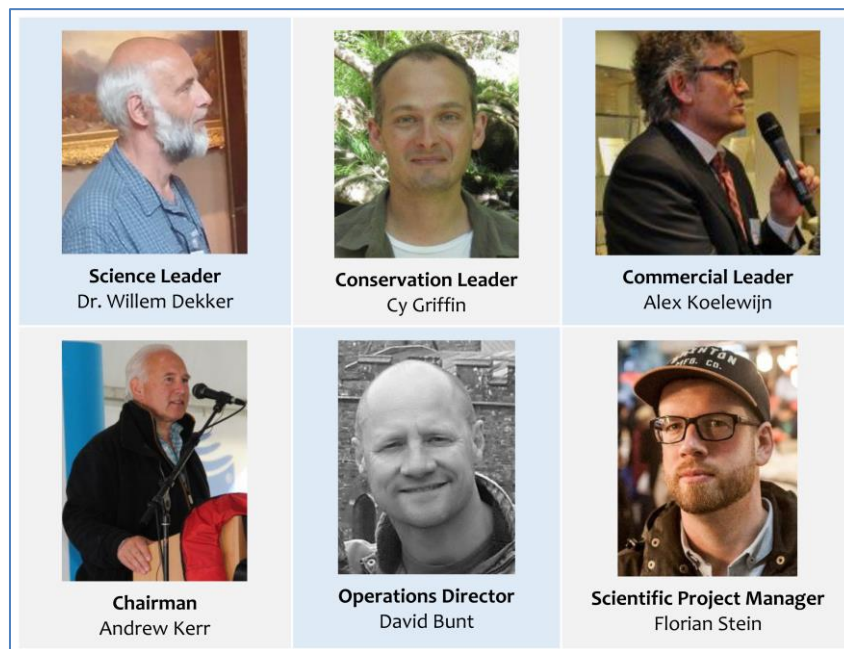


## Annual Report for the AGM 4th Oct 2018

The 2018 annual meeting is in Brussels at the office of Wetlands International European Association, SEG's key Conservation NGO partner and where Sustainable Eel Group ASBL office is now registered. The Fishmongers Hall address will cease by 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2018. In 2019 SEG will reach its 10<sup>th</sup> year since foundation. The plan that is emerging is based on an event during the last week of June at Fishmongers Hall – it is anticipated that the Dutch Eel Barge will make the journey across the North Sea to deliver eel for the celebration of our shared Eel Culture.

### 1. General Report

There have been many developments since our last gathering 15 months ago. However, SEG through the leadership team, has rapidly shaped and responded. The eel continues to be a very dynamic and complex issue. The Leadership team concept, that was first developed in 2015, has continued to grow and evolve and is now both the driving force within SEG and is organised on a truly Europe wide basis. The Leadership Team has overseen the transition of SEG (Sustainable Eel Development Ltd) a UK organisation to Sustainable Eel Group (SEG) ASBL (Not-for-profit organisation, registered in Belgium, EU). Below is the original leadership team slide from 2015, please note some titles have changed as part of the ISEAL and ASBL processes.



### 2. The Leadership Team

The scale of the eel challenge is many dimensional not the least is geography – the leadership team seeks to bridge the dispersed nature of the eel with EU wide representation that so far includes Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and the UK (we expect other countries to join in due course) - as well as including the three founding elements of SEG – Science, Conservation and Commercial with all on an equal basis. The leadership team has met face to face three times in the last 12 months at Schiphol and Brussels and there are frequent telephone conversations

between the leaders with the executive group ‘doing’ the daily work. During the year both Alexander Wever and Norbert Jeronimus have played increasing roles supporting the executive. Communication to the Eel network has developed through extensive use of social media, like Facebook and Twitter coupled to the redeveloped website. The website is now constantly referred to from all over Europe as a reliable source of information. At the AGM these leaders will make short presentations on their work for eel recovery.

### 3. The Eel Stewardship Association (ESA) and National Eel Stewardship Funds (ESF)

At the last AGM and before that at the SEG Commercial meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2016, it became and was made clear that the scale of SEG’s activities could no longer be core funded through membership and the call was made to further develop the Eel Stewardship Model of raising funds for eel recovery and sustainability. Steps were taken most notably in Netherlands and Germany. So successful have Eel Stewardship Funds become that over £.8M is raised annually. Without the support of these funds SEG could not function effectively. It is planned to develop a Partnership agreement between SEG and the ESA. SEG eventually hopes to generate all its core funding from ESA however **in the short-term subscriptions and donations will need to continue until ESF are operating universally.**

SEG believes that a responsible eel fishery and commercial sector playing the ‘stewardship role’ are essential to recovery and that without their reinvention around the SEG Standard progress will not be possible.



### 4. We are now the Sustainable Eel Group (SEG) ASBL (founded 21 June 2018)

At successive AGMs (2016 and 2017) the idea of SEG becoming Brussels based has been considered and supported. The leadership team made the decision to act at the 7<sup>th</sup> Feb meeting ratified at the 29<sup>th</sup> May meeting and announced at the SEG European Parliament event 20<sup>th</sup> June. The logic behind the decision is based on the need for SEG to be seen by all parties as the

European lead body for eel recovery – the BREXIT process, regardless of outcome, served to confirm this thinking rather than cause it.

With the help of B-M (Burson Masteller now called BCW (Burson Cohn and Wolfe): SEG's Brussels public affairs advisers) SEG met three Brussels based International Law Firms and selected Van Bael and Bellis. Their advice (and the others) was to use the Belgium ASBL model for an NGO Not for Profit Organisation. The recommendation was made on the basis that much of the original Sustainable Eel Development Ltd Memorandum and Articles could transfer and that this ASBL model was credible, flexible and the administration could be kept simple.

Van Bael and Bellis drew up the Articles of association for this Belgian ASBL, not for profit organisation. The Objects transferred directly over with the addition of the word sustainability in one place:-

- 3.1. To advance public awareness and knowledge of the conservations of eels of all species, in both the freshwater and marine environments;
- 3.2. To advance and promote scientific education and research in relation eels and to disseminate the same to the public;
- 3.3. To advance and promote by any legitimate means public education relating to eels;
- 3.4. To advance and promote measures, by public and private organisations, including governmental and intergovernmental bodies, for the conservation of eels;
- 3.5. To undertake, either alone or in partnership with other organisations, any practical projects to advance and promote eel conservation **and sustainability**

Under Belgian law there has to be one more Effective Member (including founders) than Directors.

So, to maintain the balance between science, conservation and commerce the following Seven SEG Leaders founded and established the Sustainable Eel Group as an ASBL under Belgium Law on the 21 June 2018.

From Science, Willem Dekker and Florian Stein. From Conservation Cy Griffin and David Bunt, From Commercial Alex Koelewijn and Jac Tijssen. Finally, and as an Independent and Chairman, Andrew Kerr.

### **Director / Board / Leadership Team**

The following were appointed Directors: Willem Dekker, Cy Griffin, Alex Koelewijn, David Bunt, Florian Stein and Andrew Kerr. They form the basis of **The Leadership Team** and others who are members are also invited as needed Richard Fordham, Alexander Wever, Jac Tijssen, Norbert Jeronimus and Ronald Menzel.


### **Membership**

This has two classes: Effective and Adherent. It is managed in accordance with the articles and through the Membership Secretary and the admission process. Both classes of membership are invited to the AGM however only the Effective ones have a vote.


### Work in progress for the Board / Leadership Team to Organise

- Open bank account in Brussels
- Appoint Treasurer
- Define the subsidiary relationship of “SEG UK”
- Separate the finances “SEG ASBL” and “SEG UK” (Sustainable Eel development Ltd)
- Finalise the partnership agreement with ESA
- Appoint Membership Secretary


<b>EEL RECOVERY Relationship defined through a Partnership Agreement</b>	
Eel Steward Ship ESA (ESFs)	Sustainable Eel Group SEG
<b>Commercial Stewardship</b>	<b>Recovery through Sustainability</b>
Those who eat eel help pay for recovery and commerce takes responsibility	Science, Conservation and Commercial factors combine to find solutions
Creates National Stewardship Funds	SEG Standard with ISEAL Membership
Consumer Facing Brand	B to B model - support Supply Chain
Investing in Recovery	Defining the journey to Recovery
Individual Country Schemes	One International Body
Independent Governance	Independent Governance
<b>Shared complementary communication</b>	<b>Shared complementary communication</b>



ESF  
Eel Stewardship Fund  
www.esf.international



EEL STEWARDSHIP  
ESA  
FOUNDATION



Sustainable  
Eel Group

## 5. Eel Trafficking

SEG recognised that eel recovery requires a fishery and industry that is totally committed to recovery and through its stewardship role gives leadership to protecting the eel.

The growing realisation of the scale of trafficking to Asia - it is now estimated to be some 350 million glass eels a year; about a quarter of the natural recruitment - represents both a massive threat to the eel and the very existence of a legal and responsible trade.

On request, SEG supports the research for the 'Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime' of the United Nations (UN). The outcome will contribute to the second 'World Wildlife Crime Report' scheduled for Spring 2019.

The link to the Trafficking theme on the SEG web site is:

<http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org/illegal-trafficking/>

## 6. The SEG Standard V6 and ISEAL

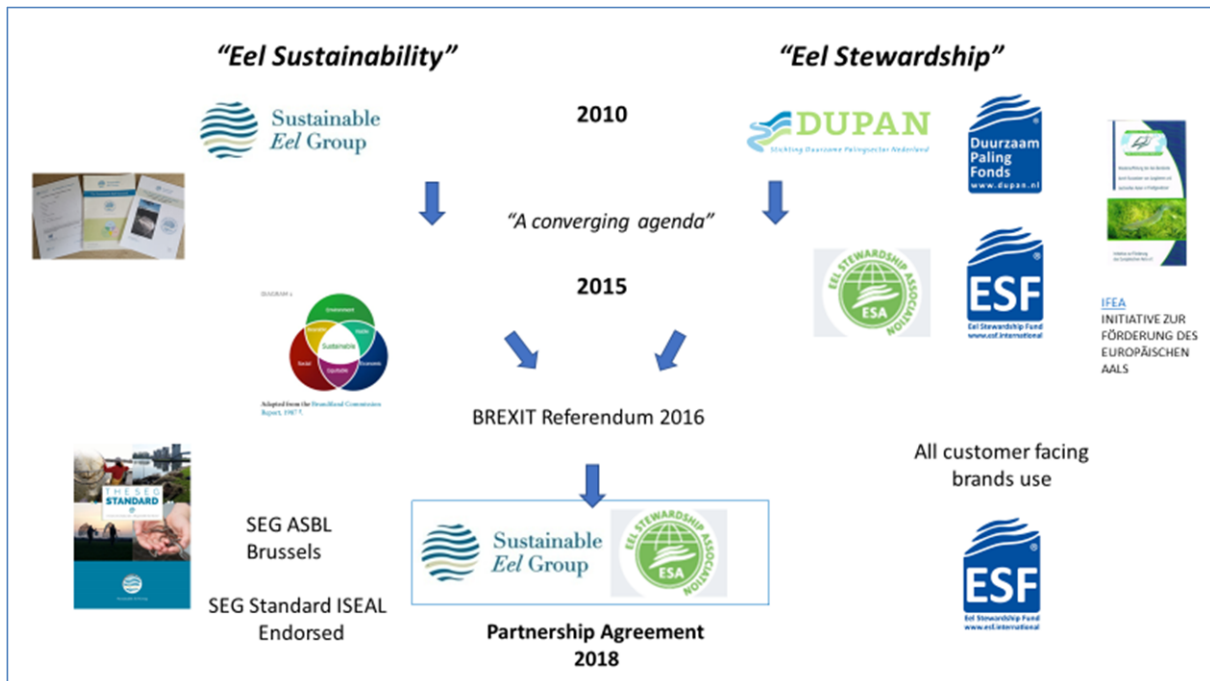
The development of the SEG Standard V6 in accordance with the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice has been a huge undertaking. It represents 4 years of work and a fundamental refresh of all that SEG believes and values. The SEG Board is very grateful to the work of David Bunt and the advisers from ‘One World Standards.’

We commend the SEG Standard along with its supporting documents like the ‘Claims and Labelling Guide’. SEG is expecting to achieve ‘Associate Membership’ of ISEAL in December 2018 and Full membership one year later. All SEG standard system documentation is available on the SEG website at: <http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org/the-seg-standard-system/>

One key outcome is the rationalisation of all logos. From the customer perspective SEG would like to see just one logo and that is the ESF one. The SEG logo will be purely for Business to Business purposes and for general communication. This has been a recommendation of One World Standards since the Berlin / Potsdam meeting of April 2016.

The continuous improvement belief of SEG is now underpinned and formalised through the ISEAL process and SEG expects further versions to develop based on the learning and knowledge gained from this internationally recognised approach.

The Eel Recovery Journey can be visibly explained in the diagram below



## 7. The Eel Regulation – its future

SEG is seeking to influence the thinking and the discussions that surround the Commission’s Road Map consultation process that may lead to a new and revised Regulation. SEG has supported the Eel Regulation and has sort to get behind and make it work. In June SEG held an event in the European Parliament to highlight the plight of the eel. Going forward SEG plans to host interested

parties and key people showing them the reinvented industry and fishery making the recovery journey.



## 8. David Bunt as Operations Director reports

### On the SEG Standard

The SEG Standard has been substantially reviewed following an extensive consultation process and other procedures according to the ISEAL codes of practice (see below).

Key differences to the previous version are:

- It is called the **SEG Standard** - not the Sustainable Eel Standard
- It is a code of practice for a **responsible** eel sector
- The standard is designed such that those who pass have demonstrated that their actions cause a **positive contribution** towards the recovery of the eel
- All those achieving the standard must be trading in **traceable, responsibly sourced eel**
- All of those achieving the standard must be contributing to an **Eel Stewardship Fund**
- **Labelling procedures** to denote that a batch of eel is responsibly sourced have changed

It is published on the SEG website at <https://www.sustainableeelgroup.org/seg-standard-2-2/> and versions will soon be available in French, Dutch and German.

### On ISEAL

The ISEAL Alliance (<https://www.isealalliance.org/>) represents the global movement of sustainability standards. It provides independent, 3<sup>rd</sup> party accreditation of sustainability standards and examples include the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and Fairtrade.

SEG is in the process of applying for ISEAL membership for accreditation of the SEG standard. When this is achieved, supermarkets will be more likely to buy and sell eel (as long as it is SEG certified responsibly sourced).

SEG should achieve 'Associate Membership' in December 2018, and there will be substantial work required in 2019 to achieve full membership by December 2019.

### **On Financial Impacts**

SEG's activities, impact and influence have increased very significantly over the past two years. This is since we have taken on two new full time staff (Florian Stein and David Bunt), made partnership agreements with Sweden University and Wetlands International to gain credible science and conservation input, and employed public affairs consultants to engage better with the European Parliament. All of this has been for the benefit of the eel and the sector that relies on it. As a result, SEG has:

- influenced the EU to counter calls for banning eel fishing
- persuaded the EU to review and improve the Eel Regulation – and SEG is mentioned as a key stakeholder for consultation
- exposed the scale of illegal trade to Asia to the EU politicians and enforcement agencies
- influenced the UK government in its Brexit considerations – so that trade with the EU can continue
- made a substantial review to the SEG standard, in line with ISEAL principles to enable and demonstrate a re-invented responsible eel sector in Europe, to
- completed the very lengthy process to apply for ISEAL membership

All of this work represents a huge investment in the future for eel. It costs £280,000 a year to run SEG at present (it will cost about £150,000 to review the SEG standard and gain ISEAL membership).

Contributions from donations and Eel Stewardship Funds has been about half of that, and we currently have debts totalling £231,000. SEG needs to recoup this investment from the sector that has benefited from it over the next 12 months through a combination of donations, ESF contributions and payment to use certain services such as claims under the SEG standard.

### **On Eel Conservation projects**

SEG has been successful in gaining grant and other project funds to deliver a series of eel conservation projects over the past 2 years. Those funds have covered SEG project management costs so have off-set operational costs to some degree. Those projects are summarised as:

#### EMFF funded

SEG is managing the following EMFF funded projects:

- **Traceability of eels** using microchemistry of otoliths (research to see if eels found in Asia can be traced to the estuary they were caught in Europe). Project cost: £76,000.
- **Pilot of Telecapêche in UK glass eel fisheries**, to see if and how an electronic catch and traceability system can be developed in the UK and benefit traceability in the whole European supply chain. Project cost: £69,000.
- **Eel Aquaponics**. Testing the economic viability of farming eels and growing plants in a closed indoor system. Project cost: £136,000.

- **SEG ISEAL membership.** Progressing SEG's membership of ISEAL. Project cost: £136,000.
- **River Glaven eel ecology.** A detailed study of the eel's ecology (migration, habitat, population etc.) to understand the eel better and to inform better Eel Management Plans. Project cost: £97,000.
- **River Brue Eel Improvement.** Survey of and improvements to the River Brue (next to the Parrett) to improve eel migration and silver eel production. Project cost: £84,000

#### Company funded

SEG is managing and has nearly completed:

- An energy company to spend £200,000 on eel conservation projects to meet its legal obligations under the UK Eel Regulations at four power stations
- Another energy to spend £100,000 on eel conservation projects to meet its legal obligations under the UK Eel Regulations at two power stations

These projects have mostly involved improving eel migration in and out of river and lake systems or habitat improvement to enhance the eel population.

#### Other projects

SEG has also been running series of other projects, e.g.

- Eels in Schools
- Trafficking investigations (Florian)
- Stocking report
- Annual glass eel market survey

SEG will also soon be drafting terms of reference for an investigation into glass eels quotas for restocking that are being used for consumption rather than the stated restocking.

## **9. SEG Financial Position at 28 Feb 2018 the auditors report**

	<b>Y/E 28.2.18</b>	<b>Y/E 28.2.17</b>	<b>Y/E 28.2.16</b>	<b>Y/E 28.2.15</b>
<b>Income</b>	£213,783	£223,317	£73,008	£82,146
<b>Expenditure</b>	£218,521	£222,355	£91,047	£87,638
<b>Net</b>	(4,738)	962	(18,039)	(5,222)

Accounting and daily management has been on a cash and bank balance basis however the scale of operation is now so great that with the appointment of a Treasurer in 2018 the financial management will be developed, improved and a full balance sheet with profit and loss established.



**THE SUSTAINABLE EEL DEVELOPMENT LIMITED**  
**DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2018**

	28.2.18		28.2.17	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>		111,655		127,355
<b>Cost of sales</b>				
Purchases		66,642		-
		<u>66,642</u>		<u>-</u>
<b>GROSS SURPLUS</b>		45,013		127,355
<b>Other income</b>				
Contributions ,fees & charges		168,770		95,962
		<u>168,770</u>		<u>95,962</u>
		213,783		223,317
<b>Expenditure</b>				
IT Support	-		3,479	
Telephone	700		420	
Post and stationery	1,090		559	
Advertising & marketing	5,799		6,728	
Motor & travelling expenses	24,842		15,022	
Sundry expenses	350		-	
Accountancy	1,350		1,240	
Professional & consultancy fee	183,492		194,014	
Bank charges	898		893	
		<u>218,521</u>		<u>222,355</u>
<b>NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS</b>		<u>(4,738)</u>		<u>962</u>