



WWF

SEAFOOD
GUIDELINES

2015

GLOBAL SEAFOOD CHARTER FOR COMPANIES

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD PRODUCTION AND PROCUREMENT

An overview for industry partners

WWF's vision is for a future in which sustainable fisheries and aquaculture thrive in healthy ecosystems, benefiting people and businesses that depend on them. We consider that engaging with companies is crucial in helping to achieve this vision.

WWF works with companies who are willing to make progressive commitments to improve their sourcing or production of their seafood and to communicate this to consumers. Our long-term goal is to ensure a shift towards sustainable production and consumption across the whole seafood sector, while applying awareness raising on seafood sustainability among consumers as a major tool.

This document outlines the objectives, principles and processes by which WWF works with companies on seafood. We seek to combine a company's business knowledge with our expertise to help improve a business's seafood procurement practice. We also cooperate with supply chain partners to make their seafood portfolios more responsible and provide leading examples at sector and country levels.

Over the years, experience has shown that we can achieve more for the environment and business by working together. WWF therefore invites companies to work with us, following the steps outlined in the WWF Global Seafood Charter, to help secure healthy oceans, aquatic ecosystems, fisheries and responsibly produced seafood for future generations.

Companies interested in cooperating with WWF should contact their respective WWF national office (wwf.org for a list of national offices).



WWF GLOBAL SEAFOOD CHARTER

Why?

WWF developed the WWF Global Seafood Charter because we believe that a majority of companies are open to sustainable seafood and do not want to source their products irresponsibly, with consequent damage to the environment, species loss, and lost livelihoods for affected communities. In order to help companies move faster along a pathway to sustainability WWF created the Global Seafood Charter to outline key steps that a company could take on this journey.

The WWF Global Seafood Charter is integral to WWF's marine and seafood work which, through better production, equitable resource governance and ecosystem integrity, aims to help deliver our vision for healthy and thriving oceans. Specifically, the Charter supports these objectives by:

- Supporting companies to develop responsible seafood policies and sourcing strategies.
- Encouraging companies to invest in "on-the-water" or "on the ground" fishery and aquaculture improvement and conservation projects
- Informing consumers and encouraging them to buy sustainable seafood.

What?

WWF works primarily with global and national seafood companies along the supply chain including producers, farmers, processors, branded manufacturers and retailers. We work in producing and consuming countries to support the better seafood production in domestic and international markets.

Who?

How?

Companies in the seafood sector that cooperate with WWF demonstrate leadership through:

1. **Committing** – making a public commitment to producing or buying more responsibly produced seafood.
2. **Investing in Fishery Improvement Projects (FIP) and Aquaculture Improvement Projects (AIP)** – aiming to achieve MSC or ASC² certified production.
3. **Investing in Fishery Conservation Projects (FCP)** – aiming to support sustainable production where certification is a relevant option within a reasonable timeframe. This includes direct support to relevant WWF projects that generate measurable conservation results and inspiring examples that demonstrate the benefits of sustainable seafood.
4. **Raising awareness** – educating employees, consumers and partners about the benefits of the MSC and ASC certification schemes.

² ASC is still a fairly new certification scheme; an agreed approach for Aquaculture Improvement Projects (AIP) is being defined with key stakeholders.



The Urgency

Marine conservation has been a priority of WWF's for over 30 years – with work focusing on marine species, fisheries and aquaculture, priority places and addressing the social and environmental threats. WWF has an extensive global marine programme active in over 100 countries around the world. It is working to demonstrate how effective marine conservation can support the sustainable use of the marine environment to ensure food security, sustainable livelihoods, and political stability, particularly in ocean-dependent communities.

WWF has a vision for the environment of a future in which sustainable fisheries and aquaculture thrive in healthy ecosystems, benefiting people and businesses that depend on them. It seeks to achieve this by working with businesses, governments and consumers to shift public opinion, redirect finance, improve governance, empower communities and orientate markets to support integrated management and sustainable use, which will lead to sustainable fisheries, responsible aquaculture, resilient marine and freshwater ecosystems and restored ocean health.

As the world's population increases, the global demand for seafood continues to rise. Over the last 50 years, the demand for seafood has increased five-fold, and the FAO estimates that to meet the continuing increase in demand, an additional 45 million tonnes of seafood will be needed by 2030. Meeting this demand for a healthy protein source will have serious environmental and social implications unless seafood is produced responsibly.

Our oceans are under continuous pressure from harmful, destructive and often indiscriminate fishing methods. More than one third of the reported global catch is identified as bycatch (unintended capture of non-target fish). The financial value of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is estimated at between €3–8 billion every year. The result is that today, the latest FAO report states that more than 28% of world fisheries are overfished¹, increasing the risk of fish stock collapse.

Aquaculture production is increasing year on year and recently surpassed marine fisheries as providing the majority of global seafood production. There is equally a need to improve current practices on fish farms to address issues such as loss of natural habitat, pollution, disease, and escape of foreign species into sensitive ecosystems. Moreover aquaculture production also adds pressure on wild-caught fisheries through the use of forage fish in fish-feed.

The transformation of seafood production, markets and governance has consequently never been more urgent in order to ensure the long-term viability of a vital food supply while safeguarding the valuable ecosystems upon which we all depend on.

Sustainable Seafood

The WWF Global Seafood Charter applies to a broad definition of seafood that includes fish, shellfish, crustaceans and even seaweed. This definition applies to freshwater and marine species and to farmed and wild-caught products. Fresh, frozen and canned seafood products are all within the scope, whether they are intended for human consumption, animal consumption or other purposes. For WWF, “sustainable seafood” is any form of aquatic life that can be caught or farmed and consumed in a way that ensures healthy and robust marine and freshwater ecosystems that provide long-term, valuable services to humanity.

To ensure the seafood comes from sustainable and responsible sources, WWF supports credible, science-based, multi-stakeholder certification programmes. Currently, the only certification schemes that meet WWF's minimum criteria are the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) for wild-caught seafood and the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) for farmed seafood.

WWF's engages with companies to help them build fully sustainable seafood portfolios and to inspire broader change in the seafood sector. WWF considers that production of sustainable seafood should satisfy all three areas of sustainability - ecological, social and economic. For us, positive ecological and social conditions are at the heart of economic sustainability and prosperity.



¹ FAO 2014. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2014. Rome. pp.223



BENEFITS FOR COMPANIES

Reduced costs and increased profitability

Research shows that investing in responsible environmental practices can cut costs by nearly 50%³. So taking action is not only good for the environment, but also for long-term business profitability. Companies can also reduce social risks by adopting such practices. Through taking practical steps, the seafood industry can ensure it meets consumer and stakeholder demands while still making profits.

Secure resource base

Tens of millions of people depend on wild-caught and farmed seafood for food and their livelihoods, as do the many workers in seafood companies along supply chains. All of them in their turn rely on healthy oceans and freshwater ecosystems that support all forms of aquatic resources.

Mitigating commercial risks

By engaging in sustainability efforts, companies can manage risks associated with reputational issue; fluctuations in commodity supply, pricing and financial instability; human rights abuses or social conflicts; and climate change. Transforming how seafood is sourced and processed delivers commercial gains to business.

Secure consumer demand

Consumers increasingly demand environmental and social accountability for the products they purchase. A recent corporate social responsibility survey⁴ found that about 90% of North American consumers would switch brands to one that supports a good cause, if the price and quality were similar; and similar percentages of global consumers say they would boycott a brand or product if they learned of irresponsible behaviour.

³ Deloitte Development LLC 2012. Selected Sustainable Value Chain Research Findings.

⁴ Cone Communications Echo 2013. Global CSR Study. 37 pp.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Commitment to increase the traceability and transparency of seafood sourcing and production
2. Commitment to being among the leading seafood sourcing companies
3. Commitment to continuous improvement, in terms of volume and scope of responsibly sourced seafood
4. Commitment to regular publication of progress towards sustainability goals
5. WWF only publicly supports products that are credibly certified

The objectives and steps of the WWF Global Seafood Charter are supported by key principles:

WWF works with partners to help ensure compliance with national and international legal frameworks aimed at ensuring transparency of fishing and aquaculture operations and traceability of the entire supply chain in order to avoid illegal seafood products.

Companies WWF work with go beyond what might be considered “business as usual”. Such leading companies substantially increase the number of species, volume or proportion of seafood product that is sustainably harvested, sourced or produced.

WWF expects fisheries or farms to set an overall objective to become certified to MSC or ASC standards. In cases where certification is not yet feasible, investment is sought for Fishery Conservation Projects which are developed for such cases.

Public stakeholders increasingly demand transparency and accountability and WWF expects companies to undertake regular and credible reporting towards its stakeholders.

To guarantee that seafood comes from sustainable and responsible sources, WWF only supports credible, multi-stakeholder certification programmes that meet what we consider to be minimum standards of performance. Currently, the only certification schemes that meet WWF’s criteria are the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) for wild-caught seafood and the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) for farmed seafood, though others may qualify in future.

WWF's APPROACH TO PARTNERING WITH COMPANIES ON SEAFOOD

WWF recognises that environmental and social sustainability is a journey. WWF partnerships that are based on the WWF Global Seafood Charter generally several or all of the steps outlined below. Companies cover the costs of the sustainability action taken, and usually contribute financially to WWF's work on sustainable seafood.

STEP 1

Understanding and clarifying expectations and intentions

Discuss and clarify expectations of both parties and the scope and ambition of any potential engagement.

STEP 2

Risk assessment and preliminary analysis

As part of a due diligence process, an assessment of the potential partnership is undertaken to identify any potential issues or non-conformity with WWF's guidelines. We recommend that companies do the same with regard to WWF. Once this has been completed successfully and both parties want to proceed, a letter of intent is signed.

STEP 3

Formal partnership agreement

Using results of the due diligence, WWF assesses the areas of highest risk and opportunities for meaningful improvement. Both parties agree the steps needed to improve fishery and/or aquaculture operations and supply chains, along with respective expectations of each other. If a decision is taken to analyse a company's supply chains in detail, a Partnership Agreement is drawn up stipulating what each party will contribute to the process.

STEP 4

Detailed supply chain analysis

A detailed supply chain analysis is conducted to provide greater understanding of seafood traded or processed by a company and its origins. WWF staff or a third party undertake an initial appraisal of existing wild-caught fishery and aquaculture sources, production modes and supply chains. This could include: analysis of the supply chain; current sustainability profile and status of target seafood species; and fishery and aquaculture management conditions.

This enables both parties to identify immediate and long-term options to address key environmental and social issues and provides a baseline against which to measure progress in moving the whole supply chain towards responsible practices.

STEP 5

Implement a Seafood Production and Procurement Policy Improvement Plan

The development and implementation of a Seafood Production and Procurement Policy Improvement Plan is a crucial step. This Plan contains a step-wise approach towards establishing a sustainable seafood portfolio. Key milestones will be achieving MSC or ASC certifications for part or the entire product portfolio.

In some cases measures, additional to MSC, may be needed to ensure socially equitable conditions in fisheries and to guarantee positive social impacts for dependent communities.

STEP 6

Transparency about commitments and progress

Open and transparent communication about action undertaken to improve seafood production and procurement is essential to drive industry-wide improvements. It is expected that companies publish their sustainable seafood sourcing or production policies. Further WWF requires companies to produce annual reports that summarise progress achieved, including on the origin of seafood, and identify plans for the next year(s).

STEP 7

Raising awareness

Educating customers, employees and other key stakeholders along supply chains increases understanding of the issues faced and solution required. WWF can advise or support training of staff, suppliers or customers on the environmental and social issues surrounding seafood. WWF also encourages and supports cooperation among seafood partners.

STEP 8

Advocating policy and management reform

Seafood companies can make significant contributions to reform of seafood policy and management. The combined voice of companies together, or with WWF and other NGOs, can be powerful in arguing for policies that support healthy marine ecosystems, good farming practices and long-term seafood supply. WWF is able to facilitate engagement of partners with relevant seafood management and regulatory bodies.

STEP 9

Results

All partnership agreements, and related production and procurement policy improvement plans, include measurable goals and timetables. Progress is tracked and public recognition given to the achievement of significant milestones.



WHY WORK WITH WWF ?

WWF has a network of offices and staff that operate in over 100 countries. This provides us with a wealth of local knowledge and experience on fisheries and aquaculture in countries of origin, where seafood is processed and where it is consumed. Since WWF has successfully undertaken this type of cooperation with national and international partners in many such countries we are well positioned to help other companies do the same. Our globally recognised brand is based upon this expertise, our integrity and collaborative approach.



Our Smart Fishing Vision and Goals:

Vision: The world's oceans are healthy, well-managed and full of life, providing valuable resources for the welfare of humanity.

2020 Goals: The responsible management and trade of four key fishery populations results in recovering and resilient marine eco-systems, improved livelihoods for coastal communities and strengthened food security for the Planet.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

panda.org

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