

## Guidance supporting UK BFT Commercial applications.

The following document outlines the information that is being sought from the questions set out within the 2026 BFT Commercial application forms.

### Q1 What steps will you take to ensure excellent fish welfare to ensure quality end-product for market?

#### What a pass looks like

A pass will be awarded where the applicant clearly explains the **practical steps, they will take to protect fish welfare from capture through to landing**, demonstrating how this also ensures a **high-quality end product for market**. Responses should show that the applicant understands the link between **welfare, handling, and product quality**.

A pass response will typically include:

- Measures to **minimise stress and injury** during capture and handling
- Prompt and appropriate **bleeding, handling, and cooling** practices
- Use of **suitable onboard facilities or equipment** to protect fish condition
- An understanding that good welfare directly supports **market quality and value**

The response should be **clear, realistic, and proportionate**, without requiring technical detail beyond what the applicant would reasonably control.

### Q2 How do you ensure the quality of your tuna during transportation and storage to the first point of sale?

#### What a pass looks like

A pass will be awarded where the applicant clearly explains how they will **maintain tuna quality after landing and during transport to the first point of sale**. The response should demonstrate an understanding that **temperature control, handling, and timely transport** are critical to maintaining product quality.

A pass response will typically include:

- Use of **appropriate cooling and storage methods** after landing
- Steps to **maintain the cold chain** during transport
- Measures to **protect fish from damage or contamination**
- A clear link between handling practices and **preserving market quality**

The response should be **practical, proportionate, and realistic**, without requiring technical or commercial detail beyond the applicant's control.

### Q3 Aboard your vessel how will you maintain quality of the BFT. What cooling materials will be used to maintain BFT quality (e.g. ice bags)?

#### What a pass looks like

A pass will be awarded where the applicant clearly explains how they will **maintain the quality of BFT onboard the vessel**, including the **cooling materials and methods** they will use immediately after capture. The response should demonstrate an understanding that **rapid cooling and appropriate onboard storage** are essential to preserving product quality.

A pass response will typically include:

- Use of **suitable cooling materials** (for example ice, ice bags, or equivalent)
- Steps taken to **cool fish promptly after capture**
- Appropriate **onboard storage arrangements** to protect fish quality
- A clear link between onboard handling, cooling, and **maintaining market quality**

The response should be **practical, proportionate, and realistic**, without requiring excessive technical detail.

### Q4 Please detail the rod and reel fishing gear that you intend to use and its suitability in BFT fisheries.

#### What a pass looks like

A pass will be awarded where the applicant clearly describes the **rod and reel gear they intend to use** and explains **why it is suitable for bluefin tuna fisheries**. The response should demonstrate an understanding that appropriate gear selection supports **fish welfare, safety, and effective control of large fish**.

A pass response will typically include:

- A clear description of the **type of rod and reel setup** to be used
- Evidence that the gear is **fit for purpose for BFT**, including strength and control
- An explanation of how the gear helps **minimise fight time, stress, or injury**
- Confirmation that the gear aligns with **rod and reel-only requirements**

The response should be **clear, proportionate, and practical**, without requiring excessive technical detail or brand-specific specifications.

**Shorter version (for inclusion in the form):** A pass requires a clear description of the rod and reel gear to be used and why it is suitable for fishing for bluefin tuna.

**Q5. Please detail the actions and protocols you will employ to minimise risks of rod and reel bycatch events, steps taken to maximise the chance of live-release, including release of undersize BFT.**

**What a pass looks like**

A pass will be awarded where the applicant clearly explains the **actions and protocols, they will use to minimise bycatch risks when rod and reel fishing**, and how they will **maximise the likelihood of live release**, including for **undersize bluefin tuna**. The response should demonstrate awareness of **best practice handling, decision-making, and restraint**.

A pass response will typically include:

- Measures to **reduce the likelihood of bycatch events** (for example gear choice, fishing practices, or situational awareness)
- Clear steps taken to **minimise fight time and handling stress**
- Protocols for **safe, prompt release** of non-target species and undersize BFT
- An understanding of how good practice supports **fish welfare and stock sustainability**

The response should be **practical, proportionate, and realistic**, without requiring overly technical detail.

**Q6: Tick the experience or training you have. Select those that are relevant and provide short explanation.**

- A. Experience of commercial hook and line / handline / rod and reel fishing.**
- B. And/or experience of recreational big game fishing.**
- C. And/or other BFT training.**

**What a pass looks like**

A pass will be awarded where the applicant selects **relevant experience and/or training** and provides a **clear, credible short explanation** demonstrating how this experience prepares them to operate safely and responsibly in a bluefin tuna fishery.

A pass response will typically include:

- At least one **relevant experience or training category** selected
- A short explanation describing **what the experience involved**
- Evidence that the experience is **appropriate to rod and reel BFT fishing**, such as handling large fish, using suitable gear, or applying welfare focused practices
- Where training is cited, a clear indication of its **relevance to BFT fisheries**

Applicants do **not** need experience in all categories. The emphasis is on **relevance and suitability**, not quantity or length of service.

**Q7: Please explain how you will manage your quota allowance to maximum effect whilst not exceeding it.**

**What a pass looks like**

A pass will be awarded where the applicant clearly explains how they will **manage their quota responsibly across the season**, demonstrating that they understand quota is a **finite limit that must not be exceeded**. The response should show a balanced approach that enables effective use of quota while prioritising **monitoring, restraint, and compliance**.

A pass response will typically include:

- An explanation that quota will be **managed across the season**, not taken as quickly as possible
- Reference to **monitoring cumulative catches** and keeping accurate records
- An understanding of the need to **plan fishing activity** in line with remaining quota
- Clear confirmation that fishing will **stop once the quota allocation is reached**
- Recognition of MMO's role in **in-season management or instructions**

The response should demonstrate **planning and control**, without requiring detailed catch forecasts or technical quota modelling.

*Tip – Focus on management, monitoring and record-keeping. Applicants should explain how they would control and monitor their quota use during the season. MMO is looking for evidence of planning and restraint.*

*This aligns with MMO's emphasis on sustainable and well-managed use of BFT quota across the season.*

**Q8: How will you provide any direct and indirect economic, employment and social benefits to coastal communities?**

**Tick the benefits that you will make when fishing the quota. Include short explanation. To pass, a minimum of 5 must be selected with a short explanation provided.**

**What a pass looks like**

A pass will be awarded where the applicant **selects at least five relevant employment and/or social benefits** and provides **short, clear explanations** showing how their participation in the BFT fishery would deliver **genuine economic or social value**, particularly to coastal communities.

A pass response will typically include:

- Selection of **a minimum of five benefits** from the list provided
- Short explanations that show how the benefits are **realistic and applicable** to the applicant's operation

- Evidence that benefits relate to **employment, income, skills, supply chains, or community value**
- A clear link between fishing activity and **positive economic and/or social outcomes**

Responses do **not** need to be detailed essays. The focus is on **credibility, relevance, and clarity**, rather than scale or ambition.