



SCOTTISH
ASSOCIATION
for MARINE
SCIENCE

21st May 2008

Dear,

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN NEW RESEARCH.

The Effectiveness of Eco-labelling and Certification in improving the Sustainability of Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources.
'EECSAF'

A project funded by the Economic Social Research Council

The Marine and Coastal Policy Unit, based at The Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) Oban, Scotland, is undertaking this ESRC funded project, to examine the issues surrounding the certification and eco-labelling of the fisheries and aquaculture industries.

This project proposes the following strategic questions:

Are certification and eco-labelling systems effective in addressing the sustainability of fishery and aquaculture derived seafood resources? Do the benefits and advantages outweigh the disadvantages and obstacles?

Our aim is to examine the issues surrounding eco-labelling at a time when labelling and certification are becoming tools with a significant investment of resources and public interest, and 'competition' is emerging between fishery and farming sectors in capturing the 'sustainable' or 'organic' market.

The aim of eco-labels and certification schemes is to promote well managed operations directly to consumers who, in theory, are increasingly demanding products from sustainable sources. The growth of eco-labels is dominant in the fisheries sector, however, in recent years, the aquaculture sector has been experimenting with eco-

labelling and moving towards 'organic' as a means of securing access and increasing competitiveness in the market.

This proposal draws on methodology from the fields of environmental policy and social science. The project uses a case study approach to the analysis of certification and eco-labelling, based on previous research on indicator systems and marine resources by the Project Leader, Dr Tavis Potts.

With your organisations input, we are asking two key questions at this stage of the research:

1. How are the primary fishery and aquaculture certification systems *designed* in order to differentiate 'sustainable' or 'organic' products from other like products in the market? What are the instruments used in this process?
2. What processes are in place for the certification body to build legitimacy and credibility? How is the certification process governed to ensure quality and effectiveness?

Further aspects of the research are investigating the effectiveness of labels in the market with consumers and retailers (via a survey), and the outcomes on producers who have gone through the certification process.

Part of our method is to undertake a series of case studies on key eco-labelling and certification schemes that focus on the fisheries and aquaculture industry sectors. We have identified your organisation, "Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation", as one of the main actors and as such we would like to invite your organisation to take part in this project. Dr Tavis Potts has been in contact with Neil Auchterlonie previously and received a positive response. As a case study subject, members of your organisation will be interviewed by the Project Leader, Dr Tavis Potts, at a mutually agreeable time and venue, for no longer than 1.5 to 2 hours. The interview will be open and semi-structured and is our primary method of data collection. We hope to collect information relating to the development and management of the label, verification and accreditation procedures, organisational governance, financial models, marketing, transparency and stakeholder engagement. The interview questions will be circulated prior to interview.

We would very much appreciate it if you could identify which staff members within SSPO would be available to answer our questions.

As a case study subject all correspondence and replies will be treated in the utmost confidence. SAMS has a strict confidentiality and ethical policy which this project will uphold.

The research team comprises of Project Leader, Dr Tavis Potts and Research Assistant, Ms Averil Wilson.

Dr Tavis Potts is a Lecturer in Marine Policy and Coastal Management at the Scottish Association for Marine Science. Dr Potts has research, supervision and teaching experience and an active research agenda in the field of international environmental

and marine policy, policy instruments focusing on market-based approaches, and green business and innovation.

Ms Averil Wilson is a Research Assistant in Marine and Coastal Policy at the Scottish Association for Marine Science. Ms Wilson has research experience in the field of Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture and Sustainable Development.

Each member of the research team is committed to the principles that guide reputable research. All research will be undertaken with care and respect for the respondent's welfare and the quality and validity of the research report/result. All information on individual firms will be treated in strictest confidence, and no individuals or individual firms will be identified in the research result. We will ask you for your contact details if you would like to receive a copy of the report. **You are free to withdraw at any time without repercussions and you may request that your contributions be removed from the project. You are free to indicate that all information provided is to be treated as 'commercial-in-confidence' and particular results of the interviews will only be quoted with the permission of the interviewees.**

If you would like further details of this study please do not hesitate to contact us using any of the methods detailed below.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tavis Potts', written over a set of horizontal lines.

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