

Strategy for Seafood: Equality Impact Assessment

October 2022

Equality Impact Assessment – Results

Title of policy

[Strategy for Seafood](#)

Summary of aims and desired outcomes of policy

The Strategy for Seafood (the Strategy) affirms the importance of the seafood sector and sets out how we are supporting industry to contribute to achieving our Blue Economy aspirations.

Directorate: Division

Marine Scotland: Seafood Trade, Aquaculture and Recreational Fisheries

Executive Summary

The seafood industry is a central element of our [Blue Economy Vision](#), which sets an ambition for Scotland to be a global leader in providing healthy, high-quality and sustainably produced and harvested seafood for consumption at home and abroad. The vision and outcomes for the [Strategy for Seafood](#) have been adapted from this in the Blue Economy Vision to highlight and further define the contribution of the seafood sector.

The Strategy sets out how we are supporting industry to contribute to achieving our Blue Economy aspirations, drawing together and bringing cohesion to the wide range of ongoing and planned Scottish Government activities that supports this, and for which the relevant impact assessments have been completed as required. The Strategy also makes some high level recommendations that are intended as prompts for potential future exploration. We cannot therefore determine the impact of any future activities at this stage.

It is our intention for these recommendations to be reviewed with the sector and any specific options identified for implementation. As part of the development of these recommendations we would ensure the potential impacts on people with protected characteristics were fully considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

Background

The [Blue Economy Vision](#), which we published on 31 March 2022, recognises that Scotland's seas and waters have an integral role to play in contributing to the nation's future prosperity, especially in remote coastal, rural and island communities, and that a healthy marine environment is critical to supporting this ambition.

The seafood industry is a central element of this vision, which sets an ambition for Scotland to be a global leader in providing healthy, high-quality and sustainably produced and harvested seafood for consumption at home and abroad.

Our [Strategy for Seafood](#) affirms the importance of the seafood sector and sets out how we are supporting industry to contribute to achieving our Blue Economy aspirations.

The Blue Economy Vision identified six outcomes across social, environmental and economic dimensions to deliver our aspirations for the sustainable management and shared stewardship of Scotland's seas and coasts to 2045. The seafood sector makes an important contribution right across these outcomes – environmental, social and economic – and one specifically relates to the sustainable production of seafood.

We therefore adapted the Strategy for Seafood vision and outcomes from those in the Blue Economy Vision to highlight and further define this contribution. This also demonstrates how the sector can contribute to the National Outcomes set out in our National Performance Framework, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In developing this strategy the Scottish Government is mindful of the three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) – eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. In any review and implementation of the recommendations in the Strategy, where we identify any negative impacts we would seek to mitigate or eliminate them. We are also mindful the equality duty is not just about negating or mitigating negative impacts, as we also have a positive duty to promote equality. We would seek to do this through continued consultation and co-development of any activity we take forward.

Strategy for Seafood Vision

Scottish seafood is renowned both at home and internationally for its quality and sustainability and is enabled by an innovative and productive sector

Strategy for Seafood Strategic Outcomes

Scotland is recognised for a seafood sector that is:

1. entrepreneurial, domestically and internationally competitive, with a secure supply chain.
2. providing healthy, quality, sustainably harvested and farmed seafood and ensuring a balanced natural capital asset approach.
3. adapting to, and mitigating the impacts of, climate change, lowering greenhouse gas emissions in seafood production and supporting our Net Zero commitments.
4. contributing to thriving, resilient and healthy coastal and island communities.

The Strategy for Seafood fulfils our [2021 Programme for Government \(PfG\)](#) commitment to "...publish a strategy for seafood in 2022 with actions to revitalise the sector consistent with a sustainable and natural capital approach, to ensure remote and rural communities benefit from activity to support growth."

Scope

The strategy covers the whole of the seafood supply chain across Scotland, from catching and production to consumption. In 2019 (the most recent figures available), there were an estimated 14,092 people directly employed in the seafood sector, many in remote coastal and island communities. ([Scotland's Marine Economic Statistics, 2019](#))

The sector is important for particular parts of the population:

- The work-force of the seafood industries and local communities who rely on them.
- The general public (in Scotland, the UK and more widely) who are consumers of seafood products caught and processed in Scotland.
- The general public of Scotland, especially coastal communities and users of the coast, in the UK and more widely who are affected by climate change, and will benefit from measures to improve the environmental sustainability of the seafood industry.

In preparing the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) we considered the different groups that may be affected. We drew on existing evidence to determine what we know already about the seafood sector. For instance, in terms of the gender disparity in certain parts of the sector, a strong reliance on workers from outside of the UK, and the need to ensure the continued development of fair work practices.

Key findings

Scottish marine sectors employed 75,490 people in 2019, contributing 2.8% of the total Scottish employment, contributing 2.8% of total Scottish employment. ([Scotland's Marine Economic Statistics, 2019](#) and [Scottish Annual Business Statistics 2019](#))

The latest [Scottish Annual Population Survey \(APS\) for 2021](#) shows that employees in the combined 'agriculture, forestry, and fishing' sector were less likely to be a woman, minority ethnic, or disabled, but more likely to be aged 50+, self-employed, have a permanent contract, or earn a real living wage (in 2020) compared to employees in Scotland as a whole. Employees in marine sectors (excluding tourism) were also more likely to be male, with nearly 80% of those employed (aged 16 or over) being male.

This gender disparity is especially prevalent in fisheries, with only 0.3% of Scottish fishers being female, and 1% of fishers in the UK being female. ([Employment in the UK Fishing Fleet 2021 survey by Seafish](#))

We know that women in Scottish fisheries make significant contributions to coastal communities and the fishing industry. Women are currently mostly employed in onshore roles, such as administration and seafood processing, and are often also responsible for (unpaid) domestic work and childcare. They are also underrepresented in offshore and senior leadership positions in fisheries. Fisheries' reputation as being a male-dominated sector, along with reports of sexist attitudes,

behaviour, and language, can discourage women from entry. These issues need to be addressed by creating and promoting a culture of equality – and an industry that is safe, fair, and accessible to women and people from other underrepresented categories. ([Women in Scottish Fisheries: Literature Review, June 2022](#))

The Strategy references two areas designed to address this underrepresentation – Scottish Government support for the [Women in Scottish Aquaculture](#) network and the intent of the [Fisheries Management Strategy](#) to better understand the barriers facing women who operate and wish to progress in the fishing industry.

Measures such as these that address sexism and occupational segregation would be expected to positively affect women, minority ethnic people and disabled people by helping to advance equality of opportunity. These may also have a positive effect in fostering good relations between people, as they should provide the opportunity to understand more about the negative effects of sexism and occupational segregation.

Recommendations and conclusion

The Strategy sets out how we are supporting industry to contribute to achieving our Blue Economy aspirations, drawing together and bringing cohesion to the wide range of ongoing and planned Scottish Government activities that supports this. These activities will be subject to equality impact assessments within their respective policy areas, while consideration of these issues would also be a requirement of any Scottish Government funding to any external organisation in future.

The high level recommendations suggested in the Strategy are intended as prompts for potential future exploration. It is our intention for these recommendations to be reviewed with the sector and any specific options identified for implementation. As part of the development of these recommendations we would ensure the potential impacts on people with protected characteristics were fully considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

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