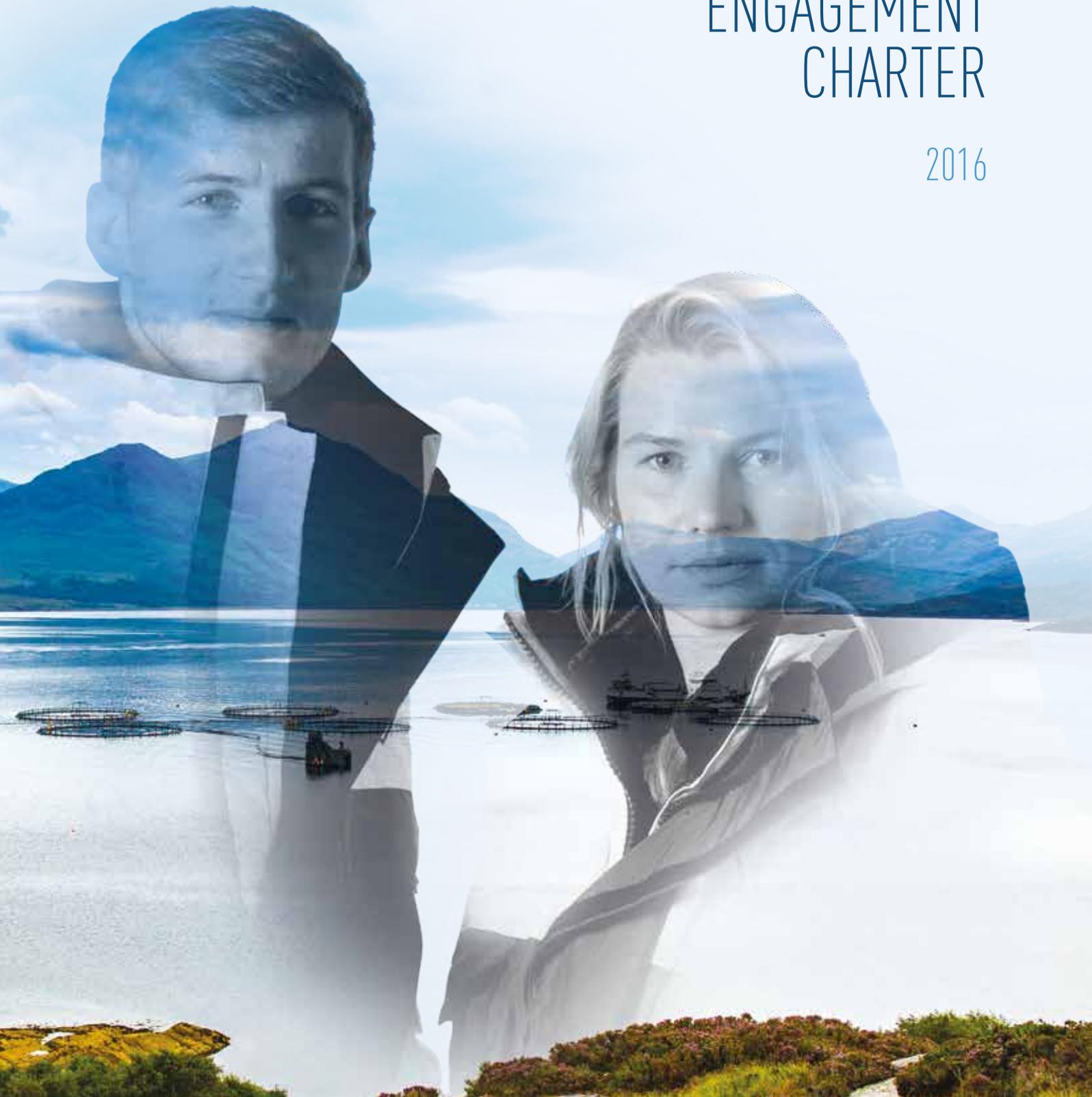




Scottish Salmon  
PRODUCERS ORGANISATION

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CHARTER

2016



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Prepared for Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation (SSPO) by





## CHARTER SUMMARY

We are pleased to set out below, the key commitments being made by the Scottish salmon industry in relation to how we work with communities throughout Scotland. Further detail is provided in this document regarding why we are making these commitments and how they will benefit both our companies and the communities we work in.

## OUR COMMITMENT

We will maintain open lines of communication with the communities in which we are based.

We will operate in our local communities with transparency, openness, honesty and integrity.

We commit to skills development and employment from local communities, both in production and processing of Scottish salmon.

We commit to encouraging local sourcing where possible, and nationally as a preference.

We will work with local communities to protect the natural environment in which we are based.

We will support local communities and initiatives through investment in support services and programmes particularly where this is in line with the industry ethos of improving health, education and the environment.

We will publish evidence each year of adherence to this charter and progress made towards the attainment of social licence.

We will commit to the development and ongoing use of a toolkit which will standardise how engagement is undertaken and reported within the aquaculture industry, including local education and sponsorship initiatives.

## SALMON FARMING AND COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND

Scottish aquaculture production is a pillar of rural industry in Scotland and provides considerable benefit for fragile economic areas and wider Scotland, stimulating over 8,000 jobs directly and indirectly. In the Highlands and Islands region alone, we provide 2,500 jobs, but as many as 4,700 or more in total across the supply chain and wider spinoff economic activity. The aquaculture industry supports youth employment, skills and training, and strengthens the economic case for public services provision of schools and ferries<sup>1</sup>. Our supply chain in Scotland creates a demand for feed, research, engineering, and downstream logistics and processing opportunities and, as such, the Scottish salmon industry also provides employment and revenue for a diverse range of sectors throughout Scotland. **WE WILL WORK TO ENSURE THAT THESE BENEFITS GROW AS OUR INDUSTRY GROWS.**

Further direct benefits range from approximately £1M collectively donated every year to community projects, sponsorships and local charities, through to the indirect benefits of allowing use of our equipment and infrastructure and, due to the additional employment aquaculture provides in rural locations, there are more potential volunteers for fire stations, mountain rescue support and lifeboat crew. **WE ARE PROUD TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND.**

As is the case for other production-based industries operating at a global level, the Scottish salmon industry is comprised of businesses which are driven by commercial factors which vary year-on-year, including employment costs, environmental conditions and of course, market prices which fluctuate considerably. It is important to acknowledge that we firmly believe communities should form part of the core business of aquaculture development and are very much part of the day-to-day considerations involved in selecting, developing and operating every site **IT MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE FOR US TO BE GOOD CITIZENS AND GOOD NEIGHBOURS.**

With the Scottish salmon industry committed to growing from 160,000 tonnes to 210,000 tonnes by 2020, there is a growing need for employment, skills development, supply chain growth and community engagement by Scottish aquaculture.

The importance of working with communities in areas where salmon is farmed is recognised by the industry as playing a crucial role in the production of the high quality fish products for which Scotland is so well known. However, in an industry where there are considerable differences in the scale of the operations, type of businesses and ownership structures, it is a challenge to create a 'one-size-fits-all' approach outlining how our companies should engage with communities. Despite this challenge, this Charter has been created by the Scottish salmon industry to highlight our commitment to working with communities and to ensure that people in the areas where salmon farming operates understand the industry and benefit from it wherever possible. **THIS CHARTER WILL HELP CREATE A POSITIVE PLATFORM FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITIES TO MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER.**

Our Charter outlines how the process of community engagement should work and where benefits can be seen for both communities and farming companies, as well as what is required from both sides in order to realise these benefits. We believe that salmon farming companies should take a 'good neighbour' approach with local communities by operating with transparency and integrity and adopting best practice methods of engagement. **WE ARE PART OF THE COMMUNITY – WE ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT BEING A PART OF ITS SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00450799.pdf>

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING COMMUNITY – INDUSTRY RELATIONSHIPS

“When a project has ongoing approval of the local community and other stakeholders”, this is the Social Licence to Operate<sup>2</sup>. This is what the salmon farming industry is working towards through the commitments made in this Charter.

To achieve social licence a *relationship* must be established, based on engagement between both the company and the community. Achieving social licence is important for both parties:

**1. FOR THE COMMUNITY:** there is a shared understanding of company operations; and communities are also provided with the means to receive both direct and indirect benefits from these operations e.g. long-term partnerships that support the delivery of community projects and programmes through in-kind support or direct sponsorship.

**2. FOR THE COMPANY:** there is greater understanding of community perceptions of the industry; there are more opportunities to explain company plans and operations; company and community can build a more informed, working relationship.

When discussing the benefits associated with rural industry in Scotland, comparisons are often drawn between aquaculture and renewable energy, with a focus most often on direct financial rewards. Indeed, Local Energy Scotland host a Community Renewables Register showing that in the year leading to October 2015, £9.9M of funding had been given to Scottish communities<sup>3</sup>. While we commend this form of benefit distribution within relevant sectors, it is not possible for all producers in the Scottish salmon industry to make such a commitment as a uniform standard due to the unpredictable and fluctuating nature of our production and returns and, therefore, the funds available to use for such initiatives. Unlike some other sectors, which are beneficiaries of public funding, the salmon farming industry is reliant on its own resources. From the Benefits to Scotland of Aquaculture report, we also recognise that the biggest benefits that we can provide are through our core business employment, wider supply chain and stimulating local economic activity. Across Scotland, this equates to £1.4 billion<sup>4</sup> annually and growing, including added value to the Highlands and Islands alone of over £150M within total activity of over £450M across the region. Growing our industry in new ways and in new areas can spread these benefits more widely.

It is engagement and benefits combined that lead to achieving a Social Licence to Operate. Signs that you have achieved a Social Licence to Operate include: the perception that relations between the community and the company are based on an enduring regard for each other’s interests; a common/shared experience of working together; and the development of collaborative and transformational opportunities for both partners. Investing in these activities is not a charitable act, but rather a mixture of ‘core business’ and ‘good citizenship’ which allows an industry to prosper.

Stewardship of local resources is a key factor in aquaculture development and it is essential that these resources are considered to include the local community as well as the natural environment. Given different opinions regarding what a community looks like, for the purposes of this Charter the definition used is “a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.” Community engagement can be referred to as “Developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences”<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sociallicense.com/definition.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.localenergyscotland.org/view-the-register>

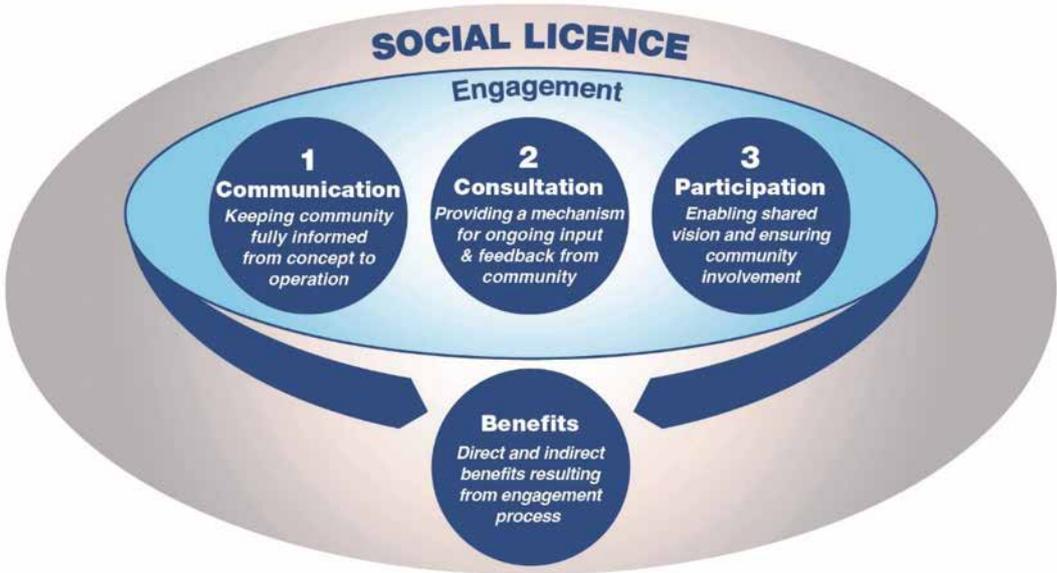
<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00450799.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.scdc.org.uk>



The industry believes that benefits should ultimately stem from engagement with the communities where salmon farming operations are based. Any benefits arising from this engagement should, wherever possible, be a result of discussions with the community and at their request. Many of the industry's employees, contractors and suppliers live and have families in these communities and are keen to be involved, rather than separated, from the process. The ultimate aim of the engagement and relationship-building process between industry and communities should therefore be to realise the benefits that are achievable for both.

In order to build community-industry relationships, the aquaculture industry uses three pillars of engagement – Communication, Consultation and Participation - as per the below diagram. Best practice involves applying all three steps of engagement in a progressive manner, with some overlap, and should ultimately result in benefit to the community.



Through this Charter, the aquaculture industry is committing to this process and further commits to development of a Toolkit, which will provide a consistent way of reporting this process for salmon farming companies, while ensuring the process is clear and consistent for local communities.

## TOWARDS A SOCIAL LICENCE FOR SCOTTISH SALMON

Our approach to stakeholder engagement is based on building trusting relationships at all levels. At the heart of our work is respecting, listening and responding appropriately to issues and concerns raised during the Community Engagement process.

A crucial factor is openly recognising that aquaculture activity is not 'zero impact' but that it will have impact and that this can be very positive. Indeed, in islands that might be keen to attract formal employment and regular income, the impact may be new housing, more boat traffic and creating opportunities beyond simply the initial jobs and income. Where environmental impacts occur, we work hard to tackle these head-on and to ensure that they are mitigated, but we will always aim to be transparent about them through lines of communication outlined in this Charter.

There are a number of principles that underpin our approach:

- Engage elected community representatives in the design of an engagement programme;
- Spend time in the community building an understanding of the needs of the local community and the geographical area;
- Understand and effectively articulate what we can bring to a community to meet their needs;
- Identify key stakeholder organisations and individuals outside the Community Council to ensure wider representation during development, as well as formal channels;
- Communicate with stakeholders and the wider community using methods and language they are comfortable with;
- Appoint a local liaison officer to represent each operation;
- Respond appropriately to issues and concerns;
- Integrate engagement outcomes into project management decisions;
- We will always work to communicate why we are keen to see a site develop and operate and, where relevant, we will engage communities in a vote to allow the local people to have a direct say in what is happening.

Our philosophy of *early engagement* reflects current best practice and is based on evidence collated through a large number of effective engagement programmes in comparable rural industries, including good examples of fish farm management. Although the resulting benefits may be different in terms of form and scale in other commercial sectors, it is important that the process is streamlined in order to make it clearer for communities themselves.

To make the process of engagement as transparent as possible, a table has been created to identify the stages of farm development and highlight potential benefits to both communities and companies of engagement at each stage – see Annex 1. Although engagement will vary from site to site, it is our aim as an industry to be consistent in our approach to working with communities, while always communicating the benefits that could be achieved all-round. The benefits identified are not exhaustive due to the varying nature of the industry and requirements of individual communities, but hopefully provide guidance to encourage discussion between companies and communities from the initial stages of scoping a site, through to the operation life of a salmon farm.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND

The below table outlines the commitment made by the Scottish salmon farming industry so as to achieve social licence to operate in the communities in which we are based. We recognise that the engagement approach will vary for each development depending on the needs of the community and the company, however we believe that these commitments are achievable at all sites.

This commitment is made on behalf of all participants who have signed up to the Code of Good Practice for Scottish Finfish Aquaculture and will become a compliance point for participants of the Code, to be assessed annually. This will therefore cover 99% of all Scottish Finfish Aquaculture.

| OUR COMMITMENT   | WHY?   |
|--|--|
| 1. We will maintain open lines of communication with the communities in which we are based.  | 1. To ensure we know and understand what issues, positive and negative, are impacting our local communities.   |
| 2. We will operate in our local communities with transparency, openness, honesty and integrity.  | 2. We aim to establish and maintain trust in our industry and its benefits.  |
| 3. We commit to skills development and employment from local communities, both in production and processing of Scottish salmon.  | 3. We want communities to understand and take part in our work – our future relies on a strong and committed workforce.  |
| 4. We commit to encouraging local sourcing where possible, and nationally, as a preference.  | 4. So the industry achieves its goals quickly and efficiently, and the community can enjoy deeper economic gains through more business.  |
| 5. We will work with local communities to protect the natural environment in which we are based.   | 5. So we can be stewards of our shared resources and be 'good citizens'; the better we are at this, the greater the chance that communities will trust us with their natural and physical environment in the future.                     |
| 6. We will support local communities and initiatives through investment in support services and programmes, particularly where this is in line with the industry ethos of improving health, education and the environment. | 6. A community that understands the links between health (especially nutrition), environment, and our industry can tell us in an informed manner where we need to improve, and work with us to solve industry challenges and trade-offs. |
| 7. We will publish evidence each year of adherence to this Charter and progress made towards the attainment of social licence.   | 7. We aim to be accountable and to show we are serious about long term development of the industry, in partnership with communities.   |
| 8. We will commit to the development and ongoing use of a toolkit which will standardise how engagement is undertaken and reported within the aquaculture industry, including local education and sponsorship initiatives. | 8. We need to demonstrate our performance transparently to all who need to know, from government to communities to buyers.   |

## THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITIES



Engagement is a two-way relationship. Communities are not simply recipients of benefits and, in addition to the commitments made by the aquaculture industry, communities also have a role to play in developing a sustainable industry. Communities can influence the feasibility and ambition of economic growth through growth of fish-farming and the cost and management of existing operations.

To help achieve a mutually-beneficial relationship between commercial salmon farms and communities, we make a number of recommendations below as to how a community should be involved. This is by no means exhaustive and is intended to indicate some key examples that have worked well elsewhere:

- Communicate as partners, not donor/recipients. Build relationships, both as individuals and community representatives, with the company (e.g. the farm manager, another local contact or through company head office);
- Be aspirational and proactive;
- Strive to represent the interests of the community as a whole, rather than just particular groups within it;
- Help incoming farm managers to understand the community and organisations within it;
- Take a pragmatic approach to getting on together, in terms of land, equipment, technical and local knowledge;
- Work towards the strengths of the community;
- Don't be afraid to ask, and bear in mind that if you don't ask, you don't get! Look at examples of what has been done elsewhere and feel free to 'think outside the box' when considering what could apply to your community. Research the planning application process thoroughly as farms might be willing to support your cause, but they always have to be conscious of doing things the right way and at the appropriate time;
- Be aware of the wider benefits that could come from development in your area rather than focusing solely on the finances;
- Remember that community support and endorsement is important for the farms to operate – a two-way relationship is needed, so work together as much as possible.
- Consider putting the decision to a community vote – it is the ultimate test of whether the case has been made for a site and has the support of the wider population.

## ANNEX 1. ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

| KEY ACTIVITIES  | 1. SCOPING  |
|---|---|
| What should be happening at this stage of development                               | <p>Site Identification and Selection</p> <p>The developer will begin to research the local community and identify formal consultation requirements (e.g. local council and community council)</p> |
| Why should a community engage at this stage?  | <p>Engaging as early as possible allows more time to develop a relationship and 'the sooner the better' certainly applies here</p>  |
| How might industry engage communities and ensure their participation at this stage? | <p>Developer to produce a draft community engagement programme to discuss with Community Council</p>  |
|   | <p>Meet and brief local community council(lors)</p>   |
|   | <p>Media strategy to include identification of local papers and highlight methods of communicating to wider public</p>  |
|   | <p>Political strategy developed to assess requirements for formal political communication at the local level</p>  |
|   | <p>Identify wider community for engagement outside of community council eg.g. local trusts, community groups, village halls, etc.</p>   |
|   | <p>Identification of a community liaison officer by developer</p>   |
|   | <p>Community Consultation on siting/location of the potential farm and initial design concept</p>   |
| What benefits could be realised at this stage for communities?                      | <p>Community can be involved in the process from the outset by helping the developer identify sites that are, or are not, suitable</p>  |
|   | <p>Early engagement builds stronger relationships to help both parties realise future benefits</p>  |
|   | <p>Outline direct potential for job creation, training</p>  |
|   | <p>Outline potential supply chain opportunities and how they can positively stimulate wider job creation and business opportunities</p>   |
|   | <p>Outline opportunities for innovative partnerships</p>  |
| What benefits could be realised at this stage for developers?                       | <p>Early engagement builds stronger relations to help both parties realise future benefits</p>  |
|   | <p>Identifying active local organisation and individuals helps the developer to guide the process ongoing</p>   |
|   | <p>Local knowledge helps provide a good understanding of the area and helps raise potential issues at an early stage</p>  |

| 2. APPRAISAL  | 3. POSTCONSENT   |   |
|---|--|---|
| Site Assessment, Design & Layout leading to Planning Application  | Development of Site  | Operation & Production  |
| Formal engagement through community council, but also wider interaction through meetings, media and events. Focus should be how engagement will proceed and a consultation plan produced  | Once planning is approved, the developer should continue to engage with the community to ensure they remain part of the process and have an opportunity to engage throughout   | The operational farm should have a shared vision with the local community and have continued community involvement throughout its life                              |
| Opportunity for communities to continue to influence the design & operation of the development. The community should have chance to feed in their input as to what will or won't work at a particular site                                  | During construction/development engagement should be ongoing so the community can hold developers accountable for what is happening  | The community should play an active role in operations to realise direct and indirect benefits. This is a two-way relationship and relies on communication          |
| Community consultation plan finalised and published for all parties to see  | Establishing Community Liaison Group to ensure communication is maintained. Can include Community Council, Community Trusts and other interest groups  | Regular farm meetings with Community Liaison Group to keep lines of communication open at all times   |
| Submit Preapplication with Communities (PAC) Report to confirm that meaningful community engagement has taken place   |  |   |
| Regular meetings to allow developer to present updates on proposal to local community   |  |   |
| Consultation events at local venues to communicate plans at initial stage and again prior to submission of application  | Discuss & formally agree ongoing Community engagement plan and associated benefits as appropriate  | Open days at sites to allow community and visitors to see what is happening at shore base and cages where possible  |
| Offer of individual meetings or drop in sessions with community liaison officer to ensure all voices are heard  |  |   |
| Initial discussions on community benefits if appropriate. This is not a material planning consideration and developers must be careful what is discussed at this stage to balance engagement and being seen as trying to sway local opinion | Ensure that wider community can clearly see what is happening through information boards, community meetings, drop-in clinics or have an open door policy where possible. This can be managed by a Community Liaison Officer |   |
| Ability to influence the development with mechanisms in place for ongoing input and feedback from community   | Keep wider stakeholders informed of opportunities so they can understand some of the economic linkages being made  | Inkind benefits e.g. community use of equipment (such as boats & forklift trucks)   |
| Ability to influence size, scale and location of farms through local expert opinion   |  | Infrastructure benefits e.g. jetties, piers, improved road access and improved viability of ferry services  |
| Include benefits in scenario assessments and discuss trade-offs/what is desirable   | Local Supply chain providers e.g. hauliers, wellboats, feed suppliers etc.   | Local on farm jobs with training and career development from apprenticeships to long term management staff  |
| Identify where potential suppliers might be and outline where different scenarios have an impact on jobs and business opportunities   |  | Local Supply chain providers e.g. hauliers, wellboats, feed suppliers etc.  |
| Identify where potential suppliers might be and outline where different scenarios have an impact on jobs and business opportunities   |  | Biomass related community benefit fund where appropriate at a fixed EGBP per tonne of fish produced   |
| Identify where potential suppliers might be and outline where different scenarios have an impact on jobs and business opportunities   | Local construction & engineering job creation during construction and specialist skills contracted during operation as well  | Sponsorship of local sports teams e.g. shinty, football, rugby  |
| Identify where potential suppliers might be and outline where different scenarios have an impact on jobs and business opportunities   |  | Staffing and sponsorship of local charity events including safety boats and staff time  |
| Identify where potential suppliers might be and outline where different scenarios have an impact on jobs and business opportunities   |  | Sustainable rural population, which can result in staff/family volunteering as firemen, lifeboat crew, teachers etc   |
| Identification and mitigation of opposition concerns  | Identification of local supply chain actors through consultation process can reduce development and operation costs  | Provision of both direct and indirect benefit is very important to farmers in building local relationships and showing commitment to communities as good neighbours |
| Opportunity to engage local community, where appropriate, to gauge what benefits are needed in the area   |  |   |
| Local knowledge can play a crucial part in site identification in relation to physical location, ecology, seasonality, etc.   |  |   |

## ANNEX 2. LINKS TO RELEVANT WEBSITES AND ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

The Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation (SSPO)

SSPO is at the centre of salmon farming's industry-wide initiatives and public communication, acting as a trusted source of information, a strong industry voice and a focus through which industry leadership and objectives can be channelled.

The organisation plays a central role in representing the industry on political, regulatory, media and technical issues in Scotland, the UK, EU and internationally. Further details available at <http://scottishsalmon.co.uk/>

SSPO members

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Loch Duart                  | <a href="http://lochduart.com/">http://lochduart.com/</a>   |
| Marine Harvest              | <a href="https://www.facebook.com/marineharvestscotland/">https://www.facebook.com/marineharvestscotland/</a> |
| Wester Ross Salmon          | <a href="http://www.wrs.co.uk/">http://www.wrs.co.uk/</a>   |
| Scottish Sea Farms          | <a href="http://www.scottishseafarms.com/">http://www.scottishseafarms.com/</a>                               |
| Cooke Aquaculture Scotland  | <a href="http://www.cookeaquaculturescotland.com/">http://www.cookeaquaculturescotland.com/</a>               |
| The Scottish Salmon Company | <a href="http://www.scottishsalmon.com/">http://www.scottishsalmon.com/</a>                                   |
| Landcatch                   | <a href="http://www.landcatch.co.uk/">http://www.landcatch.co.uk/</a>   |
| Howietoun Fishery           | <a href="http://www.howietounfishery.co.uk/">http://www.howietounfishery.co.uk/</a>                           |
| Migdale Smolt Ltd.          | +44 (0)1863 760107  |

## IMANI DEVELOPMENT / SRSL

This charter was produced by Imani Development and SAMS Research Services Ltd in cooperation with SSPO and member companies, further information is available at: <http://imanidevelopment.com/> and <http://www.srsl.com/>

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDANCE

SSPO community information site: <http://scottishsalmon.co.uk/farming/>

Investing in your community – A guide to managing community funds:  
[www.hie.co.uk/community-support/managing-community-funding/default.html](http://www.hie.co.uk/community-support/managing-community-funding/default.html)

Local Energy Scotland – examples of how community engagement is managed in renewable energy:  
[www.localenergyscotland.org](http://www.localenergyscotland.org)

Framework for community benefits from onshore renewables in Argyll & Bute:  
[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/crop-benefits-community](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/crop-benefits-community)

Foundation Scotland details on community benefit management:  
<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/communities/>

Community Development Alliance Scotland: <http://www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org/>

Scottish Community Development Centre: <http://www.scdc.org.uk/>

## EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY BENEFIT FROM SCOTTISH SALMON

The Scottish Salmon Company fundraising for the Sandpiper Trust:  
[www.sandpipertrust.org/the-scottish-salmon-company-salmon-run-2/](http://www.sandpipertrust.org/the-scottish-salmon-company-salmon-run-2/)

Marine Harvest shinty sponsorship:  
[www.stornowaygazette.co.uk/sport/local-sport/marine-harvest-plough-cash-in-camanachd-1-3678627](http://www.stornowaygazette.co.uk/sport/local-sport/marine-harvest-plough-cash-in-camanachd-1-3678627)

Wester Ross Salmon supports Highland Wildlife Park:  
<http://www.highlandwildlifepark.org.uk/news/article/1605/fishy-treats-for-victoria/>

Cooke Aquaculture sponsors fishing event: <https://www.facebook.com/cookeaqua/?fref=ts>

Scottish Sea Farms, Heart of the Community Trust:  
<https://www.facebook.com/notes/scottish-sea-farms-ltd/new-pipes-for-oban-band/1245773905442158>

Loch Duart sponsors cyclist Kerry MacPhee: <http://www.kerrymacpheelochduardtiet.com/>



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