purposes of protecting blue carbon both in inshore and offshore areas – seagrass/saltmarsh/deep mud habitats/kelp forests/Carbonate reefs;

iii)The carbon benefits of ending overfishing/restoring fish biomass.

Clarification: While the climate change objective also looks at adaptation we would prefer this report to focus more on steps that can be taken to combat climate change but where there are obvious adaptations that can, and should, be made then these should be highlighted.

**iv. Outline case study of best practice –** using one particular fishery/fleet segment/sea area (this will be left to the contractors discretion as to which is the best metric to use) set out what a climate change strategy would look like in operation.

**v. Provide a key set of recommendations** for the UK fisheries administrations to deliver on the Fisheries Act climate change objective. As well as some of the practical elements needed within a climate change strategy it would be useful to have some political context in this section around the opportunities for UK leadership in this area, including the UK government making clear commitments in the run up to COP26 in 2021.

**vi. Interlink with nature and biodiversity requirements** - MCS, RSPB & WWF have a good understanding of what features of management are required to deliver on an ecosystems based approach to fisheries management – see G-UK white [paper](https://greeneruk.org/sites/default/files/download/2018-10/Greener_UK_response_White_Paper_on_sustainable_fisheries.pdf).  We cannot separate climate change considerations as we need fisheries management to help combat climate change, *and* recover biodiversity to build resilience and this will be our narrative.  We would not envisage the contractor spend time researching the biodiversity component of policy application but would welcome this being brought in as context for overall management – which we can assist with.

**Target audience:**  The target audience for the report is broad but will include policy makers (government agencies, regulatory bodies); regional fisheries organisations, fisheries supply chain representatives; and other stakeholders including, but not limited to research organisations, NGOs, and IGOs.  As such, the report should use professional and where necessary technical language with appropriate numbered citations and references, while still being accessible to readers without a technical background.

If possible it would be useful to have an easy to digest summary of what a climate change strategy would entail alongside a brief and compelling argument on its importance which could be used for advocacy with the general public.  This could be in the form of an infographic.

The Report should be a maximum of 50 pages in length, 1.5 space, 12 point Aerial font.

**Method of work:**

* Desk based reviews of published literature, as well as grey literature and reports available on-line or through stakeholders (we will provide some of these).

**Deliverables:**

* Production of a report in pdf and word format for WWF/MCS/RSPB to use for both internal and external communication, covering the above objectives with strong executive summary (which may be in form of, or accompanied by an infographic) that includes conclusions and recommendations.  The report will be used to guide WWF/MCS/RSPB in policy development and recommendations for advocacy around practical elements of a climate change strategy for sustainable ecosystems based UK fisheries and marine management. It may also be used to generate public awareness for the importance of this as a key area for governments leadership.

**Timeline:**

Tender Response Deadline: Feb 19th

Evaluation completed: w/c Feb 22th

Contract signed and work commences: w/c March 1st

First draft report delivered: 29th March

Final report due: April 19th

**Candidate profile**

The  consultant should demonstrate the following skills and competencies:

* Familiarity with the role of blue carbon in combating climate change, including near shore (saltmarsh, seagrass) and further offshore (muddy sediments) habitats as well as the role of marine species (maerl, fish, bivalves etc);
* Familiarity with net zero concept, marine vessel emissions, and the potential for innovation around retrofitting or future proofing marine vessel emissions;
* Understanding of the rudimentary elements of fisheries management;
* Strong writing skills in English (please provide examples of past work with your application); An ability to read or assimilate Spanish or French language reports would be an additional bonus;
* Ability to work independently, network with necessary stakeholders, and meet targets and milestones.

**Available budget:**  in region of £10-15K

To express interest in this opportunity, applications should be submitted to include the following elements:

* A letter (maximum 2 pages A4) expressing interest and demonstrating the relevant skills and experience;
* A short method statement (maximum 2 pages A4) detailing the approach and method that shall be used to deliver the Terms of Reference;
* A table indicating how the available budget would be allocated with respect to different milestones and tasks associated with the report;
* An up-to-date CV (or similar) for individuals to be involved in delivery;
* A maximum of 3 examples of past work, demonstrating relevant skills.

Please send applications by email to Helen McLachlan (Fisheries Programme Manager)  hmclachlan@wwf.org.uk by February 19th.

**February 2021**