

INVITATION TO TENDER

Supporting the commercial uptake of selective fishing gear

Deadline for submission: 5 p.m. on Wednesday 5th March 2025

February 2025

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1.0 Background

1.1 Seafish

Seafish supports the UK seafood sector to help it thrive. We are a non-departmental public body set up by the Fisheries Act 1981 and sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra.) Our unique non-competitive role means we work in partnership with stakeholders across the UK seafood supply chain from catch (and aquaculture farming) to plate. We tackle everything from research to campaigns and insights to training, helping industry to overcome challenges and take hold of opportunities. For more information on our current 2023-28 Corporate Plan please visit: [our website](#).

1.2 Gear Forum

The Gear Forum, convened by Seafish, focuses on advancing gear innovations to help drive economic, social and environmental sustainability in capture fisheries. The Forum brings together fishing associations and producer organisations, gear technologists, researchers, and UK-wide governments / regulators.

2.0 Project

2.1 Overview

Consumers have increasing expectations that their seafood is responsibly sourced and from sustainable fisheries. Gear selectivity, aimed at minimising environmental impacts and improving economic efficiency, is a key issue for both the UK fishing fleet and wider seafood supply chain.

Despite a tradition of selective gear innovation, industry faces ongoing challenges in their commercialisation of successful gear trials into everyday fishing operations. There are several factors that contribute to the low rate of adoption / uptake of new selective gear designs by the commercial fishing sector: cost, practicality in use and potential reductions in catch rates of target species can all disincentivise fishermen from making changes.

A further factor identified by the Gear Forum is the process to secure regulatory approval to commercially use a modified / new gear innovation once a gear trial has successfully concluded. This issue is often cited by the catching sector as a 'block' on its ability to deliver environmental and efficiency improvements, although there is currently an absence of tangible examples to substantiate this, and to provide clarity and build shared understanding on the primary causes.

The focus of this project is to assess the validity of the outlined issues from a regulatory perspective, through a review of existing processes and their successful application, and to determine how best to support the process, to deliver the most practical and sustainable outcomes for the fishing sector, seafood supply chain and wider society.

The intended use of the project findings are to support better adoption and uptake of modified and new selective fishing gear designs. It is envisaged that such a framework would have a variety of benefits to regulators, fishers, the seafood industry and wider society; including:

- instilling a ‘can do’ industry culture where selective gears are concerned;
- a more streamlined process that delivers efficiencies and transparency, potentially across jurisdictions;
- building greater confidence to innovate; and
- help to incentivise fishers to trial and commercially use modified / new selective gears.

2.2 Workshops

Two sector workshops will be convened with a focus on gleaning key insights to help build open and shared understanding and consensus on the main challenge(s), and to explore and test potential solutions. The workshops will ideally be in-person, but online events will also be considered, with a focus on engagement with the catching sector, regulators and wider seafood supply chain.

2.3 Project deliverables

The key audience for this project’s outputs are the UK catching sector, fishing gear / net makers, regulators and wider seafood supply chain. There are three main deliverables:

1. **Identify the problem:** from a regulatory perspective, develop a clear shared understanding of the challenges in advancing beyond successful selective gear trials to commercial fishing opportunities. Whilst these are to be considered methodically – i.e. stepwise through the gear authorisation process via tangible examples – the focus will be on identifying the challenges, rather than providing a detailed critique of (technical) regulations.

Existing regulatory processes will be considered and an evaluation provided on how these are working at the moment; drawing on clear examples of successful gear deployment and to assess whether improvements need to be recommended. A key focus of this research will be to understand what approaches exist and how these differ across jurisdictions – including the countries of the UK or elsewhere – and whether / where scope exists for a one-size ‘fits all’ approach.

2. **Outline roadmap:** it is anticipated that there will be a need for some system improvements. An outline roadmap will be produced to bring clarity to what needs to be achieved and to agree the steps to be taken to deliver the necessary system fixes. These improvements may not be regulatory in nature and could be more process enhancements, but the roadmap will provide a single framework. Oversight will be provided via a project review group including members of the Gear Forum. It is recognised that this roadmap will require subsequent refinement and agreement from key stakeholders, and which will be outside the scope of this project.
3. **Outline plan:** necessary to translate the roadmap into a deliverable work programme and to identify key responsibilities.

3.0 Seafish project resourcing

We will provide support to the successful contractor as follows:

- A project manager also serving as the nominated day-to-day contact point on the project.
- Convene a ‘task and finish’ sub-group of the Gear Forum to provide the necessary project oversight and attend the project inception meeting.
- Proposed invitees for both fishers / gear technologists involved in selective gear trials, as well as UK regulatory and enforcement officers with direct responsibility for authorising selective gears.
- Representation at the face-to-face workshops.

4.0 Tender and Contract

4.1 Contractor expertise

Suitable contractors must be able to demonstrate that they are able to deliver all project requirements.

4.2 Outputs

The required deliverables for the project are:

- Stage 1 – two workshops (ideally held in-person at a city location close to mainline rail, but online events will also be considered.)
- Stage 2 – a final project report, including the roadmap and action plan.

4.3 Costs

Indicative project budget:

- c.£10k (incl. VAT) for stage 1
- c.£30k (incl. VAT) for stage 2
- c.£40k (incl. VAT) for both stages.

Tenders should be submitted covering all costs associated with adequately delivering the required project outputs for both stages 1 and 2. Each stage of the work should be costed separately together with the total project costs provided in GBP and inclusive of VAT.

Applicants will not be entitled to claim from Seafish any costs or expenses incurred in preparing their tender document, irrespective of whether or not it is successful.

4.4 Responsibilities

The contractor will be responsible for completing the project and producing the required deliverables within the agreed deadlines, quality and costs.

4.5 Payment schedule

In relation to the project timelines given in Section 4.7, one payment will be made as follows:

Payment schedule	Percentage of contract value
First and final payment following successful project delivery (Stage 1 and 2) - 2 nd June 2025.	100%

4.6 Methodology

Contractors are required to set out their methodology, providing detail of the approach to be taken, together with timelines for the two project stages, expertise and project management. See Appendix 1 and 2 for further information.

4.7 Project timelines

The project timetable is as follows:

Actions	Date
Publication of Invitation to tender	20 th February 2025
<u>Closing date for receipt of tender submissions*</u>	<u>5 p.m. on 5th March 2025</u>
Notification to successful applicant of intent to award contract	7 th March 2025
Proposed project start date (and inception meeting)	10 th March 2025
Phase 1: workshops	By 16 th April 2025
Phase 2: report (incl. roadmap and outline plan)	30 th May 2025

** Submissions received after this time will not be accepted*

4.8 Awarding criteria

All submissions will be assessed for both their value-for-money and quality. The criteria used together with weightings for assessing submitted tenders are included in Appendix 2.

4.9 Contract and project management

The project will be managed within Seafish's standard project management process to ensure successful project delivery. An inception meeting will be held between Seafish and the contractor. Seafish's nominated project manager will be the day-to-day contact point.

4.10 Tender length

Tender submissions should not exceed 12-sides of A4 excluding the cover and content pages. Whilst details of project team members are to be included, these should be restricted to skills and capability statements.

4.11 Seafish submission deadline

Deadline for receipt of tender submissions is 5 p.m. on Wednesday 5th March 2025.

Appendix 1: Details to be included in submitted tenders

As a minimum, tenderers are required to submit the following:

1. **Contact details:**
 - a. Name of the lead partner(s)
 - b. Main point of contact, together with email and telephone number
 - c. Company registration number and registered address
 - d. VAT number
2. **Methodology:** explain how the work will be undertaken, including the key activities.
3. **Capability statement:** evidence capabilities and track records in this area, including examples of relevant work successfully completed (with dates) relating to policy and / or regulation, as these relate to commercial fishing.
4. **Project team:** overview of the project team who will undertake the work, including relevant skills and expertise to successfully deliver the project. Applicants are encouraged to include an outline project organogram where appropriate.
5. **Project management:** an overview of the approach to be adopted, together with a Gantt chart indicating milestones and any activity dependencies.
6. **Project risks and risk management:** these should cover the key project risks (e.g. financial, resourcing etc.) that could critically impact on the work and its delivery, and your proposed mitigation steps to prevent these happening, or help to effectively manage them in the event that they do occur.
7. **Costings (in GBP):**
 - a. Fees – report production and workshop (costed separately)
 - b. Project management
 - c. Others (e.g. disbursements)
 - d. Total price (inclusive of VAT)
 - e. VAT where applicable
 - f. Day rate costing (inclusive of VAT) in the event additional post-contract support is required by Seafish.
8. **Disclaimer:** detail any projects previously undertaken for Seafish, including point of contact, or any family members currently employed by Seafish, or employed over the last five-years.

Appendix 2: Awarding criteria

All tenders will be assessed for both their value-for-money and quality. In the interest of ascertaining the highest level of transparency, fairness and competition, Seafish will use the following evaluation matrix to score each submission:

Selection and Awarding Criteria	Weighting (%)
Understanding of the project requirements, as well as the steps to be taken to review the work to ensure alignment with Seafish's objectives.	20
Interpretation of the project brief demonstrating value for money.	35
Relevant experience and expertise in the fields of policy and regulatory evaluation; in particular as these relate to the UK seafood sector.	25
Staff availability and contingency plans should key team members become unavailable during the project.	20