

Versions Issued

| Version | Date | Description of Amendment | Approved by: |
|---------|------------------|--|--|
| 1.0 | October 2022 | First version | D. Bunt, Director of Conservation Operations |
| 2.0 | 23 June 2023 | Substantial revision to align with ISEAL Assurance Code of Best Practice | SEG Board |
| 2.1 | 20 July 2023 | Updates following stakeholder consultation | A. Kerr, Chair of Board |
| 2.2 | 16 November 2023 | Clause 4.8 added, amends to 4.9 | SEG Board |
| 2.3 | 1 December 2023 | Minor amendments following further checks and feedback | A. Kerr, Chair of Board |

This document is the property of the Sustainable Eel Group. It is effective from the date above.

1 Purpose and scope

- 1.1 This describes the requirements for entities seeking group certification to the SEG Standard.
- 1.2 It is to be verified by CABs during assessments of groups.
- 1.3 The only 'groups' in the SEG Standard System are fisheries.
- 1.4 It is a component of the [202 SEG Assurance System](#).

2 Definitions

- 2.1 A fishery is a collection of fishers who fish in a defined area. Not all fishers in a fishery are required to join the group in order for certification to proceed, but it shall only apply to those fishers who have applied to be part of the certified fishery and have agreed to its terms.
- 2.2 The entity applying for group certification is the organisation which oversees the group.
- 2.3 The requirements for the client, as referred to in the SEG Standard and Assurance System, may be fulfilled by either entity applying for certification or by each of the individual fishers.

3 Rationale

- 3.1 The reasons for creating requirements for group certification are:
 - a. efficiencies in having one entity oversee and provide guidance to fishers on conformance;
 - b. providing greater likelihood in conformance to the standard by groups;
 - c. decreasing the unit cost of certification; and
 - d. increasing fishers' access to certification.

4 Group requirements and assurance

- 4.1 The entity (organisation applying for certification) applying for certification shall be **legally registered or officially recognised**.

Guidance: Entities which could be considered as the applicant include organisations such as traders or local fishery co-operatives and associations.

- 4.2 The entity applying for certification shall **define the area covered by the certification**.
- 4.3. The entity applying for certification shall have a **legally binding agreement** with each of the fishers in the group. In France this is known as an '*Attestation d'Honneur*'. The agreement requires that the fisher agrees at least to:
- Comply with Components 1 and 2 of the SEG Standard;
 - be subject to a Group Internal Procedure implemented by the entity applying for certification;
 - be subject to external third-party audits conducted by a SEG approved CAB;
 - take measures, as directed by the entity, to address non-conformances identified in internal assessments and/or non-conformances identified by the CAB;
 - provide documentation relevant to conformance to the SEG Standard, as requested; and
 - agree to be bound by the [105 SEG Standard Terms and Conditions](#).
- 4.4 The entity applying for certification shall develop and effectively implement a **Group Internal Procedure** to include:
- A process for **evaluating new fishers** before they join the group to ensure they do not have any existing major non-conformities with the SEG Standard;
 - Conducting internal assessments** of the ongoing conformance of the fishers according to the fishery rules and Components 1 and 2 of the SEG Standard and apply sanctions as outlined in 4.5 below;
 - Ensuring the fishers **fish within the area defined** in 4.2;
 - Requirements for fishers to make themselves **available for an audit** or provide valid proof of unavailability;
 - Ensuring that all **fishers come into conformance** with any non-conformances identified by the SEG CAB during an external audit;
 - Keeping records**;
 - Providing all** fishers a copy of the SEG certificate and the [105 SEG Standard Terms and Conditions](#).
 - A process for **removing members** from the group for non conformances (see also 4.5 below) or not being available for an audit (see 4.4 d above); and
 - A process for members to **return to the group**, if permitted, after being removed, according to the timescales in 4.5 a. – c. below.
- 4.5 The Procedure shall Include the following **sanctions for non-conformances**:
- Where a fisher has a minor non-conformance, they shall be given 1 month for correction, after which the fisher shall be removed from the SEG certified list until correction.
 - Where a fisher has a major non-conformance, they shall be removed from the SEG certified list immediately, until it is corrected.
 - Where a fisher has three minor non-conformances in the same season, they shall be removed from the SEG certified list for the remainder of the season.
 - Where a fisher has three major non-conformances in the same season, they shall be excluded from the SEG certified list for remainder of the fishing season and the following season.
 - Where 25% - 50% of fishers are non-compliant (minor or major) at any one time, the organisation applying for certification shall report itself to the CAB for consideration for a minor non-compliance and a possible temporary suspension from certification whilst a Corrective Action Report (CAR) is issued by the CAB and resolved. When resolved to the 0 – 25% level, the CAR will be regarded as resolved and the certificate re-instated.
 - Where more than 50% of the fishers are non-compliant (minor or major) at any one time, the organisation applying for certification shall report itself to the CAB for withdrawal from SEG

certification until the issues are resolved to the satisfaction of the CAB. When resolved to the 0 – 25% or 25 – 50% levels, the outcomes at e. above shall apply.

For Guidance on major and minor non-conformances, see:

- [202 SEG Assurance System](#) and
- [103a SEG Standard V7.0 Component Guidance](#).