



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Infrastructure  
and Projects  
Authority

To: Sarah Adcock, Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the UK Seafood Fund

From: Tamara Finkelstein, Permanent Secretary of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Nick Smallwood, Chief Executive Officer of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority

19 May 2022

Dear Sarah,

## **Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for UK Seafood Fund**

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the UK Seafood Fund with effect from 17 January 2022. This letter sets out your responsibilities and the support you can expect from your department and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

As SRO, you are directly accountable to the Director for Marine and Fisheries and sponsor for this project, under the oversight of the Permanent Secretary as accounting officer for Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Minister of State Victoria Prentis and Secretary of State George Eustice.

Your project forms part of the Defra portfolio, under the oversight of the chair of the Defra Executive Committee and is included in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

You have personal responsibility for the delivery of UK Seafood Fund and will be held accountable for the delivery of its objectives, with policy intent and outcomes expected.

This encompasses securing and protecting its vision, ensuring that it is governed responsibly, reported on honestly, escalated appropriately and for influencing the context, culture, and operating environment of the UK Seafood Fund.

You are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing viability of the project and recommending its pause or termination if appropriate. Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these to Executive Committee

You remain accountable to ministers, as set out in the Civil Service Code, and should deliver the project in accordance with the objectives and policy intent as set by ministers.

In addition to your internal accountabilities, SROs for GMPP projects and programmes are personally accountable to parliamentary select committees.

This means that, from the date of this letter, you will be held personally accountable to and could be called by select committees to account for and explain the decisions and actions you have taken to deliver the UK Seafood Fund.

It is important to be clear that your accountability relates only to implementation, within the agreed terms in this letter, it will remain for the minister to account for the relevant policy decisions and development.

More information on this is set out in [Giving Evidence to Select Committees - guidance for Civil Servants](#), sometimes known as the Osmotherly rules. Information on the roles and responsibilities of the SRO are detailed in the Infrastructure and Project Authority's guidance on [the role of the senior responsible owner](#).

You should also make yourself familiar with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#), the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework, and the guidance and requirements for project delivery as set by Defra Portfolio Directorate.

## **Time commitment and tenure**

This role will require at least 50% of your time to enable effective delivery of the role and execute your responsibilities in full.

You are required to undertake this role until achievement of project close, planned for March 2024. Progress towards this will be reflected in your personal objectives.

Any changes to the agreed time commitment or tenure of the role, as set out above, will require both departmental and Infrastructure and Projects Authority consent.

## **Objectives and performance criteria**

Any proposed changes to scope which impacts on the policy intent or the realisation of benefits must be authorised by the Ocean Sustainability Portfolio Board and may be subject to further levels of approval.

The vision of the project is for the UK to be a leading, productive, resilient and sustainable fishing nation, with the best infrastructure at ports and technology on board, at the forefront of championing sustainability and with a thriving workforce and its objectives are to:

- a. Increase the sector's ability to sustainably catch, land, process and sell more fish as the UK's quota increases over the next five years.
- b. Fund scientific partnerships that develop current technology, gear and stock assessments thereby improving the transition to sustainable stocks and a healthier marine environment.
- c. Fund skills and training that improves the sustainability of the workforce by supporting new entrants to the sector and upskilling the current workforce to better manage their businesses and work more collaboratively with scientists and policy makers based on the same mutual understanding.
- d. Level up coastal communities by rejuvenating and modernising ports and harbours to improve prosperity, create jobs and improve social and environmental welfare

Your personal objectives and performance criteria which relate to the project are to support:

- the long term future and sustainability of the UK fisheries and seafood sector;
- reform and modernisation of the sectors infrastructure to level up and bring economic growth to coastal communities;
- the use of the best science, research and technology in fisheries management;
- new entrants to the industry and upskill the existing workforce;
- an environmentally sustainable fishing industry that gives most value for money and reflects the long term needs of the sector;

- the implementation of domestic fisheries reform measures which will deliver Brexit benefits and move the UK away from the EU's Common Fisheries Policy;
- Defra to make a meaningful contribution to the Government's ambition on net zero;

You are expected to run your project in accordance with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#), the other [Functional Standards](#) as applicable to this project and the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework.

## Extent and limit of accountability

### Finance and Controls

HM Treasury spending controls will apply on the basis set out within the department's delegated authority letter. Where the project exceeds the delegated authority set by HM Treasury, the Treasury Approval Point process will apply, and the details of each approval process must be agreed with your HM Treasury spending team. You should consult your departments finance colleagues on how to go about this.

You should note that where expenditure is considered novel, contentious, repercussive, or likely to result in costs to other parts of the public sector, HM Treasury approval will be required, regardless of whether the project expenditure exceeds the delegated authority set by HM Treasury.

If in doubt about whether approval is required you should, in the first instance, consult departmental finance colleagues before raising with the relevant HM Treasury spending team.

The overall estimated budget, resourcing requirements, and tolerances for your project will be agreed as part of the approval process. You will be expected to deliver within these tolerances and report quarterly on these as part of GMPP reporting.

You should operate at all times within the rules set out in [Managing Public Money](#). In addition, you must be mindful of, and act in line with, the specific HM Treasury delegated limits and Cabinet Office controls relevant to UK Seafood Fund. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).

### Delegated authority

You are authorised to:

- approve expenditure of up to £100 million in pound sterling, using the appropriate approval channels where this amount exceeds the expenditure limit of £3 million for SCS1 grade.
- agree project rescheduling within three months of agreed milestones, but rescheduling beyond that must be agreed with the Ocean Sustainability Portfolio Board
- recommend to Director for Marine & Fisheries and the Ocean Sustainability Portfolio Board the need to either pause or terminate the project where necessary and in a timely manner

These authority limits are subject to change and other conditions or tolerances may be set as part of the business case approval and ongoing monitoring processes which you should then operate within.

Where issues arise, which take you outside of these authority limits which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these issues to the Permanent Secretary and the Ocean Sustainability Portfolio Board.

## Appointments

You should engage a full-time project director or manager to support you in the management of this project and make other appointments as required for the control and delivery of your project within your delegated authority.

## Governance and assurance

You should pay attention to ensuring effective governance for your project, including the establishment of a project or project board with appropriate membership and clear terms of reference.

As primary owner, you must ensure that the project secures business case approval from Defra Investment Committee, Executive Committee and HM Treasury (HMT). You should also ensure that the project remains aligned to the strategic outcomes, costs, timescales, and benefits in line with the approved business case as well as monitoring the context within which the project is being delivered to ensure it remains valid.

Where a change impacts the scope, costs, benefits, or planned delivery milestones agreed as part of an agreed business case, you are responsible for following the agreed change request approval process and setting a new, approved, business case baseline.

You should ensure that an accounting officer assessment is completed alongside the approval of the outline business case and that this is published on GOV.UK as part of the government's transparency requirements on major projects.

You are responsible for bringing to the attention of the accounting officer any material changes in the project which could require a new accounting officer assessment to be completed and published. [Guidance on completing accounting officer assessments](#) for major projects is available from HM Treasury.

Although you are directly accountable for this project, you are also expected to support delivery of the department's overall strategic objectives.

This means that you are expected to work collaboratively with other SROs and project directors in adjacent projects and programmes and with the Defra portfolio management office and portfolio director to manage dependencies, resources, schedules, and funding to support delivery of the overall change the department needs to achieve its strategic objectives.

You should ensure that appropriate and proportionate assurance is in place and agree on the level and frequency of assurance reviews through the maintenance of an integrated assurance and approvals plan. You should develop this plan and its maintenance in collaboration with the departmental assurance coordinator and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

## Project or programme status, reporting and transparency requirements

The project status at the date of your appointment is reflected in the most recent quarterly return on the project to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and is the agreed position as you assume formal ownership of the project.

You are responsible for ensuring the honest and timely reporting on the position of the project to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority while it remains on the GMPP and for providing reports and information to the Defra portfolio management office as required. Information on the project will be published annually by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

You are responsible for publishing on GOV.UK a summary of the accounting office assessment completed in line with the approval of the Outline Business Case and summaries of any subsequent assessments should they be required.

## Development and support

As SRO of a GMPP project, you are required to complete the Major Projects Leadership Academy, and you have agreed to enrol on a cohort in the near future. The Head of Profession in Defra can provide further information on the application process.

To widen experience and understanding of the role, SROs are also expected to become accredited assurance reviewers and to lead or participate in such reviews for other government departments, the wider public sector, and other areas of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as appropriate.

Becoming an assurance reviewer and completing a review will form part of your time at the Major Projects Leadership Academy. To maintain your accreditation, you will be required to participate in a review at least once every 12 months.

The department will assist you in securing the necessary resources to support the project, and will set clear guidance, requirements and standards, which align to the [Government Functional Standard on Project Delivery](#), to enable good governance and effective delivery.

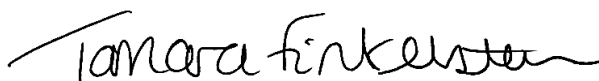
You will be part of the department's cohort of major project leaders who will be expected to support each other, share good practice and lessons learned and to collectively develop solutions. You should liaise with the department's head of profession for project delivery to discuss the maintenance and development of your delivery and leadership skills.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority will be available to you for support, advice, and assurance throughout the project's time on the GMPP.

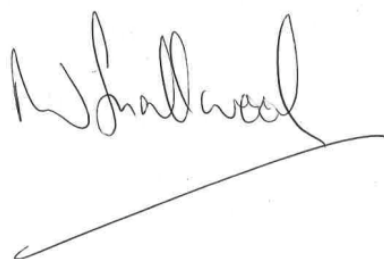
Following approval of the business case and entry onto the Defra GMPP portfolio, the Defra portfolio office will provide ongoing oversight and support and will take steps to help resolve and escalate risks, issues or constraints that are acting as a blocker to successful delivery.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your role as SRO.

Yours sincerely,



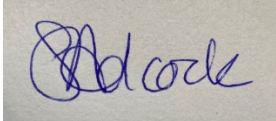
Tamara Finkelstein  
Permanent Secretary,



Nick Smallwood  
Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure and  
Projects Authority

### **Confirmation of acceptance of appointment**

I confirm that I accept the appointment of Senior Responsible Owner for the project, including my personal accountability for implementation, as set out in the letter above.



Sarah Adcock

19 May 2022