



Sustainable Seafood Policy Toolkit for Seafood Suppliers and Buyers

Authors and contributors:

Pedro Ferreiro
Bernal Vilela
Enrique Alonso-Población
Dave Martin
Justin Boevers
Kathryn Novak
Sam Grimley
Michael Seager
Duncan Leadbitter

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Disclaimer:

The present document aims to serve as a guidance tool for seafood supply chain companies seeking to behave in a more responsible fashion when sourcing from wild-capture fisheries. Although most of the information and examples provided in this document are applicable for both wild-caught and farmed seafood products, this document has been developed under a wild-fisheries-oriented project, and therefore no warranty, expressed or implied, is made regarding adequacy, completeness, reliability, accuracy, or usefulness for farmed seafood products. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of SFP or other participating organizations.

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For more information see:

www.globalmarinecommodities.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Sustainable Seafood Policy Toolkit for Seafood Suppliers and Buyers aims to aid seafood businesses involved in the supply chains of wild-caught seafood who wish to develop a comprehensive Sustainable Seafood Policy (SSP), making commitments to the sustainable use of resources and the well-being of the fishing communities they source product from.

Seafood supply chain companies can have a significant impact on the health of the world's oceans and the protection of millions of livelihoods, fostering the development of more sustainable fisheries by encouraging better resource governance and the adoption of good fishing practices. By implementing an SSP, seafood suppliers and buyers will be equipped with a key tool to strategically guide their purchasing decisions following established principles and good practices. This allows seafood businesses to mitigate a number of risks, including assured supply, reputational, economic, and legal risks. This document advises companies to develop SSPs as a core element of the company's overarching corporate social responsibility strategy and encourages committed companies to make them public to ensure adequate accountability.

Using examples from publicly available SSPs, this toolkit provides guidance on how to obtain information to assess the sustainability performance of fisheries from which a given company sources, and outlines the structure and topic areas most commonly used in SSP documents. The examples in the document come from businesses that collaborate at different levels with third-party organizations (mainly NGOs) to inform the design and evaluate the performance of their SSPs. In order to facilitate its use to businesses and individuals with less experience in SSP development, the toolkit provides a brief introduction to basic features of an SSP, including global frameworks and guiding principles; clarifies key concepts such as responsibility and sustainability; recommends alignment with definitions already set by certification and ratings systems to facilitate working toward agreed-upon frameworks; and points to the importance of including social responsibility criteria as part of the SSP.

This document provides guidance for policy development only. Yet, in doing so, the paper highlights the need for further attention to: i) the current gaps left by seafood sustainability standards and policies in regard to a number of key issues, such as climate change, or the social and human dimensions of the entire seafood value-chains to prevent, for example, human rights abuses; ii) the lack of meaningful standards that can guide policy development to improve sustainability performance and human well-being in small-scale fishing communities from producing countries in the Global South, who are widely recognized as among the most vulnerable groups involved in seafood production systems; and iii) the need for adequate resource allocation and due diligence to prevent a prevalence of policy over practice and ensure businesses produce the planned positive outcomes.

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List of **Acronyms** and **Abbreviations**

AIP	Aquaculture Improvement Project
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
BAP	Best Aquaculture Practices
CASS	Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ASIC	Asian Seafood Improvement Collaborative
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
ETP	Endangered, Threatened, and Protected
GMC	Global Marine Commodities
GDST	Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability
GSSI	Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative
FAD	Fish Aggregation Device
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIP	Fishery Improvement Project
FOS	Friends of the Sea
GAA	Global Aquaculture Alliance
GSSI	Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HCR	Harvest Control Rule
ISEAL	The global membership organization for credible sustainability standards
ISSF	International Sustainable Seafood Foundation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU	Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported
IFFO RS	International Fishmeal and Fish oil Organization – Responsible Sourcing
KDE	Key Data Element
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
ODP	Ocean Disclosure Project
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFP	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
SRAT	Social Responsibility Assessment Tool
SSC	Sustainable Seafood Coalition
SSF	Small-scale Fisheries
SSP	Sustainable Seafood Policy
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

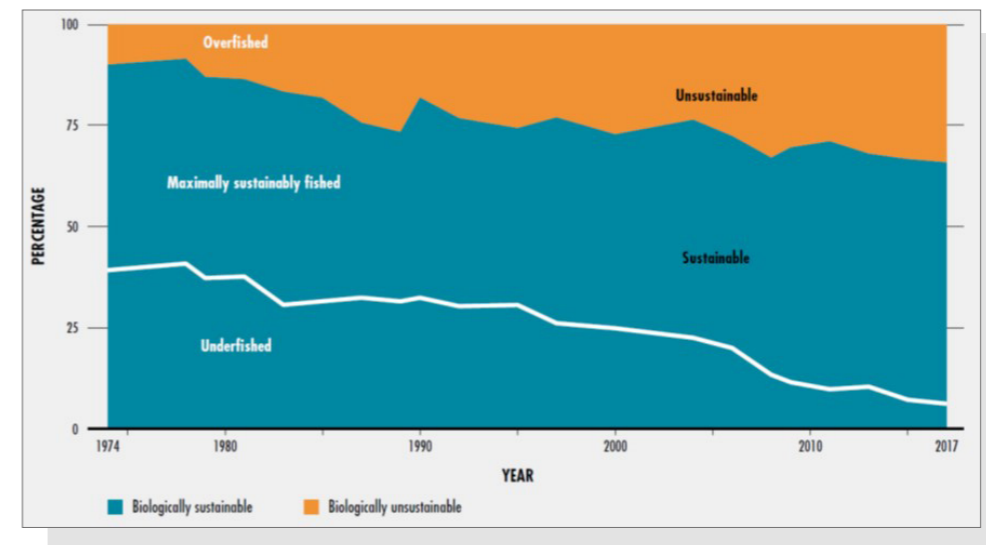


A call to action

According to FAO (2020), the fraction of fish stocks that are within biologically sustainable levels decreased from 90 percent in 1974 to 65.8 percent in 2017, in a decline that has been practically continuous since 1974 (See Fig. 1). Dwindling fish

stocks; the effects of climate change; illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing; and human rights abuses at sea are inextricably related (EJF, 2019), and are among the most pressing issues to be addressed by the global seafood industry.

Fig. 1. Global trends in the state of the world's marine fish stocks, 1974-2017 (from FAO, 2020).



It is time for global action to stop and reverse this trend, and seafood supply chains have a key role to play, using their influence and resources to foster more sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and healthier marine environments, and to contribute to food security and the livelihoods and well-being of millions of fishery-dependent people worldwide. By doing so, companies will assure the future supply of the resources upon which their businesses depend, while satisfying the growing demand for sustainability from their clients. They will

also address potential reputational, economic, and legal risks (see Uhlemann, S. & O'Connell, 2021; Hosch & Pramond, 2021) arising from the commercialization of unsustainable products. This Sustainable Seafood Policy Toolkit is designed to guide seafood suppliers and buyers of fish and fishery products coming from any of the world's fisheries to implement the measures needed to guide their purchasing decisions to prioritize, promote, and normalize the supply of sustainably or responsibly sourced seafood products. Read it, use it, and make it yours.



Introduction

Market demand is a key vector of change in the seafood sector. Supply chain companies can have a significant impact on the health of the world's oceans and the protection of millions of livelihoods, fostering the development of more sustainable fisheries and aquaculture by encouraging better fisheries governance and the adoption of good fishing and fish-farming practices. In turn, companies that produce, process, or retail seafood, and which are committed to sustainability and human well-being, will build the basis for business success by reducing some of the intrinsic risks to seafood production and supply. By developing a Sustainable Seafood Policy (SSP), seafood buyers and retailers will be equipped with a key tool that marks the first stepping stone in the journey to a responsible fishing economy.

This toolkit aims to help seafood businesses that wish to develop comprehensive SSPs to make a commitment to the environmental sustainability of the seafood products they buy and sell, and the well-being of communities involved in the supply chain. This guidance document is specifically tailored for wild-caught seafood sources and can

be used for all seafood categories (e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, smoked). SSPs vary greatly between companies, regions, and sectors. Rather than relying on general principles, this toolkit draws on and highlights practical lessons from specific examples of publicly available SSPs. The examples presented in this document are from businesses that collaborate at different levels with third-party organizations, mainly nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).¹ These organizations can bring the expertise required to support companies on different topic areas in the development of SSPs, and help companies plan their corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies to ensure they yield the expected positive impacts. While this toolkit focuses on the development phase of SSPs, it should be noted that developing business policies is not enough to address the complex challenges faced by the oceans and the people who depend on them. Policies should be accompanied by sufficient resources to ensure adequate implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as remediation mechanisms to ensure companies are having the positive impact planned.

¹ A list of third-party organizations providing such support can be found in the Useful Resources section at the end of this document

Principles and concepts informing development of sustainable seafood policies

SSPs vary greatly from company to company. Yet, there are key aspects that are widely found in most sustainable seafood CSR frameworks, including, at a minimum: i) references to global policy frameworks that inform the company's SSP, ii) a clear conceptual framing of the scope of the company's commitments, iii) alignment to agreed-upon seafood sustainability standards that enable measuring the environmental performance of a fishery and its progression over time, iv) a commitment to continuous improvement, and v) a commitment to ethical sourcing that ensures the prevention of human rights abuses in supply chains and the promotion of social well-being.

Following United Nations guiding principles and policies

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) defines **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) as "the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives ('Triple-Bottom-Line Approach'), while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders" (UNIDO). SSPs should be embedded within the framework of a broader CSR umbrella. It is recommended that the general CSR framework and the SSP are in full alignment with at least three policy instruments: a) the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UN, 2011), b) the UN Sustainable

Development Agenda for 2030, and c) the UN Global Compact initiative. This alignment enables companies to account for how their operation contributes to global goals for a more sustainable and fairer world.

Endorsed in June 2011, the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) set guidelines for both States and businesses to prevent, address, and remedy human rights abuses committed in business operations.

The [UN Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030](#) (UN, 2015) provides a blueprint to help governments, NGOs, the private sector, and civil society at large achieve shared prosperity in a sustainable world. In particular, it provides guidance on how the private sector can engage in meaningful CSR activities. Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG 14, Life Below Water, aims to "preserve and sustainably utilize oceans, seas and marine resources." Therefore, any responsible seafood company should at a minimum support the implementation of SDG 14 in its SSP. Seafood businesses are also strongly connected to other SDGs, including SDG 1, No Poverty; SDG 2, Zero Hunger; SDG 5, Gender Equality; SDG 7, Affordable and Clean Energy; SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth; SDG 9, Industry Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG 10, Reduced Inequalities; SDG 12, Responsible Production and Consumption; and SDG 13, Climate Action.

The [UN Global Compact initiative](#) aims to mobilize a global movement of sustainable companies and stakeholders to create a better world. To make this happen, the UN Global Compact supports companies to:

1. Conduct business responsibly by aligning their strategies and operations with [ten principles](#) on human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption.
2. Take strategic actions to advance [broader societal goals](#), such as the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), with an emphasis on collaboration and innovation.

Conceptual framing of the company's commitments

As a general principle, a Sustainable Seafood Policy should be written in an easily understandable way, enabling adequate accountability of the company to its shareholders, consumers, and society at large. Before developing an SSP, two key concepts need to be made clear in order to avoid general audience confusion and to frame the scope of the company's commitments:

- **Responsibility** refers to the behavior of an individual or company, considering the environmental, financial, social, and economic aspects of its activities. A company can be labeled as acting responsibly if it obtains its seafood by following a set of clear, transparent, and well-defined criteria that help to reduce the environmental impact and improve the socioeconomic returns to those involved in the production and distribution of a given good. The resulting products could therefore be described and labelled as

responsibly caught or responsibly sourced, depending on the node of the supply chain where the individual or the company operates.

- **Sustainability** refers to an intrinsic feature of a given resource that results whenever the governance of the natural resource base is conducted “in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations (...)” (FAO, 1989). More widely accepted approaches understand sustainability as reflecting a positive economic, social, and environmental impact of the fishing activity.

Alignment with agreed-upon sustainability standards

When applied to the specifics of the fisheries sector, the notion of sustainability can be interpreted in many different ways. However, it is not desirable for each company to work with different notions of how sustainability can be achieved in fisheries. Instead, aligning with definitions set by certification and ratings systems that are based on expert knowledge is recommended, and can be more cost-efficient, as it can be an enormous task to internalize the cost of developing credible standards and evaluating the sustainability of all fisheries a company sources from.

More comprehensive certification and ratings systems that establish what today can be considered good practices in mainstream fisheries management have been built upon internationally agreed instruments, such as the [FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries](#) (FAO, 1995) and its subsequent technical guidelines, such as the

[FAO Guidelines For The Ecolabelling Of Fish And Fishery Products From Marine Capture Fisheries](#) (FAO, 2009). Building upon these instruments, sustainable fishing is strongly dependent on adequate fisheries governance that ensures the health of the relevant fish stocks impacted by a fishery. This includes, among other factors, the availability of enough data and adequate science for decision making; effective management through transparent and participatory decision-making mechanisms; and effective monitoring, control, and surveillance mechanisms to avoid illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing. As a consequence, seafood can be labeled as sustainable whenever it meets a set of standard requirements of fishery governance and can be tracked back to its catch. The FAO's 2015 [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication](#), or [SSF Guidelines](#) (FAO, 2015), represent the first-ever internationally agreed instrument that sets guidelines to improve governance to achieve sustainability of small-scale fisheries. Yet, there is a gap when it comes to certifications and ratings standards fully built upon the SSF guidelines and its principles. Important gaps also need to be filled by sustainability standards when it comes to measuring issues related to the climate change impacts of capturing and distributing seafood. Seafood certification programs are voluntary programs for businesses. Third-party certification provides a higher level of security on the verification of the sustainability of the product, its capture in a legal fishery and, normally, seeks to reward sustainable fisheries by distinguishing

them with an ecolabel. The organizations handling the certification programs develop and regularly update their standards and have systems to ensure robustness and independence of third-party auditing firms who evaluate the fishery and receive authorization to grant the receipt of the label. Chain-of-custody certification systems complement fishery ecolabeling programs by helping ensure the certified product is identified and separated from uncertified products, usually through one-up, one-down business-to-business verification. Eco-labeling certification programs enable companies to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability to their consumers. There are many seafood sustainability certification programs, and this diversity has been identified by seafood industry stakeholders as a source of confusion for seafood buyers and consumers. To address this issue, bodies such as the ISEAL Alliance and the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) work to assert credibility for sustainability standards. Still, certifications are expensive and sometimes not attainable for all fisheries.

While not as comprehensive as third-party certification, ratings systems based on the same general principles of sustainability are a good option to track sustainability performance of a given fishery.² Unlike certification programs, seafood ratings programs are most often involuntary programs, where the organization running the ratings system itself selects fisheries of interest. This makes them especially relevant to enable businesses analyzing the risks incurred when purchasing products not covered by certifications. Seafood ratings programs do not

provide ecolabels, but rather inform supply chains and consumers through simple-to-use codes such as traffic light colors (e.g., Seafood Watch “Best Choice”/green, “Good Alternative”/yellow, and “Avoid”/red), summarized assessments (e.g., Ocean Disclosure Project’s “Well-Managed,

Managed, Needs Improvement”), or codified advice (e.g., Ocean Wise’s “Recommended” or “Not Recommended”). Traceability is currently a challenge, however, since there is no direct link between a rating and a particular fleet or supply chain, but rather to the fishery itself.³

Box 1. Aldi Nord Germany Fish Purchasing Policy targets three main goals

Through its Fish Purchasing Policy, Aldi North strives to promote measures that counteract the endangerment of fish stocks in the world’s oceans, conserve ecosystems in oceans and inland waters, contribute to animal welfare, and improve working conditions in the fishing industry. This policy has three main goals:

1. Increasing the proportion of sustainable seafood and fish products sold, as well as protecting endangered fish species, through the following commitments:

- **Wild-caught:** Requiring full MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) certification of seafood and fishery products from their standard and seasonal ranges in the commodity groups of fresh fish and frozen fish.
- **Aquaculture:** Ensuring that seafood and fishery products from their standard and seasonal ranges in the commodity groups of fresh fish, frozen fish, refrigerated items, and canned food are entirely certified in accordance with ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council), European Union organic label, or GLOBALG.A.P. standards.
- Implementing alternative approaches for non-MSC-certified tuna and mandating that their suppliers comply with the minimum requirements.
- Banning certain fish species whose stocks are acutely endangered or which fail to meet the requirements of their internal sustainability assessment.
- Contractual obligation of their suppliers to comply with internationally recognized social standards.

2. Traceability: Ensuring full and continuous traceability of all products throughout the value chain.

3. Declaration of products: Providing transparent product information for their customers through indications of origin beyond the legal provisions, as well as labelling all products containing fish with the Aldi Transparency Code.

Committing to continuous improvement

Sustainability can be represented as a continuous path, as a fishery can always improve its sustainability performance. Embracing the notion of continuous improvement is today a common

feature and a highly recommended practice in any SSP. Including a process of progressive and continuous improvement over time, in line with the company’s vision and guiding principles, provides a sense of coherence and long-term commitment.

² To learn more about differences between certification and ratings systems, visit: <https://fishchoice.com/understanding-seafood-ratings-and-seafood-certifications>

³ The definition of a fishery may vary. See, as a reference, FishSource’s profile structure: <https://www.fishsource.org/how/structure>

This can be done in several different ways, for example by adopting the idea of fishery improvement projects (FIPs) as an integral part of the SSP. As defined by the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions (CASS), a FIP is a multi-stakeholder effort to address environmental or social challenges in a fishery. FIPs emerged as a tool for fisheries that cannot attain a level of performance required to achieve the requirements

of a specific sustainability standard (Cannon et al., 2018) to take steps toward better sustainability performance. FIPs enable responsible businesses in seafood supply chains to proactively engage in moving fisheries forward along the improvement path, while using the interest of the markets to incentivize the required changes in policies and practices (see CASS, 2021).

Box 2. Why sustainability matters: Seattle Fish Company embraces the concept of continuous improvement

In their sustainability commitments, Seattle Fish Company establishes the need to be responsible and intentional in how they catch and grow their fish and seafood. This means being mindful not only of how much fish they produce, but also how it is caught and farmed, and the impact it may have on the environment or future generations.

In the company’s sustainability commitments, they commit to:

1. Assess the sustainability of the products they procure, and share this data with their customers, stakeholders, and community. Seattle Fish Company will roll out a sustainable scoring system that provides data on all of their products, which allows their customers, stakeholders, and the community to make informed purchasing decisions.
2. Shift procurement of their products to more sustainable and environmentally responsible products, as well as eliminate products that are critically unsustainable or are sourced from facilities that infringe upon human rights. Improve the sustainability of their products by 25 percent, using their scoring system as a benchmark to measure improvement. Seek to eliminate products that are critically unsustainable, or from illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fisheries, as well as those that come from sources that have been found to infringe upon human rights.
3. Foster continual improvement efforts in their industry by actively supporting fishery improvement projects (FIPs) and aquaculture improvement projects (AIPs), and participating on industry boards. Seattle Fish will support FIPs/AIPs and develop a mechanism to promote that participation to their customers and stakeholders. They will also participate on at least two industry boards that are dedicated to significant, positive change in the seafood industry.
4. Develop a process and system for full transparency of their products, including fishing methods and gear types. Develop a process for collecting and publishing source fishery information from vendors, including species, location of harvest or farm, gear/farm type, and sustainability score.
5. Create an ongoing series of workshops and events for employees and other stakeholders to provide education about issues and opportunities regarding sustainability. Seattle Fish will host educational workshops and training for their customers, employees, and other stakeholders to cultivate an appreciation for sustainable fishing practices and seafood as a healthy, sustainable food source.
6. Manage their operations mindfully and reduce their resource usage. An employee-run “Green Team” will lead the charge on reducing waste generation and water and electricity use by 5 percent per year. Progress on goals will be revisited every two weeks to ensure continual adjustment and improvement.

The FIP concept is well-defined and established (see CASS, 2021), with clear implementing methodologies and reporting tools already adopted among the global sustainable seafood movement community. To help a fishery improve its sustainability performance, FIPs can work against a given standard or set of criteria based on internationally agreed sustainability guidelines and instruments. The final goal of FIPs is to attain fisheries sustainability targets in a given timeframe. Certifying a fishery may not necessarily be the aim of a FIP, as it is, in essence, a commercial decision.

CASS has adopted the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard as the recommended framework to set the baseline to measure a fishery's environmental performance and help build FIP workplans. The use of a robust standard such as the MSC, with a publicly available set of criteria and well-established methodology, facilitates the search for technical specialists who can develop baseline analyses and measure progress. However, achieving a level of performance equivalent to MSC certification may not be a realistic or desirable target in some fisheries. Depending on the fishery and the problems to be addressed, or the requirements of the end markets, other standards and improvement frameworks (FishSource, Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, Fair Trade, or the recently developed Asian Seafood Improvement Collaborative – ASIC) can be used to identify the problems and set the improvement targets (see, e.g., Escarabay et al, 2020). Setting the right targets early on in the process is crucial

to ensure the setting of attainable goals and continued improvement progress. Companies are encouraged to publicly support the implementation of FIPs at any level. They are also encouraged to monitor and evaluate the process to enable fisheries to ensure progress and even shift to more ambitious improvement targets to eventually attain the desired outcomes, while also ensuring that fisheries and fishing communities get value from the process. In order to guarantee that FIPs are active and making progress, their implementers are required to periodically report their activities publicly. This is done mostly, though not exclusively, through Fishery Progress, a public website that enables FIPs to report their advances publicly, and the seafood industry and NGO community to track FIP progress. Progress ratings of FIPs are displayed on FisheryProgress.org and are evaluated by SFP using the standardized FIP Evaluation tool (SFP, 2021).⁴ Further to FIPs, other measures can be used to embrace the notion of continuous improvement, such as including specific time-bound commitments that can be measured with quantitative indicators in an SSP. Companies can also set targets to gradually increase the percentage of seafood products coming from fisheries certified as sustainable or with positive scores given by one of the existing ratings systems (such as FishSource, the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, and Ocean Wise), or from FIPs rated as successfully implementing improvements (with an A-C rating).

⁴ More information about FIPs can be found in the CASS Guidelines for Supporting Fishery Improvement Projects at: http://solutionsforseafood.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FIP_report_screen-final_revised_september.pdf. To learn more about FIP rating tools, please see the tool's latest update: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AWDDJmwu7j-AOpgru5bE7-d5BO6q4wc/view>

Addressing human rights issues and improving social well-being

Embedding ethical standards in a company's CSR policy is a growing need if businesses aim to contribute to tackling the multidimensional problems faced by global seafood supply chains. Yet, this is an area that requires further development.

Public evidence of human rights abuses within the seafood sector has increased in the last decade, with particular attention paid to labor abuses onboard offshore industrial and distant-water fleets (e.g., EJP, 2019; Yi Chiao Lee et al, 2018). Yet, human rights abuses have also been identified along all of the supply chain (Ratner et al, 2014), reinforcing the need to consider a wider range of vulnerable groups (Finkbeiner et al, 2021). Promoting the well-being of communities whose livelihoods rely upon the catch and post-harvest sectors requires supply chains to enlarge their focus from the elimination of the most obvious human rights abuses – such as forced labor or human trafficking – and work toward addressing wider challenges such as the economic, social and cultural rights of individuals and groups within their supply chains (Teh et al, 2019).

A series of initiatives, including risk assessment tools or guidelines and indicators, have been developed by different organizations to address this topic.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UN, 2011) provide an outline of how businesses should operationalize corporate responsibility to respect human rights through policy commitments, human rights due diligence, and processes for remediation.

The Seafood Certification and Ratings

Collaboration developed a [Framework for Social Responsibility in the Seafood Sector](#) (Opal, 2018), building on three high-level principles agreed upon by a number of NGOs and businesses under the so-called “Monterrey Framework” for social responsibility (Kittinger et al, 2017): 1) protect human rights, dignity, and access to resources; 2) ensure equality and equitable opportunity to benefit; and 3) improve food and livelihood security. Rather than a standard itself, the Framework provides an overview of key topics in social responsibility for the seafood sector and indicates which available tools and standards are relevant to assess performance at a particular level. Also building on the “Monterrey Framework” (Kittinger et al, 2017) and in alignment with the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small-Scale Fisheries, Conservation International, in collaboration with the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions and the Coalition for Socially Responsible Seafood, developed “[The Social Responsibility Assessment Tool for the Seafood Sector](#)” (SRAT) in 2019. SRAT (CI, 2019) serves as a rapid assessment tool to assess risk for social issues in fisheries, identify areas in need of improvement, and include actions in FIP workplans to address social issues. SRAT is not a certification or ratings system, but rather serves as a protocol to assess social responsibility and can help measure progress over time toward social and economic goals. SFP has developed a guide, also aligned with these same principles, that is designed to support industry work on social responsibility and is tailored for retailers and suppliers.⁵ This guide (SFP, 2019) provides useful resources that may help companies in embedding social issues into SSPs. The guide includes a practical annex⁶

⁵ [Embedding Social Issues in Fishery Improvement Projects: SFP Guidance to Retailers and Suppliers](#)

⁶ [Annex to Embedding Social Issues in Fishery Improvement Projects: SFP Guidance to Retailers and Suppliers](#)

that presents the different steps that a seafood company should take to address labor risks in its supply chain and summarizes the different tools applicable for each step.

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership's Seafood Metrics system provides a Human Rights Risk Indicator (HRRRI) tool that provides a high-level human rights risk assessment for fisheries, focusing on human trafficking, forced labor, child labor, and violations of freedom of association and collective bargaining. The HRRRI comprises ten carefully selected indicators that use country- and fishery-specific data to generate an individual fishery risk score. The HRRRI fishery scores are designed to help businesses assess risk across their supply chain and prioritize higher-risk fisheries for enhanced risk assessment. More recently, FisheryProgress, a platform available for FIPs to report their progress publicly, launched a [Human Rights and Social Responsibility Policy](#) (FisheryProgress, 2021), with the aim of helping FIP participants to identify and reduce the risk of human and labor rights abuses in their fisheries, and to provide a common framework for social performance of FIPs,

increasing transparency around the efforts FIPs are taking to address human and labor rights risks. Companies at the forefront of the sustainable seafood movement have already started to include social and labor commitments in their SSPs. Yet, ensuring adequate impact of policies calls for the need to further investments and work across the industry in ensuring due diligence along the entire supply chain (see, e.g., recent report by Business and Human Rights Resource Center, 2021), not only when it comes to assurance mechanisms but also remediation actions. Significantly more resources are also required by all stakeholders, particularly NGOs working to further develop certifications and ratings standards that can adequately inform supply chains about the social dimensions of their purchasing decisions. Further development of standards should focus not only on addressing human rights and labor issues in offshore fleets, but also in capturing the principles of the FAO's [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries](#) (FAO, 2015), to drive market support for improvements in small-scale fisheries and their supply chains toward meeting the goals of this first-ever international instrument.

Box 3. Tesco's seafood policy commitment on human rights

Tesco's seafood policy takes the issue of human rights extremely seriously, recognizing the importance of ensuring that workers in their supply chains are treated with respect and are working safely, and acknowledging that human trafficking and forced labor have been identified in the seafood industry. Within [Tesco's SSP](#), there is a specific section on human rights that states: "All of our seafood suppliers are bound by the Tesco Ethical Trade Requirements. In order to ensure that workers in our supply chains are working safely and treated with respect along the entire supply chain, we have worked with Sustainable Fisheries Partnership to undertake a human rights risk assessment of our UK seafood supply chains. This is enabling us to identify areas where workers may be at risk, and to work in partnership with our suppliers on any improvements that are needed. We will work closely with NGOs and other civil society actors to ensure that we are driving change in the most impactful way possible." Furthermore, Tesco has developed a specific [approach to human rights](#) that explains their position, discusses how they integrate human rights within their business, and describes their human rights due diligence approach.

⁶ Annex to Embedding Social Issues in Fishery Improvement Projects: SFP Guidance to Retailers and Suppliers

Data for assessing sustainability performance, monitoring, and decision making

A sustainable seafood policy can only be effective and relevant to the company's needs if it relies on accurate information about the fisheries from which the company is sourcing. A comprehensive and standardized data-gathering mechanism that covers all seafood items is therefore the basis upon which to build an SSP that will allow the company to meet realistic and time-bound objectives. Companies working on seafood sustainability should ask suppliers to provide information about the species and fishery prior to any supply agreement. This request can then be transformed into a legally binding commitment in supply contracts, to ensure that species and fishery information is regularly captured with every purchase and that suppliers gather and submit information on their source fisheries on a regular basis.

To evaluate environmental sustainability performance, there are certain pieces of information, such as species scientific name, fishing gear, fishing area, or nationality of the vessels, that are key for ensuring the correct identification of a given fishery. These are considered primary data elements, and gathering them should be compulsory. Secondary data elements are those that allow for more granularity of information on the fishery and serve as evidence about the sustainability performance of a given product. Secondary data elements can come from third-party tools such

as seafood sustainability ratings, certifications, consumer guides, or ad hoc fishery sustainability evaluations, and can help buyers to identify if a given product meets the company's sustainability specifications. It is up to the company to decide which out of all the available tools will be used for measuring and monitoring seafood sustainability performance, as well as to determine the responsible sourcing requirements that the company will apply when purchasing seafood products.

Ideally, a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) should be established to measure seafood sustainability performance over time, and a mechanism that allows the company to measure progress and internally report against those KPIs should be implemented.

Companies have two options for gathering data for decision making as well as monitoring and evaluation purposes – either internalizing the work or using a service provider.

Doing it yourself

Some companies may prefer to internalize the cost and effort required to gather data and perform their own sustainability evaluations, as well as evaluate and monitor the company's seafood sustainability performance.

As a starting point for this process, a harmonized data-gathering mechanism should be embedded in the company's purchasing procedures. There

are some tools available in the public domain to carry out this process, such as the [Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability](#) (GDST), an international, business-to-business platform established to advance a unified framework for interoperable seafood traceability practices. GDST has developed public traceability standards and guidelines that rely on an agreed list of universal key data elements (KDEs) that can be used by companies in the seafood supply chain. Other companies have also developed questionnaires that include KDEs and are used to gather information from suppliers.⁷ Once the source fisheries are identified, the company needs to ensure that sustainability evaluations are robust, independent and based on a publicly available standard (see “Alignment” section above). To ensure alignment with sustainability commitments, it is recommended that sustainability evaluations be based on adequate standards, such as recognized third-party certification or ratings systems. Finally, the company should implement a mechanism designed to track the sustainability performance of seafood products over time, to allow for self-measurement of compliance against the SSP and monitoring of success in meeting commitments and achieving set goals.

Using third-party data analyses

As an alternative to internalizing the data analysis process, companies can use analyses carried out by third parties – usually NGOs,

consulting firms, or individual consultants – who can help inform them about the risks of their purchases, especially for non-certified seafood. Some of the major seafood ratings and assessment programs available for businesses that include both public reports and published methodologies, include:

- FishSource by Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
- Seafood Watch Program by Monterey Bay Aquarium
- UK’s Marine Conservation Society’s Good Fish Guide
- Ocean Wise Program by Vancouver Aquarium.

[FishSource](#) is an online information resource on the status of fish stocks and fisheries that provides seafood buyers with up-to-date, non-partisan, and actionable information on the sustainability of fisheries and the improvements they need to make to become sustainable. Developed and maintained by the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, FishSource stands as one of the world’s largest catalogs of source fishery information for wild-harvest seafood. The Monterey Bay Aquarium [Seafood Watch](#) program helps consumers and businesses make choices for a healthy ocean by using color-coded recommendations – red (avoid), yellow (good alternative), and green (best choice) – based on fisheries sustainability evaluations. Sustainability evaluations are also carried out by the Vancouver Aquarium’s [OceanWise](#), which provides a symbol to help businesses

⁷ An example of a KDE questionnaire developed in Excel format to facilitate data gathering from a given supplier and in-house data management and storage, is available in the following link: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.sustainablefish.org/Sustainability%20Questionnaire.xlsx>

identify more ocean-friendly seafood choices. UK NGO Marine Conservation Society evaluates seafood sustainability under its [Good Fish Guide](#) methodology, which classifies seafood using a five-tier color code that ranges from Best Choice to Fish to Avoid. The above-mentioned ratings systems make their evaluations publicly available through online platforms. Yet, it would be too time consuming for businesses to search for sustainability evaluations every time they make a purchase and understand all the technical nuances of sustainability evaluations. In order to help businesses analyze the risks of their purchases in real time, several platforms are available.

SFP offers a number of services to seafood supply chain companies interested in evaluating their source fisheries under the FishSource standard, to help guide their purchasing decisions. These include, among others,⁸ the [Seafood Metrics System](#). By aggregating and tracking a company’s seafood purchase orders and managing change over time, the Seafood Metrics system provides businesses with key analyses required to understand the sustainability of their seafood and make informed decisions, including information to: a) make informed choices on which fisheries to source from, based on up-to-date information about sustainability; b) develop strategies for improving fisheries that face sustainability challenges and that are important to their supply chains; c) measure overall progress toward their goal of a more sustainable seafood supply chain;

and d) report on that progress to customers and external audiences. FishChoice provides its partners with a set of tools to help them track the sustainability status of their products against different ratings systems (Seafood Watch, OceanWise, and MCS’s Good Fish Guide), find seafood choices meeting certain sustainability requirements, and share that information with their customers. Building upon the above systems, new analytics schemes are being developed specifically tailored to inform purchasing policies of key domestic suppliers in markets in the Global South. Initiatives are currently being implemented in Mexico through the markets program of the NGO SmartFish, in Chile by the NGO Centro de Pesca Sustentable, in Peru through the market engagement program run by the local NGO REDES Sostenibilidad Pesquera, and in the Philippines through Juan Catch – Better Seafood Philippines Program.



⁸ See <https://www.sustainablefish.org/Programs/Seafood-Industry-Services>

Structure and topic areas

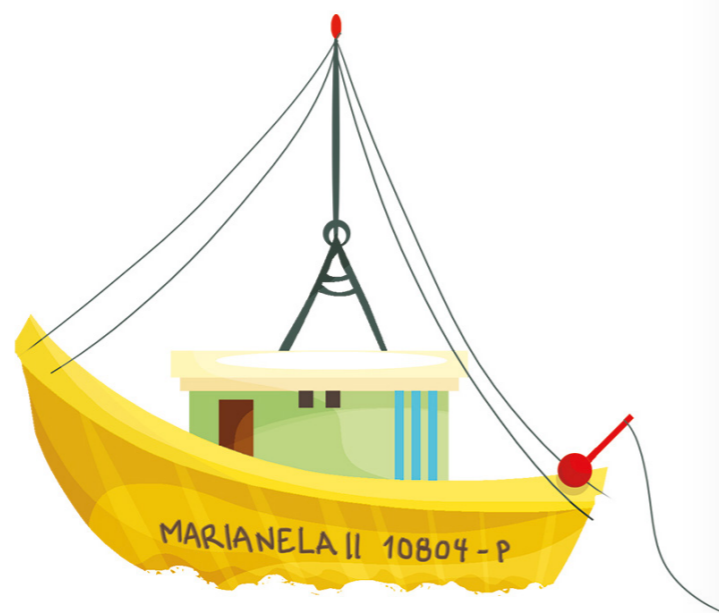
There is no fixed structure to follow when developing an SSP, but there are several key topic areas that are generally covered by any SSP. These topic areas are listed below, followed by a brief summary of each and examples of how they are addressed by different supply chain companies.

1. Institutional declaration
2. Procurement policy
3. Responsible sourcing
4. Seafood sustainability certification and ratings programs
5. Improvements in fisheries
6. Membership in seafood sustainability initiatives and collaboration with other stakeholders
7. Transparency
8. Education
9. Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

Institutional declaration

This section is used to declare to society, beyond its non-existent legal effects, the relevance of seafood sustainability within the CSR framework of the company. It presents the core values of the company and positions the company's seafood sustainability engagement under the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It should also introduce or outline the key pillars of the company's seafood sustainability policy, which might include:

1. Scope of seafood covered by seafood sustainability policy and start date of when policy goes into effect
2. Assessment of the sustainability of seafood products
3. Prioritization of environmentally sustainable/responsible/friendly seafood products
4. Support for products from FIPs and AIPs that are not yet performing at a certifiable level of sustainability
5. A seafood products monitoring system that complies with current legislation and avoids IUU fishing or International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List species
6. Supply chain engagement, education, and promotion of their own seafood sustainability commitments
7. Sustainability evaluation of new products against the current SSP.



Box 4. Slade Gorton's commitments: A three-fold institutional declaration

Slade Gorton lists a series of company commitments around three major topics:

Seafood for a lifetime: They commit to: a) reducing waste, b) regenerating resources, and c) reshaping the consumer's experience with seafood.

Sustainability: Their seafood products are certified as sustainable, while they work together with additional suppliers and fisheries to ensure they have the resources and incentives necessary to move along the continuum of responsible harvesting practices.

Food safety and quality: The company indicates that ensuring a wholesome, traceable, and safe supply of seafood is their number-one job. Their plants operate under strict HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) standards and are certified by Safe Quality Foods. They work directly with their suppliers to ensure adherence to the same strict protocols and require comprehensive third-party food safety audits at all facilities. Best practices in safe handling and processing are shared widely in order to support **full traceability** and continuous improvement efforts along the seafood supply chain.



Procurement policy

The sustainable seafood procurement policy section lists the principles that the company follows to behave responsibly when purchasing seafood products, specifying as well a set of product attributes that can and should be incorporated directly into procurement specifications. Examples include:

1. Guaranteeing legality and compliance with management measures
2. Guaranteeing traceability from boat or farm to client
3. Avoiding IUU products and respecting decent working conditions
4. Labelling
5. Supporting continuous improvement
6. Proactively seeking sourcing from selective low-impact fishing gears
7. Prioritizing new products that meet the company's seafood sustainability policy requirements
8. Avoiding species coming from vulnerable ecosystems and endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species
9. Requiring or giving preference to sustainably certified products or products from fishery improvement projects
10. Established timeline for review of the policy itself to calibrate based on internal and external developments.

Box 5. The seven foundations of Hy-Vee's seafood procurement policy

Hy-Vee is committed to selling seafood that is not only safe for consumption but also harvested or raised in a manner that provides for its long-term viability (sustainability), while minimizing damage to the environment and other sea life. The company describes the following key topics as the foundations of its seafood procurement policy:

1. **Safety, Quality, and Freshness.** Their procurement practices are designed to ensure that safety, quality, and freshness are of the highest priority.
2. **Legal Compliance.** Hy-Vee indicates that they will never knowingly buy or sell seafood that has been harvested, transported, or otherwise handled in an illegal manner.
3. **Supplier Integrity.** Hy-Vee commits to only do business with suppliers of high ethical standards, with a proven commitment to the quality, safety, and sustainability of their seafood products.
4. **Quality Information.** The concept of seafood sustainability is complex. The company declares that decisions on what constitutes sustainable seafood will be made based on fundamentally sound, high-quality data, science, and research from a variety of credible sources.
5. **Education and Communication.** Hy-Vee indicates that they will keep their customers, employees, and stakeholders informed about their efforts to improve the sustainability and overall quality of their seafood supply.
6. **Transparency.** Information on their seafood supply will be transparent, traceable, and readily available to customers.
7. **Partnership.** Hy-Vee declares that they will work in partnership with their customers, suppliers, other retailers, and interested stakeholders to continuously improve the sustainability of the seafood supply chain.

Box 6. Aramark structures its seafood purchasing policy around seven actions

Aramark's seafood purchasing policy indicates a series of actions intended to address the company's commitment to responsible sourcing of both wild-caught and farm-raised fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable seafood products. The policy includes the following actions

1. A commitment to purchase 100 percent of contracted seafood from responsible sources in the US. The company reviews their purchases annually to ensure they're making progress against these goals.
2. Description of responsibly sourced products as species recognized by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program as green (best choice) or yellow (good alternative), as well as specific eco-certified products recommended by Seafood Watch, from certification systems such as the MSC, ASC, or Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA).
3. Seeking to avoid the purchase of species identified as being at-risk where there are no improvement processes in place. They review their purchases annually to drive toward the exclusion of species identified as red (avoid) by Seafood Watch and commit to working with their partners and consumers to promote awareness about alternatives to red-listed species. They also work to avoid buying seafood that was transshipped at sea or is from IUU fisheries.
4. Seeking to support responsible fisheries management practices by purchasing from sources that ocean conservation organizations have identified as being responsibly managed; are on a clear well-defined path toward achieving certification; or are engaged in a credible FIP that meets criteria outlined by the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions or an AIP based on guidance provided by Seafood Watch.

Box 6. Aramark structures its seafood purchasing policy around seven actions

5. Being actively engaged in industry-wide discussions with suppliers, distributors, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to standardize tracking of key data elements, including 1) Latin species name, 2) location of catch or farm, and 3) production method. They believe improvements in transparency and traceability across the entire industry will drive accountability throughout the seafood supply chain.
6. Continuing to advocate for policy reform in the US government and domestic and international fisheries management bodies, addressing IUU fishing, harvest control rules (HCRs), and other key issues.
7. Committing to work with their suppliers and other partners to improve transparency and traceability throughout the seafood supply chain, to address social and economic issues impacting the lives of workers, local communities, and cultures. They are on a path of continuous improvement as they seek to understand the issues, evaluate the options, and determine the most responsible approach to identify and resolve human rights and labor abuses, and support sustainable livelihoods for seafood workers.

Box 7. SAFCOL's sustainable tuna procurement policy is based on four pillars

Safcol has developed a tuna sustainable procurement policy that is based on four pillars:

1. Full traceability. Safcol tuna is fully traceable, from ship to shelf, and legal. Safcol knows which boats catch its tuna, where they catch it, and what methods they use. To ensure this, Safcol does NOT source from:
 - Any vessel or company that has engaged in IUU fishing activities. Vessels are checked against IUU vessel blacklists supplied by the relevant tuna management bodies as well as the Greenpeace IUU blacklist.
 - Any vessels that offload their catch to another vessel at sea (known as transshipment).
2. Safcol does not use the following overfished tuna species in its cans: Atlantic bluefin (*Thunnus thynnus*), Pacific bluefin (*Thunnus orientalis*), southern bluefin (*Thunnus maccoyii*), and bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*).
3. No purchasing from indiscriminate fisheries. Safcol does not source tuna from destructive fisheries. All Safcol's tuna is certified as Dolphin Safe by the Earth Island Institute. The company states their entire tuna catch is FAD-free from October 2011.
4. Honesty and transparency about its tuna. Safcol will clearly label its cans with the common and scientific name of the tuna species, the fishing method, and the ocean where it is caught. The company does not engage in shark finning activity and does not deal with suppliers who do. It has a strong catch retention policy to reduce the discarding of dead and unwanted fish, and it does not source from fish stocks for which there is no assessment, or the status is unknown.
5. Safcol will continue to inform its customers about the work it is doing on tuna and to highlight any environmental concerns to its customers, retailers, and the media. It supports and promotes fair trade and the development of sustainable tuna fisheries.
6. Support for marine reserves. Safcol supports high seas marine reserves. The company recognizes that marine reserve areas closed to all fishing activities are important to ensure the biodiversity and productivity of our oceans and notes that it does not source its tuna from any of these areas.

Responsible sourcing

In this section, the company provides the basis of their claim, specifying what they consider to be the foundations of responsibility as suppliers.

Box 8. Category-specific responsible seafood policy: Wild-caught and aquaculture criteria in High Liner Foods' commitments

High Liner Foods is committed to sourcing all of their seafood from sustainable or responsible sources. "Responsibly sourced" helps define their product-specification requirements from sources that they have identified as being responsibly managed and on a clear, well-defined path toward achieving certification. To meet their policies, High Liner Foods has specific required criteria for both wild-caught and farmed seafood products.

Wild-caught seafood products must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- MSC certified or in MSC Full Assessment
- Certified to a scheme recognized by the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI)
- In a credible and publicly documented FIP
- OceanWise Recommended
- Rated Best Choice (green) or Good Alternative (yellow) by Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch.
- Farmed aquaculture products must meet one of more of the following criteria:
- Certified to the ASC, GlobalG.A.P., or Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) (1- 4 star rated) scheme or in ASC Full Assessment
- In a credible and publicly documented AIP
- OceanWise Recommended
- Rated Best Choice (green) or Good Alternative (yellow) by Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch.

Box 9. Species-specific responsible seafood criteria: Mentions of tuna in Asda's and Tesco's responsible seafood policies

Asda states the importance of sourcing from well-managed fisheries that conserve ocean biodiversity in their responsible seafood policy. One of the pillars of their policy is transparency, and they were the first supermarket to publish data on the fisheries that supply them. They say consumers can see exactly how and where their wild fish is caught – and how sustainable they are and the steps they are taking to improve it.

With regards to tuna, Asda's own-brand tinned tuna and tuna sandwiches come from pole and line, fish aggregation device (FAD)-free fisheries or fisheries that use FADs but only when participating in FIPs where progress is published on the Fishery Progress website. Their tuna is also certified dolphin-friendly by the Earth Island Institute.

When sourcing canned tuna, Asda does not work with any company that uses vessels that have been officially blacklisted, use transshipment at sea, have been prosecuted for illegal activities related to the trade of fish, or have undertaken shark finning. They also label their fish products to show where they come from.

Box 9. Species-specific responsible seafood criteria: Mentions of tuna in Asda's and Tesco's responsible seafood policies

Tesco also recognizes its crucial role in promoting the sustainable management of marine fisheries and aquaculture in its responsible seafood policy. Tesco states that they are working to ensure that all the wild seafood they sell is responsibly sourced, and its public seafood policy includes the following components:

- Tesco's use of the terms "Responsibly Sourced" and "Sustainably Sourced" on their packaging is governed by the Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC) Codes of Conduct on Environmentally Responsible Fish and Seafood Sourcing and Environmental Claims. The company undergoes independent third-party audits to ensure they are in compliance with the Codes.
- Tesco cites its work in partnership with Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) to collect data on their source fisheries, assess risks, and work with their suppliers on any improvements that are needed, often through FIPs. They also work with MSC, having rapidly expanded the number of MSC-ecolabeled counter, pre-packaged, frozen, and canned fish products sold in Tesco stores.
- Regarding tuna, Tesco states that it is leading calls for the sustainable management of the world's tuna stocks. In 2017, they signed a Global Declaration on Tuna, which includes commitments relating to sustainability, social responsibility, environmental responsibility, and government partnership. In particular, they are committed to advocating for the development of HCRs by each of the world's tuna management organizations. Tesco is founding member of the Global Tuna Alliance, and holds the Vicechair role of the Steering Committee. In their commitments, they mention that all of their UK canned tuna is either pole and line, FAD-free, or MSC-certified.



Seafood sustainability certification and ratings programs

In this section, the company aligns with specific seafood sustainability standards, either certifications or rating programs, that they recognize and use to take decisions. In some cases, companies supporting third-party certification of seafood products also use this section to present the reasons why the company

believes that seafood products certified under those standards present a competitive advantage, for example:

- Lower associated risk
- Third-party independent verification
- Increased credibility
- Facilitation of transparency along the supply chain
- Alignment with the FAO code of conduct
- Support for implementation of the UN SDGs.

Box 10. Walmart's seafood policy sustainability standards requirements

Walmart's seafood policy states that, by 2025, and based on price, availability, quality, customer demand, and unique regulatory environments across their global retail markets, they will require all:

1. Fresh and frozen, farmed, and wild seafood suppliers to source from fisheries that are:
 - Third-party certified as sustainable using MSC or BAP, or certified by a program that follows the FAO Guidelines and is recognized by the GSSI as such. For their farmed supply, they expect suppliers to ensure sustainable production and sourcing throughout the supply chain, including final processing plant, farms, hatcheries, and feed mills.
 - OR
 - Actively working toward certification or in a FIP or AIP that has definitive and ambitious goals, measurable metrics, and time-bound milestones.
2. Canned light and white tuna suppliers to source from fisheries that are:
 - Complying with the International Sustainable Seafood Foundation (ISSF) sustainability conservation measures AND
 - Third-party certified as sustainable using MSC or certified by a program that follows the FAO Guidelines and is recognized by the GSSI as such. Walmart will also source from suppliers using better management fishing practices, as validated through chain of custody (e.g., pole and line, free-school sets).
 - OR
 - Actively working toward certification or in a FIP that has definitive and ambitious goals, measurable metrics, and time-bound milestones.

Improvements in fisheries

This section contains the company's commitments to fishery improvement projects. FIPs allow companies to demonstrate responsible behavior in a plausible way, adopting in practice the notion

of continuous improvement. A list of the FIPs the company supports and sources from should also be presented, together with a brief explanation of the role the company plays in promoting and supporting improvements in these fisheries.

Box 11: Different approaches to considering and supporting fishery improvement projects (FIPs): Sea Delight, Ocean Outcomes, CeDePesca, and Red Lobster

Sea Delight is committed that their company (in the US and Canada) will source 60 percent of their wild seafood, at minimum, from FIPs on an annual basis. Their sustainable seafood policy also includes a specific section on fisheries improvement, demonstrating Sea Delight's commitment to supporting and improving their source fisheries through a variety of actions, including:

1. Creation of FIPs for source fisheries
2. Direct implementation of FIP activities
3. Financial contribution to FIPs
4. Employing on-the-ground staff to coordinate FIP activities
5. Working with Sea Delight suppliers to improve fishery practices and overall fishery performance.

Box 11: Different approaches to considering and supporting fishery improvement projects (FIPs): Sea Delight, Ocean Outcomes, CeDePesca, and Red Lobster

Ocean Outcomes' website has a specific section that explains the work they do with FIPs, hand-in-hand with commercial fisheries and seafood businesses, to help them become more sustainable. The site notes that Ocean Outcomes' fishery improvement work addresses the full range of major fishery challenges contributing to the global fisheries crisis, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; overfishing; depletion of non-target stocks; habitat impacts; and management system issues such as inadequate monitoring. These issues represent serious risks to the sustainability and security of fisheries, food supplies, and human livelihoods. It also includes a list of all the FIPs the company supports.

CeDePesca's website explains what a FIP is and describes its purposes: to promote specific improvements in the fishery's administration, research, and exploitation to obtain its sustainability. The site includes a link to all the FIPs the company supports.

Red Lobster's sourcing story states that the company only sources from suppliers who follow industry best practices, including third-party certification programs such as Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) or Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP), or engagement in a credible fishery improvement project (FIP).

Membership in seafood sustainability initiatives and collaboration with other stakeholders

In this section, the company highlights its participation in collaborative efforts to promote synergies between the different actors for more responsible use of natural resources. These alliances may involve pre-competitive collaborations with other companies in the seafood business, but also other private and public institutions, scientific or research organizations, NGOs working on sustainable seafood or any relevant civil society organizations (such as organizations involved in labor rights issues). Participation of the seafood industry

in the construction and strengthening of these relationships will in turn contribute to a more cohesive socioeconomic environment and therefore help foster seafood sustainability. Reference should be made, therefore, to all the initiatives the company is a part of, as well as any collaborations or partnerships with third-party organizations that support the company on seafood sustainability-related issues. Examples of such pre-competitive collaborations working to foster sustainable exploitation of the oceans are: Supply Chain Roundtables (SRs)⁹, SeaPact,¹⁰ Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS),¹¹ International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF),¹² and the Seafood Task Force.¹³

⁹ <https://www.sustainablefish.org/Programs/Improving-Wild-Fisheries/Seafood-Sectors-Supply-Chain-Roundtables>

¹⁰ <http://www.seapact.org/about.html>

¹¹ <https://seabos.org/about-seabos/>

¹² <https://iss-foundation.org/who-we-are/about/>

¹³ <https://www.seafoodtaskforce.global/about/at-a-glance/>

Box 12. Showing support for seafood sustainability initiatives and collaboration with other stakeholders: Frinsa, Metro, and PanaPesca

Frinsa states that it is a pioneer in joining forces with international organizations at the forefront of the sustainability of marine resources and expresses support for International Pole & Line Foundation, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, Friends of the Sea, Dolphin Safe Fishing, and the Marine Stewardship Council.

Metro states that they have identified the 12 major fish and seafood species they sell and that 90 percent of these species will be certified by 2025, according to one of the following certification standards: i) ASC, ii) European Organic Certification, iii) FOS (Friends of the Sea), iv) GAA – BAP, v) GLOBALG.A.P, or vi) MSC, or according to another certification standard that has been recognized by the GSSI. As an alternative, METRO aims for a credible, comprehensive fishery improvement project registered on FisheryProgress.org and with a clear target of achieving certification within a reasonable timeframe.

PanaPesca highlights their pride in supporting the following sustainability organizations and initiatives: i) Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA), ii) GSSI, iii) Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, including the Global Squid Supply Chain Roundtable (SR), the Global Octopus SR, the Peruvian Jumbo Flying Squid FIP (Gigas), the Japanese Flying Squid FIP (Todarodes), and the Chinese Mitre Squid FIP (Chinese Loligo), iv) MSC, v) ASC, vi) BAP, vii) Friends of the Sea (FOS), and CeDePesca (Argentine Red Shrimp FIP) and time-bound milestones.

Transparency

Transparency must be an integral element of any company's CSR strategy and, as such, this section should not only reinforce the company commitment to this matter, but also provide references to any public traceability tool, seafood

sourcing disclosure platform (e.g., Ocean Disclosure Project (ODP) or Seafood Progress), corporate CSR reports, or fisheries assessments (e.g., FishSource, Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, and GSSI recognized certifications) of their seafood sources.

Box 13. The Ocean Disclosure Project

The Ocean Disclosure Project (ODP) provides a reporting framework for seafood-buying companies, including retailers, suppliers, fish feed manufacturers, and more, to voluntarily disclose their wild-caught and farmed seafood sourcing, alongside information on the environmental performance of each source. Before the ODP, few companies had publicly disclosed where they get their seafood from, making it difficult for stakeholders to understand the sustainability of source fisheries and farms and their associated risks. Participation in the ODP represents a pioneering commitment to supply chain transparency for companies sourcing seafood.

Launched in 2015 by Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, the project started with the support and participation of five companies: UK retailers Asda (the first company to report via the ODP), Morrisons, and Co-op Foods; and aquaculture feed producers Biomar and Skretting. The ODP has continued to expand in number and geographic coverage of disclosures. Participation in the ODP is expected to continue growing over the next few years through active promotion to industry in Europe, the Americas, and Asia.

Box 14. Co-op Foods: working together with the fishing industry and disclosing through the Ocean Disclosure Project

Co-op Foods joined the Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC) in 2011. The coalition brings together major British businesses to make real changes in the seafood industry. All sourcing and labelling of their own-brand fish products meet the SSC codes of conduct. The company also works in partnership with the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership to ensure they continue to source the most sustainable seafood options and work together to find solutions to challenges in the marine environment. In addition, they make information about where their wild fish comes from publicly available through the Ocean Disclosure Project website.

Companies may also include information on the vessels they are sourcing from, which also allows consumers to verify, for example, whether the vessels have been included in any IUU fishing list. Participating in transparency initiatives enables companies to reach a wider audience. Investors are looking beyond basic responsibility and increasingly making decisions and developing strategies around a range of environmental performance, social impact, and governance issues indicators. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing is a strategy to influence positive changes in society through investments that rely on independent ratings to help assess a given company's behavior against the three ESG dimensions. Having clear and publicly available information about how the company contributes to these three dimensions is key to benefit from ESG investing.

Education

In this section, companies describe how seafood sustainability topics and the company's commitments are disseminated internally and externally through staff trainings and

communication materials that are shared up and down the supply chain.

Internal education and training on seafood sustainability will help employees better understand seafood sustainability challenges faced by seafood supply chains, the implications these challenges might have within the business at all levels, and the measures taken by the company to act in a responsible manner. This kind of internal education helps build a positive organizational culture, providing staff a shared vision and fostering greater pride in the company's practices. Educating staff on the commitments of the company to sustainable seafood and building an organizational culture where sustainability is everyone's business helps enhance external communications and relationships with wider communities.

External education up and down the supply chain will help support sustainability improvements along the supply chain, acknowledge best practices for seafood production, develop trust among consumers, create brand value, and present the company's CSR work and the SSP as instruments to support common social benefits.

Box 15. Seafood companies' commitment to education

Southwind Food's seafood commitments include a section dedicated to traceability and education. More specifically, they note that they “educate our employees, customers, suppliers, and other key stakeholders about sustainable seafood, including the importance of addressing environmental and social issues and working towards full traceability (...).”

Fortune Fish & Gourmet has a commitment to both internal and external education. In their seafood policy, they note that they will share information collected on their seafood products with their sales staff and will incorporate the sustainability assessments into existing employee training, so that employees fully understand the sustainability of the seafood products Fortune Fish is selling and can speak confidently with their customers about the issues. Fortune Fish & Gourmet will also seek opportunities one-on-one, online, and in other sales materials to educate their customers about seafood sustainability and what the Fortune Fish policy is doing to support environmentally responsible practices.

Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

This section is used to align the company's SSP and purchasing decisions with the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It provides an explanation of how the company's efforts address environmental and socioeconomic well-being in fisheries

and fishing communities. While achieving SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) is directly supported by the application of a comprehensive SSP, there are other goals that can also benefit from the implementation of a seafood company's SSP (see above section Following UN guiding principles and policies).

Image 1. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (U.N., n.d).



Useful resources

Ratings systems with publicly available methodologies and reports

Seafood Sustainability Rating Program	Main market focus
FishSource	Global
Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program	US
Vancouver Aquarium Ocean Wise Seafood	Canada
Marine Conservation Society Good Fish Guide	UK

Relevant organizations and consulting firms

The following table provides a non-comprehensive list of organizations that can provide different expert services linked to the development of seafood sustainability policies (e.g., analytics, ad hoc advice, etc.) or that

collaborate with the seafood industry on a wide range of seafood sustainability-related topics. A comprehensive list of NGOs and subject-area experts working to improve the responsibility and sustainability of seafood supply chains can be found through the [Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions Global Hub](#).

Name	Type	Scope
Sustainable Fisheries Partnership	NGO	Global
World Wildlife Fund	NGO	Global
FishWise	NGO	North America & Europe
FishChoice	NGO	North America
Gulf of Maine Research Institute	NGO	US
Smartfish	NGO	Mexico
Pesca Responsable y Comercio Justo	Consulting	Latin America
Redes – Sostenibilidad Pesquera	NGO	Peru
Centro Pesca Sustentable	NGO	Chile
China Blue	NGO	China
MRAG	Consulting	Global
Key Traceability	Consulting	Global
Seafood Legacy	Consulting	Japan

Other **useful resources**

[CASS Common Vision for Sustainable Seafood](#): This document describes six realistic steps companies can take to develop and implement a sustainable seafood policy.

[Certification and Ratings Collaboration](#): Five global seafood certification and ratings programs working together to coordinate tools and increase impact so that more seafood producers move along a clear path toward environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

[Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions](#): CASS is a key driver of the global sustainable seafood movement and has developed and adopted a common vision for supporting industry to engage on seafood sustainability.

[FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries](#): As defined by FAO (FAO, 1995), the Code “sets out principles and international standards of behavior for responsible practices with a view to ensuring the effective conservation, management and development of living aquatic resources, with due respect for the ecosystem and biodiversity.”

[FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication](#): As defined by (FAO, 2015), these guidelines “are intended to support the visibility, recognition and enhancement of the already important role of small-scale fisheries and to contribute to global and national efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty. The Guidelines support responsible fisheries and sustainable social and economic development for the benefit of current and future generations, with an emphasis on small-scale fishers and fish workers and related activities and including vulnerable and marginalized people, promoting a human rights-based approach

[FAO Guidelines For The Ecolabelling Of Fish And Fishery Products From Marine Capture Fisheries](#): As defined by FAO (FAO, 2009), these guidelines “are applicable to ecolabelling schemes that are designed to certify and promote labels for products from well-managed marine capture fisheries and focus on issues related to the sustainable use of fisheries resources.”

[FAO technical guidelines on aquaculture certification](#): As defined by FAO (FAO, 2011), the guidelines “provide guidance for the development, organization and implementation of credible aquaculture certification schemes.”

[FIP rating tool](#): This document describes SFP’s standardized tool for measuring fishery improvement project (FIP) progress.

[Fishery Progress](#): This website provides a range of information about global FIPs, from quick snapshots of progress and opportunities to get involved, to detailed evidence for improvements.

[Framework for Social Responsibility in the Seafood Sector](#): This framework provides a broad overview of the relevant topics for social responsibility in seafood and indicates what tools are available to assess or improve performance.

[Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability](#): The GDST is an international, business-to-business platform established to advance a unified framework for interoperable seafood traceability practices.

[Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative](#): This initiative aligns global efforts and resources to address seafood sustainability challenges.

[Guidelines for Supporting Fishery Improvement Projects](#): These guidelines define the kind of fishery improvement projects members of CASS support and include criteria for basic and comprehensive FIPs.

[ISEAL Alliance](#): ISEAL is the global membership association for credible sustainability standards. Its mission is to strengthen sustainability standards systems for the benefit of people and the environment.

[MSC standard](#): The Marine Stewardship Council standard is used to assess if a fishery is well-managed and sustainable; the website also explains how the standard is used and what is assessed.

[Ocean Disclosure Project](#): The ODP is a reporting framework for seafood-buying companies to voluntarily disclose their wild-caught and farmed seafood sourcing, alongside information on the environmental performance of each source.

[Roadmap for Improving Seafood Ethics](#): Created by FishWise, RISE helps companies to navigate human and labor rights challenges and create conditions for decent work across seafood supply chains.

[Sea Pact](#): Sea Pact is a group of leading North American Seafood Companies dedicated to driving stewardship and continuous improvement of social, economic, and environmental responsibility throughout the global seafood supply chain.

[Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Seafood Industry Services](#), offers industry partnerships, turnkey services, and bespoke solutions through science-based, data-driven, business-minded approaches. SFP's tools and services help market actors around the world drive change in their businesses and supply chains toward sustainable fisheries.

[Seafood Metrics](#): This SFP system provides businesses with the resolution and details necessary to understand the sustainability of their seafood and make informed decisions.

[Social Responsibility Assessment Tool for the Seafood Sector](#): A rapid assessment tool to assess the risk of social issues, to identify areas in need of improvement, and to inform the development of a FIP workplan that includes a social element.

[Sustainable Seafood Coalition](#): The Sustainable Seafood Coalition is a pre-competitive collaboration platform to establish standards for responsible sourcing by buyers of seafood, and a harmonized approach to environmental claims made when selling that seafood.

[Sustainable Seafood Coalition Codes of Conduct](#): These are voluntary agreements on responsible sourcing and labelling.

[UN Global Compact](#): A voluntary initiative based on CEO commitments to implement sustainability principles and take steps to support UN goals

[UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#): Information about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, established as the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

[UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#): These Guiding Principles seek to provide an authoritative global standard for preventing and addressing the risk of adverse human rights impacts linked to business activity.

[Understanding Seafood Ratings and Seafood Certifications](#): This FishChoice webpage provides a clear explanation on the main differences between seafood ratings and seafood certifications.

Box resources

- **Box 1. Aldi.** Source: https://www.aldi-nord.de/content/dam/aldi/germany/bewusst-einkaufen/nachhaltigkeit/fisch/ALDI_North_Fish_Purchasing_Policy.pdf.res/1491830088867/ALDI_North_Fish_Purchasing_Policy.pdf
- **Box 2. Seattle Fish Co.** Source: <https://www.seattlefish.com/sustainability-commitment/>
- **Box 3. Tesco.** Source: <https://www.tescopl.com/sustainability/publications/policies/downloads/seafood-policy/>
- **Box 4. Slade Gorton.** Source: <https://www.sladegorton.com/about-us/our-commitments/>
- **Box 5. Hy-Vee.** Source: <https://a9effd958e0dc59aaf3b-80520a33cc33a15351bd958c9b8ecc55.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/file/SeafoodProcurementBrochureFinal.pdf>
- **Box 6. Aramark.** Source: <https://www.aramark.com/files/seafood-principles-policy>
- **Box 7. SAFCOL.** Source: <https://www.safcol.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SAFCOL-Sustainable-Seafood-Procurement-Policy-2.pdf>
- **Box 8. High Liner Foods.** Source: <http://www.highlinerfoods.com/en/home/sustainability/sustainability-overview/efforts-and-performance.aspx>
- **Box 9. ASDA and Tesco.** Source: i) <https://www.asda.com/environment/farming-nature>; ii) <https://www.tescopl.com/sustainability/publications/policies/downloads/seafood-policy/>
- **Box 10. Walmart.** Source: <https://corporate.walmart.com/policies#00000150-2911-d3e8-a7d3-29bf64b50000>
- **Box 11. Sea Delight, Ocean Outcomes, CeDePesca, and Red Lobster.** Sources: i) <https://seadelightglobal.squarespace.com/sustainable-seafood-policy>, ii) <https://www.oceanoutcomes.org/areas-of-focus/fishery-improvement-projects/>, iii) <https://cedepesca.net/promes/>, iv) <https://www.redlobster.com/our-story/seafood-with-standards/our-beliefs>

- **Box 12. Frinsa, Metro Cash & Carry, and PanaPesca.** Sources: i) <https://en.grupofrinsa.com/sustainability/>; ii) <https://responsibility.metroag.de/focus-areas/raw-material-sourcing>; iii) <https://panapesca.com/sustainability/>
- **Box 13. Ocean Disclosure Project.** Source: <https://oceandisclosureproject.org/>
- **Box 14. Co-op.** Source: <https://www.coop.co.uk/our-suppliers/farmers/fish>
- **Box 15. Southwind Foods and Fortune Fish & Gourmet.** Sources: i) <https://www.southwindfoods.com/our-commitment>; ii) <https://www.fortunefishco.net/sustainability>
- **Box 16. Nueva Pescanova Group.** Source: <http://www.nuevapescanova.com/en/engagement/corporate-social-responsibility/contribution-to-sustainable-development/>
- **Box 17. Ahold Delhaize.** Source: <https://www.aholddelhaize.com/en/sustainable-retailing/sustainability-strategy/vision-and-strategy/>
- **Box 18. Regal Springs.** Source: <https://www.regalsprings.com/our-sustainability/goals/>



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