



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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www.gov.uk/defra

08 October 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation on introduction of EU points system for masters of fishing vessels

I am writing to inform you that we are carrying out a consultation on introducing a points system for fishing vessel masters convicted of serious offences.

The purpose of the consultation is to seek your views on the proposed details of the points system for masters that will apply in England.

The UK has already put in place a points system for fishing vessel licences. This system is set out in detail in the [EU fisheries control regulation](#), including the offences which attract points, the number of points awarded for each offence, the thresholds that must be reached to invoke a suspension, and the duration of any suspension. The Control Regulation also requires us to establish a points system for masters but the details of this are not set out in the Control Regulation. We propose to introduce a system which is similar and complementary to the existing points system for fishing vessel licences.

Under this proposal, the points system will be applied to the vessel master as well as the vessel licence. A series of points thresholds would lead to progressively longer periods when an individual could not act as the master of a fishing vessel. At the extreme, permanent prohibition could result. Minor fisheries infringements which do not result in conviction in court but are dealt with in other ways such as warning letters or financial administrative penalties will not attract points.

Every time a conviction for a serious infringement¹ is secured, the appropriate number of points will be registered in the national register of fishery offences. The Marine

¹ Serious Infringement in accordance with Article 3(2) of Council Regulation 1005/2008: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:286:0001:0032:EN:PDF>



Management Organisation has already set up a national register for the points scheme for vessel licences that went live in June 2013. We will extend this register to record points awarded to masters anywhere in the UK. Other UK fisheries administrations will also use this database, and this will ensure an accurate UK-wide record. The single UK database will also ensure that vessel owners and operators will be required to visit only one website in order to check that the master they intend to employ is not currently suspended.

Defra invites the views of all owners and masters of English registered fishing vessels engaged in fishing or who will be affected by the proposed introduction of points system.

The following documents may be found on Defra's website: www.gov.uk/defra

- Impact Assessment; and
- Consultation document.

We welcome your views and comments on the proposals by the 19 November 2014. If you wish to obtain a copy of this consultation, please contact

Defra
Fisheries Compliance Team
Area 8A, Millbank
C/o Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
Or by email to: FishingMasterPointsSystem@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Responses

To submit your consultation response please complete the consultation questionnaire provided through Citizen Space (Citizen Space is an on-line consultation tool) at www.gov.uk/defra.

Responses must be received by **19 November 2014**.

Consultation Criteria

1. This consultation is in line with the Consultations Principles. These can be found at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/consultation-principles-guidance>
2. When this consultation ends, we will hold copies of the responses here they will be made available on request. Members of the public may ask for a copy of responses under freedom of information legislation.
3. If you do not want your response - including your name, contact details and any other personal information – to be publicly available, please say so clearly in writing when you send your response to the consultation. Please note, if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, that won't count as a confidentiality request.
4. Please explain why you need to keep details confidential. We will take your reasons into account if someone asks for this information under freedom of information legislation. But, because of the law, we cannot promise that we will always be able to keep those details confidential.

We will summarise all responses and place this summary on our website at www.gov.uk/defra. This summary will include a list of names of organisations that responded but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.

5. If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them to:

Defra Consultation Co-ordinator,
Room 629
9 Millbank
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR
or email consultation.coordinator@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

6. Thank you for your help in this matter. If you have any queries please contact us as above.

Yours faithfully

Compliance Policy Team
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs